



Approved: June 27, 2016

**CITY OF ARDEN HILLS, MINNESOTA
SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION MEETING
MAY 31, 2016
ARDEN HILLS CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, Mayor Grant called to order the City Council Work Session meeting at 7:50 p.m.

Present: Mayor David Grant; Councilmembers Brenda Holden, Fran Holmes, Dave McClung and Jonathan Wicklund

Absent: None

Also present: Interim City Administrator Sue Iverson; City Planner Ryan Streff; Senior Planner Matthew Bachler; and City Clerk Amy Dietl

1. AGENDA ITEMS

A. City Meeting with Master Developer - TCAAP

Stacie Kvilvang, Ehlers & Associates, stated on May 2, 2016, the JDA selected a master development team for the TCAAP Property. This team consists of Alatus, Inland Development and Robert Thomas Homes. The team has been meeting with both City and County staff and held a meeting with the JDA on May 24, 2016. In order to become better acquainted and obtain City Council perspectives, the team feels it is important to also meet with the City Council. Introductions occurred between the City Council and Alatus team. She then requested the Council provide the Alatus team with feedback on TCAAP.

Bob Lux, Principal at Alatus, explained he was a Minnesota native. He reviewed his work history noting he has been in the building business his entire life. He indicated he had a passion for large scale projects and was excited to be working with the City of Arden Hills on TCAAP. He thanked the City Council for all of their efforts on the Master Plan and TRC.

Todd Stutz, Tradition Development Corporation and Robert Thomas Homes, introduced himself to the Council noting he was a local developer and semi-custom home builder. He described several larger developments that he had completed in the metro area. He explained Robert Thomas Homes constructed approximately 150 homes per year.

Kent Carlson, Inland Development Partners, stated he has been in the commercial real estate business for the past 30 years. He discussed his work history in detail with the Council and indicated he was looking forward to working with the City of Arden Hills on the TCAAP project.

Tom Shaver, Inland Development Partners, reported he has been in this industry for the past 33 years. He commented on his work experience and explained he was extremely excited to be a part of this project.

Mayor Grant stated he was looking forward to the Council being able to hold a discussion with Alatus. He requested Alatus describe the first 90 days of this project.

Mr. Shaver discussed the work that has been taking place by Alatus at this time, noting his team was working to fully understand the environmental, site surfaces, and subgrade conditions. All of this information had to be understood prior to any mass grading being completed and would also assist Alatus in phasing the project.

Councilmember Holden wanted to see the project done right the first time and appreciated Alatus' attention to the grading details.

Mr. Shaver provided further comment on the projected timeline for the TCAAP development.

Councilmember Holmes asked if the sequencing of payments would change.

Ms. Kvilvang did not anticipate there would be any change to the timing and sequence to the project.

Mayor Grant questioned what market studies were being completed for the project.

Mr. Shaver explained that two parallel studies were being completed for the TCAAP project. He reported the studies were focusing on single and multi-family residential. He commented on the discussions that were being held with brokerage firms.

Councilmember Holden requested further information on Alatus' vision for mixed use.

Mr. Stutz believed there was such a thing as too many single family homes and too many apartments. He stated it would be important to find the right mix of diverse housing for this development to be successful in order to meet the needs of all buyers. He appreciated all of the work the Council had completed within the TRC.

Mayor Grant appreciated that Alatus was going to work to find the proper mix of housing for this project, knowing there was more than one right answer.

Councilmember Holden discussed the history of the TRC and noted the Council had reviewed the density on three separate occasions. She believed the proposed density was a maximum.

Councilmember McClung stated he would support a higher density for the project.

Mr. Stutz stated he was not focusing on density per se, but rather wanted to see the project have the right mix of housing for the community.

Ms. Kvilvang questioned if Alatus believed they could reach 1,431 units on the site.

Mr. Stutz explained the two neighborhoods (Creek and Hill) have 350 units, which allows for the balance of 1,000 units in the Town Center. He indicated there was a need for high quality high density units, which would work for the Town Center. He stated he would work to find creative ways to put the right amenities and housing in the Town Center.

Mr. Shaver commented Alatus was working to find the right mix of housing and amenities to attract both residents and corporate users to the site.

Councilmember McClung discussed the extreme success of the Centennial Lakes development. He was very interested in seeing how the water feature would become an amenity on TCAAP.

Councilmember Wicklund asked how the developers could make this property different than any other 200 home development in the metro area.

Mr. Lux explained this started with good planning and a strong development team. He indicated this property had strong access points, high traffic counts, and there was a need for restaurants.

