

MINUTES OF A REGULAR VOTING MEETING OF THE
FAIRFIELD PLANNING COMMISSION

January 11, 2012

Scott Lepsky, Vice-Chairman, called the Regular Meeting of the Fairfield Planning Commission to order.

Members present: Jeff Holtegel, Scott Lepsky, Mark Morris, Tom Hasselbeck, Bill Woeste and Bob Myron.

Jeff Holtegel, seconded by Mark Morris, made a motion to excuse Don Hassler. Motion carried 6 – 0.

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING:

The minutes of the previous meeting, held December 14, 2011, were approved as submitted.

NEW BUSINESS:

Emerald Lake Home Elevations - M/I Homes

Tim Bachman stated Emerald Lake is a Planned Unit Development which was approved by the City in 2004. There is a P.U.D. agreement and the initial builder in the subdivision was Ryan Homes. In 2007, Ryan left the development and Fisher Homes submitted several of their elevations for approval. A 2007 P.U.D. Agreement was created allowing Fisher to market the approved elevations. In 2010, Fisher submitted a new line of home elevations. The 2007 P.U.D. agreement was revised to include the approved 2010 elevations. M/I Homes is now asking to build in the subdivision so the same process that Fisher went through in 2007 and 2010 is being followed.

There are two legal binding documents for this subdivision; the P.U.D. Agreement and the Covenants and Restrictions (prepared by Welsh). The subdivision covenants set a minimum square footage for the homes of 2,800 for a two story and 2,200 for a ranch. Ryan's P.U.D. agreement required a front façade of brick, stone, dryvit or similar material. The 2010 Fisher line included a product on the front elevation that was not vinyl or masonry. It is was cementious product that can be formed into siding, shakes, panels, etc. Fisher received approval to use this product on their homes. With regard to the sides and rear of the homes, there was still the requirement that the first floor had to remain a masonry product wrap (brick wrap). Vinyl was permitted on both the sides and rear of second story elevations. M/I is proposing changes just as Fisher did. With a few exceptions, their plans also have the brick first floor wrap as well as using a cementious product on the front façade.

Planning Commission's role is to consider the building materials, quality of material, architecture, size of homes and maintaining the home values in the subdivision. M/I Homes met with staff in late November and were told of this review process. They supplied the elevations which were put on the City's website for the homeowners and Commission to review.

Planning Commission Meeting Minutes

Mr. Dave Welsh, developer of Emerald Lake, stated Fisher is still marketing homes but have closed their model. In order to make the subdivision viable, a builder needs to market the development. Because it is a Planned Unit Development, plans need to be approved by the Planning Commission. He really is not changing anything other than the builder and type of home they propose. The restrictive Covenants that were approved for Fisher will continue to be what is offered by M/I Homes. Mr. Welsh sold three lots last year, nine the year before. The carry cost of a project such as this is enormous. Welsh Development was worked very hard to keep Emerald Lake looking in excellent shape at all times. A lot of people have attended this evening because they are upset about the value of their homes. Anyone who bought a home from 2000 to 2009 knows their house is not worth what they paid for it. Mr. Welsh believes this development however has maintained or held its value better than most because of location, uniqueness of the property and the fact that it is well maintained. They are looking to replace one builder with another and keep the requirements the same.

Mr. Mat Walker, M/I Homes, Vice President of Land Acquisition in the Cincinnati area, stated that like Fisher, their plans do not exactly match the original P.U.D. as it was designed. It was difficult to get pictures of the homes they propose as the Emerald Lake homes will be of a higher quality than what they currently offer in the Cincinnati market. The starting price will be the same as Fisher's. Options usually add \$50,000 - \$100,000. With options, the average price would be \$340,000 (base price is \$280,000).

An aerial of the subdivision was shown. Section 4 remains to be developed. Two slides of Fisher homes were shown depicting the cementitious siding used on the second story of the front elevation. Slides of M/I's homes were then shown (areas highlighted in yellow will be cementitious siding, areas in blue, cementitious shakes). Mr. Walker stated a few of the homes will receive bump outs, morning rooms, bays or bonus rooms to comply with the square footage requirement. They are also staying with Fisher's approval of brick/stone on the front, brick first floor wrap and any siding on the front would be a cement fiber board. Vinyl will be used on the side and rear of the homes. Mr. Bachman added M/I has requested that the exterior of the fireplaces be approved with siding, not brick. Mr. Walker replied brick is more expensive in that the basement foundation has to be poured with the bump out of the fireplace in order to support the brick. Emerald Lake has both siding and brick fireplace exteriors. Mr. Walker also pointed out on the slides that some of the roofs do not meet the minimum roof pitch as specified in the Covenants and Restrictions (hip roofs). Pictures of similar homes proposed were given to the Commission to review. The homes had two car front entry garages which will be side entry in Emerald Lake. If a buyer wants a front entry garage, the plans will be submitted to the Commission for approval. Six plans with multiple elevations will be offered (Ainsley, Cheswicke, Clayton, Ryder, Watson and Wellesley).

