
VILLAGE MEMORANDUM

TO: JOHN PERRY, VILLAGE ADMINISTRATOR
FROM: STACI HULSEBERG, DIRECTOR OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT
MICHAEL MAYS, SENIOR PLANNER *MM*
DATE: DECEMBER 4, 2003
SUBJECT: STAFF RESPONSE TO SMOTER SUBDIVISION COMMENTS/QUESTION *ARK*

Recently, Planning and Development Department staff received e-mail comments from Trustee Robert Brandt and a question from Plan Commissioner Joe Przepiorka regarding the proposed Smoter subdivision to be developed by Gallagher and Henry (Attachment 1). Gallagher and Henry has submitted plans for preliminary plat of subdivision, rezoning to R-3 and annexation for the 48-acre parcel on Heritage Parkway (Attachment 2). Staff has provided the developer with our first round of comments and currently is awaiting their second submittal. Staff would like to respond to Trustee Brandt and Commissioner Przepiorka regarding the proposal. We have paraphrased or summarized their e-mails below in bold for ease of reading. The full e-mails are attached.

Question: Is it possible to design the retention area landscaping for the southwest corner of the Smoter subdivision so that a visual sightline for the Vicente monument is maintained?

Based on the preliminary landscape plan provided with the original submittal by Gallagher and Henry, all of the existing vegetation currently located at the southwest corner of the Smoter property would be removed with the construction of the proposed retention pond. However, Gallagher and Henry is proposing landscaping on the perimeter of the retention pond. With their next submittal staff will ask Gallagher and Henry to move proposed landscaping away from the south west corner to maintain appropriate visibility for the Vicente monument sign and the intersection of Westminster Drive and Heritage Parkway.

Comment: I'd like to preserve as many trees as possible in the wood area. Longer setbacks with undisturbed areas of trees. Move the development south and east of the tree area. It doesn't matter that the trees are scrub trees, trees are trees - and it will take decades for small trees to grow as large. Spread the houses out in the wooded area if houses must be built there to ensure keeping as many trees as possible. Gallagher and Henry can charge lot premiums to make up for lost profit on less dense development. I'd like to keep the tree/bush line on the east property line of Vicente and the west property line of Smoter. It may be scrub brush and unkept in places but it adds to the visual character of the area, as opposed to plain, flat land. I reviewed an overhead photo of Smoter and believe that, at a minimum, a buffer zone of trees be left along the Vicente property line. I don't know how deep - 50 feet, etc. - but without it, there is the potential of cutting right up to Vicente homeowners. That would create an uproar.

Based on the tree survey conducted by EnCap, Inc. Environmental Consultants and Planners for Gallagher and Henry and an examination of an aerial photograph of the existing Smoter property woodland, staff estimates that 990 lineal feet shared by both subdivisions has an existing significant woodland buffer. When early plans were provided to staff three years ago, we requested that Gallagher and Henry relocate the proposed park site from the center of the property to the northwest corner to preserve existing trees in response to Vicente resident concerns. In addition, the extreme northwest corner of the Smoter site will also be preserved as open space and wetland preservation. That means that of the 990 lineal feet shared by the two subdivisions with a

significant woodland buffer, 799 feet or 80% will be preserved with at least a 50 foot tree buffer (at some points along the tree line this buffer will be much larger).

Of the remaining 191 feet, 66 will be dedicated for road right-of-way, critical in staff's opinion to provide a secondary access point at the north end of both subdivisions for traffic management and safety considerations. The remaining 125 feet or 12.5% of the entire 990 foot frontage is a proposed buildable lot. As staff has mentioned in previous correspondence with Mr. Coonrod whose home directly abuts this particular lot in the Smoter property, staff is supportive of a buildable lot at this location not only because it encourages neighborhood character diversity, but more importantly, because it provides physical linkages between subdivisions, which foster better communities.

In direct response to Mr. Coonrod's concerns, staff had asked Gallagher & Henry in the September 23, 2003 staff review letter to preserve existing trees along the shared property line with Mr. Coonrod's home. Gallagher & Henry have tentatively agreed, provided that utilities are not required for the same area. Further, staff will require the developer to adhere to the Village's tree replacement guidelines for those trees that are removed in the subdivision.

Comment: The houses built by Gallagher and Henry in the other neighborhood to the west and south of us (Vicente) are much too close together. Less dense, larger lots with lot premiums, etc. would be ideal for Smoter.

Staff has done a comparison of the densities and average lot sizes for the proposed Smoter subdivision and surrounding subdivisions (see attachment 3). The proposed Smoter subdivision will have the same density as Vicente (2.3 dwelling units per acre) and will have a greater average lot size (10,694 square feet vs. 9,262 square feet). In fact this is somewhat contrary to typical land use development principals, which recommend higher density residential development closer to commercial areas (e.g. North Waterfall Glen Business Park) that provide a transitional buffer for the single-family development. The Woodridge Comprehensive Plan's Long Range Land Use Plan designates the Smoter property as Low Density Residential or one to four dwelling units per acre. The proposed Smoter subdivision is consistent with the Woodridge Comprehensive plan and would fully comply with the proposed rezoning to R-3 Residential which has a minimum lot size of 8,200 square feet.

In summary, staff has attempted to balance the concerns of nearby residents with the property owner's right to develop the area in a manner consistent with the Woodridge Comprehensive Plan and Village Code.