Mr. Shaver stated entertainment and restaurant opportunities were high. He has heard there was a desire to not create two downtown areas but rather to integrate this property into existing Arden Hills. He believed that the Town Center would be a draw for the entire community which would create a connection between existing and new Arden Hills.

Further discussion ensued regarding the retail and entertainment possibilities within the Town Center.

Councilmember Holmes agreed that Town Center could be a uniting factor for the City due to the fact Arden Hills does not have a current downtown.

Councilmember McClung wanted to see trail and sidewalk connections in order for the project to also be connected to the remainder of Arden Hills. He discussed the importance of hitting the mark the first try on the amenities included in the Town Center.

Mr. Lux wanted the Town Center to be a unique space with a different environment than St. Anthony or Rosedale. This would be his challenge.

Councilmember Holden questioned how the Town Center would be addressed during the winter months.

Mr. Lux stated the Town Center environment could be enhanced during the winter months through seasonal planters, music and lighting. He believed that the seasons had to be embraced in order to continue to draw people to the area in the middle of winter.

Councilmember Holden inquired who would be responsible for the Town Center planter maintenance.

Mr. Lux anticipated that the maintenance of this would be overseen by the Town Center business owners or an HOA.

Ms. Kvilvang stated a special services district could also be established in order to assist with the maintenance of this area.

Councilmember Wicklund asked what the biggest challenge would be for Alatus in the next six months.

Mr. Stutz believed the biggest challenge would be for Alatus to get caught up on the planning efforts that have been completed to date. He stated branding was another item that would be a challenge over the coming months.

Councilmember Wicklund commented it would be nice to have Arden Hills integrated into the branding, however, he was uncertain this would sell.

Mr. Stutz indicated the branding would be tricky given the property's history. He understood it was critically important to pay homage to the property while also bringing the property forward to the present.

Councilmember McClung agreed it would be important to tie the site to the City of Arden Hills and have it incorporated into the community.

Mr. Shaver thanked the Council for this valuable feedback. He explained the branding efforts would stem from the information gathered through the market studies.

Councilmember Wicklund requested the Council be provided with the information gathered from the market studies.

Councilmember McClung asked how Alatus would work with both the JDA and the City.

Ms. Kvilvang reported Alatus was very aware that any changes to the TRC or the Master Plan would have to come before the City Council and that all other project approvals that fit within the confines of the TRC would go before the JDA.

Mr. Lux anticipated that Alatus would be holding more discussions with the City Council in order to gain feedback from the City on the vision and goals for the project throughout the planning process. He asked for comments from the Council regarding the retail center goals.

Mayor Grant questioned if the development could support a big box development.

Mr. Lux anticipated that a HyVee or Cub Foods would fit nicely into the development, but not a Super Target or Super Wal-Mart. He described the amenities that could be provided by HyVee if allowed to have up to 90,000 square feet of retail space.

Councilmember McClung believed it would be important to have an anchor to draw people to this retail site.

Further discussion ensued regarding the proper size and grocer for this project.

Councilmember Holden questioned how the grocery store would be tied to the Town Center.

Mr. Stutz believed this would hinge on how the development was laid out and connected in order to make the site walkable.

Councilmember Wicklund asked if structured parking was being considered for the Town Center. It was his opinion that structured parking would be attractive to visitors.

Mr. Shaver commented this was being considered.

Ms. Kvilvang asked if the 20 acres of land was enough to create an anchored retail space.

Mr. Shaver believed 200,000 to 250,000 square feet of space would be enough. He stated it would be important to tie this retail to the Town Center.

Councilmember Holmes understood that boutique type stores were having a hard time competing with Amazon. For this reason, she supported other big box type stores in this area.

Mr. Shaver recommended that store names be discussed further after the market studies were complete.

Ms. Kvilvang explained the City's biggest concern with this development was the retail/commercial portion of the development. She indicated the long-term success of this area was critical to the entire development.

Mr. Lux thanked the Council for their time and for the discussion held this evening. He indicated he and his team would continue working and focusing on the success of this development.

2. COUNCIL COMMENTS AND STAFF UPDATES

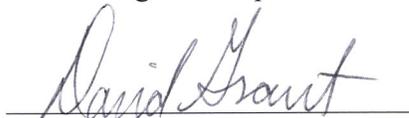
None.

ADJOURN

Mayor Grant adjourned the City Council Work Session meeting at 9:30 p.m.



Sue Iverson
Interim City Administrator



David Grant
Mayor