On the Clayton ranch, a bonus room was added in order to meet the minimum square footage requirement. Square footage is based on living space. This house also has a vertical board bead and baton (salmon highlighted color) which will also be a cementitious material.

Discussion occurred regarding the rear elevation of the Watson. Mr. Scott Frinfrock, architect for M/I explained the house has three levels and the break in the brick on the rear of the house is the line of the floor for the master bedroom. Mr. Bachman pointed out it does not meet the first floor brick wrap requirement.

Discussion was also held regarding the product used on the sides of the front off-sets. Mr. Frinfrock stated it depends on the design of the house and what structurally is under it. Some of the sides can be bricked, others will have the cementitious siding.

The last slide shown was an overview of the subdivision showing the homes that have front entry garages.

Mr. Woeste asked about the basic cost of the various homes and was informed the Cheswicke would start at \$285,000. The \$42,000 option example used earlier would cover items such as bronze knobs on the plumbing fixtures, upgraded cabinets, etc. Options affecting the exterior would be morning rooms, bonus rooms and bump out on the back. Mr. Lepsky stated three of the homes that will be marketed in Emerald Lake are also available in the Township for a much lower cost. He asked what the differences were to justify the price increase for the Emerald Lake home. Mr. Walker replied vinyl siding is permitted on the front second floor, bumps have been added to several of the Emerald Lake plans to meet square footage, lot prices are different, side entry garage requirement and the brick being lower to grade.

Mr. Hasselbeck asked if M/I still offers the Showcase line of homes. Mr. Walker stated not in the Cincinnati area. Emerald Lake homes will be upgraded from their Classic Select line and will have 9' ceilings on the first floor.

Mr. Joe Corrado, 5824 Emerald Lake Drive, suggested "premium siding" as referenced in the covenants be defined. The Ryan Homes have a 6" vinyl siding, Fisher used 4". Excluding Phase 4, there are 21 lots remaining. Most of these will difficult to build on due to elevation changes, drainage, etc. Regarding the Watson "B", Mr. Corrado felt there was too much siding on the front elevation. The ranch plan, Clayton, has to have a second story bonus room added in order to meet the square footage. The covenants define square footage measured from outside wall to outside wall. Mr. Corrado said most of the homes outside of The Reserves have siding on the exterior of the fireplace. The brick on the Watson "A" also needs to have a full wrap. A minimum of 8" should be set for the cementitious siding and all the windows should have grids. Mr. Walker replied it is their intention to have grids on all the front windows. The side and rear windows will not have them.

Mr. Bert Huffer, 5973 Emerald Lake Drive, forwarded a letter to the Commission with concerns he has with the development. The homes in the development have already decreased by 23%. Part of the problem stems from allowing Fisher to reduce the amount of brick on the front of their homes. To reduce brick any further, would not be acceptable. Mr. Huffer stated the agreement with Fisher stipulated that all future homes would have 3 car garages. The number of two car garages is addressed in the covenants. M/I is proposing two car garages. The way the covenants are currently structured, the owners have no say regarding changes. The Planning Commission is the only protections the owners in Emerald Lake have.

Mr. Huffer reminded the Commission of the number of residents that objected to the extensive amount of siding Fisher proposed in 2010 and 2011.

Mr. Bachman stated the Commission did not require Fisher to have 3 car garages. There was much discussion regarding side entry, front entry and percentages within the different phases of the subdivision so that one phase didn't have a large amount of front entry garages.

Mr. Bachman agreed with Mr. Carrado that premium siding should be defined. The Watson "B" has too much siding and the Clayton ranch is not really a ranch if it has a second story. Mr. Bachman also did not understand why the Watson could not have a full brick wrap. The grids were a new item brought up at this meeting and Mr. Bachman agreed they should be installed on the front.

On the Watson plan, Mr. Hasselbeck stated the elevation without a gable over the garage (Watson A) is too plain. He recommended that a gable be over the garage and a full brick wrap 8' – 9' high around the entire house be required. Mr. Walker agreed not to offer the Watson "A" in Emerald Lake. Mr. Frinfrock also agreed to the full brick wrap. It was also suggested that the Clayton (2 story ranch) be pulled from the line of homes. Mr. Frinfrock stated the second story bonus room is also an option on the Cheswicke. It is a very much desired option. Mr. Hasselbeck pointed out the back wall could be moved out in order to make the square footage. Mr. Walker stated they would pull it from the line. If they were to sell one, they would come before the Commission for approval.

The interior of the homes was discussed. Mr. Walker said the base price finishes are pretty plain. Most customers will spend between \$50,000 and \$100,000 in upgrades.

Mr. Hasselbeck pointed out home values across the country have decreased. Thirty to thirty-six percent of the monthly market closings is some type of distressed property (short sale, bank owned properties or foreclosures). Most of these people are not purchasing another home. Finding buyers in the Emerald Lake price range is really difficult right now. If another builder is not brought in, values could go down.

Mr. Bachman recommended the Commission require side entry garages which M/I has agreed to do. If they have a front entry, it will be submitted to the Commission for approval. All of the first floor will be brick. Mr. Hasselbeck suggested brick be 8' – 9' high measured from the primary front door level or grade. Mr. Bachman stated the Commission also needs to address the exterior of the fireplace. The Clayton ranch will be removed from the line as well as the Watson A. The front windows will all receive grids. Premium siding needs to be defined. Mr. Frinfrock informed the Commission 5" and 7" cementious siding is available. Mr. Walker stated their vinyl siding is typically 4".

Jeff Holtegel, seconded by Bill Woeste, made a motion to approve the home plans submitted with the exception of the Clayton and Watson "A" with the following condition:

1. All garages will be side entry. Front entry will require Planning Commission approval.
2. First floor masonry wrap will be measured from the front door threshold up 8' – 9'.
3. Grids on the front windows.
4. Cementious siding on the front façade will be 5" – 7".

5. Side and rear vinyl siding will be a minimum of 5”.

Mr. Morris asked if the number of front entry garages set for Fisher was being eliminated. Mr. Bachman replied it still is in effect. A new builder in the subdivision should make the garages side entry unless there is a hardship.

Mr. Bryan Saleeba, 6251 Casey Court, asked if the Commission would require the exterior fireplace to be brick. Mr. Hasselbeck explained the basement foundation would have to be adjusted for the brick. Mr. Walker informed the Commission the material for the fireplace would be cementitious siding still making the entire first floor a cementitious product.

6. The motion was amended and seconded that the fireplace exterior would be cementitious siding.

Carol Monohan 4244 Waterfront Court, asked if M/I would be building a model home and was told no. A spec home will be built and staffed on the weekends.

Motion passed unanimously.

Conditional Use Application – Night Club – 125 Cincinnati Mills Drive

Jeff Holtegel, seconded by Bill Woeste, made a motion to remove this item from the table. Motion carried 6 – 0. Mr. Bachman stated the applicant is no longer interested in this location. There is however another interested party.

Motion carried 6 – 0.

Jeff Holtegel, seconded by Tom Hasselbeck, made a motion to remove the item from the agenda. Motion carried 6 – 0.

Election of Officers:

Chairman – Jeff Holtegel, seconded by Bill Woeste, nominated Scott Lepsky as Chairman. Jeff Holtegel, seconded by Bob Myron made a motion to close the nomination and elect by acclamation. Motion carried unanimously.

Vice-Chairman – Jeff Holtegel, seconded by Tom Hasselbeck, made a motion to nominate Don Hassler as Vice-Chairman. Jeff Holtegel, seconded by Bill Woeste, made a motion to close the nomination and elect by acclamation. Motion carried unanimously.

Secretary – Scott Lepsky, seconded by Jeff Holtegel, made a motion to nominate Peggy Flaig as Secretary. Bob Myron, seconded by Bill Woeste, made a motion to close the nomination and elect by acclamation. Motion carried unanimously.

Board of Zoning Appeals Representative – Jeff Holtegel, seconded by Tom Hasselbeck, made a motion to reappoint Scott Lepsky to the Board of Zoning Appeals. Tom Hasselbeck, seconded by Bob Myron, made a motion to close the nominations and elect by acclamation. Motion carried unanimously.

Design Review Committee Representative – Jeff Holtegel, seconded by Bill Woeste, made a motion to reappoint Tom Hasselbeck to the Design Review Committee. Mark Morris, seconded by Bob Myron, made a motion to close the nomination and elect by acclamation. Motion carried unanimously.

Community Reinvestment Housing Council Representative – Bill Woeste, seconded by Scott Lepsky, made a motion to nominate Jeff Holtegel. Mark Morris, seconded by Bill Woeste, made a motion to close the nomination and elect by acclamation. Motion carried unanimously.

OKI Representative – Jeff Holtegel, seconded by Tom Hasselbeck, made a motion to nominate Tim Bachman with Mark Morris acting as back-up. Jeff Holtegel, seconded by Bob Myron, made a motion to close the nomination and elect by acclamation. Motion carried unanimously.

REPORTS AND STUDIES

Jeff Holtegel stated Heritage Glen is changing ownership. There are also 2 new businesses to Fairfield. O’Gara and Safety Kleen will each employ about 25. Council also approved the contract for construction of the Huffman Park on John Gray Road.

Being no further business, the meeting adjourned.

Scott Lepsky, Vice-Chairman

Peggy Flaig, Clerk