DEVELOPMENT REVIEW COMMITTEE (DRC)

Following are the minutes from the City of Las Cruces Development Review Committee
Meeting held Wednesday, January 9, 2019 at 9:00 a.m. at City Hall, Room 1158, 700
North Main Street, Las Cruces, New Mexico.

DRC PRESENT: Katherine Harrison-Rogers, Planner Senior
Mark Dubbin, Fire Department
Rocio Nasir, Engineering Services-CD
Meei Montoya, Utilities
Andrew Wray, MVMPO
Soo Gyu Lee, Streets and Traffic
Cathy Mathews, Landscape Architect

STAFF PRESENT: Sara Gonzales, Community Development
Becky Baum, Recording Secretary, RC Creations, LLC

OTHER PRESENT: John Moscato
Chad Sells

I. CALL TO ORDER (9:00)

H-Rogers: Good morning everybody. Welcome to DRC. It’s approximately 9:00, January 9th.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES - November 7, 2018

H-Rogers: First item of business is approval of minutes from November 7, 2018. Were there any modifications?

Wray: Yes. I am not listed as present. I made a couple of motions that day so I know I was there.

H-Rogers: All righty. Any other modifications to those minutes? No. With that, do we have a motion to approve?

Wray: So moved.

H-Rogers: Is there a second?

Gonzales: Second.

H-Rogers: All right. All those in favor.

MOTION Passes UNANIMOUSLY.
H-Rogers: Any opposed? All right, so those minutes pass with the corrections as mentioned by Mr. Wray.

III. OLD BUSINESS - NONE

H-Rogers: We don't have any old business today.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

1. Case 18ZO3000015: Metro Park Village Phase 3 Final Site Plan
   - A request for approval of a final site plan known as Metro Park Village Phase 3 located within the Metro Verde East Planned Unit Development (PUD).
   - The proposed final site plan proposes 185 single-family residential lots and 3-tracts that will be dedicated to the City of Las Cruces and utilized for drainage and a 1.07 acre park. The final site plan shall be required to follow all requirements of the Metro Verde PUD Concept Plan Amendment #5.
   - The proposed subdivision encompasses 37.23 +/- acres, is zoned PUD (Planned Unit Development) and is located on the southeast corner of Peachtree Hills Road and Sonoma Ranch Blvd.
   - Interior roadways follow either a 38-foot wide or 42-foot wide cross section as reflected in Amendment #5.
   - Submitted by Sierra Norte Development Inc., property owners

H-Rogers: We do have one case for new business. Sara Gonzales with Community Development can go ahead and introduce that for us.

Gonzales: So this is a proposed final site plan known as Metro Park Village Phase 3 and this property is located on the southeast corner of Sonoma Ranch Boulevard and Peachtree Hills, north of Sirocco Avenue. It approximately encompasses 37 acres in size. It is zoned PUD. This was a portion that was added to the Concept Plan Amendment #5 as part of a project done that was acquired by the State and is now being rezoned and going through the process through City Council.

   The property entails 183 residential lots. There are three tracts to be designated; two of them will be for drainage, and then there is a two-acre park that is located in the southeast corner of the property for a park. There are multiple cross sections located throughout the subdivision including basically a 38-foot wide, 42-foot wide, and a 50-foot cross section. It will also include the development of Peachtree Hills Road that is located to the north. And then Sonoma Ranch is being built out with the (inaudible) for this project.

H-Rogers: All right. Thank you Sara. It should be noted that like as Sara said, this particular project is following the under the guise of the new Amendment,
so it's a little bit of a test project for everyone. And of course would need to be conditioned upon final approval at City Council. So with that I'll go around the room and see if staff has any comments or concerns. I'm going to start with Traffic.

Lee: I would like to pass on because I don't know exactly what's going on.

H-Rogers: Okay.

Lee: I'm here just for the support.

H-Rogers: Okay, Parks.

Mathews: No. I don't think so. We've talked a little bit about the park and of course it'll be designed as we go through construction and we've already gone over all the street cross sections as far as I know so I think we're good.

H-Rogers: Okay. And Engineering.

Nasir: I'm still a little troubled by the block length in the middle. The one that is like 1,000 feet or something like that. The one right in the middle.

Mathews: Lotus.

Nasir: This one right here. And actually this is the newer cross-section right here. So they did put what we asked for which was the street that comes onto Sonoma Ranch and I believe from the design of Sonoma Ranch this entrance onto Sonoma Ranch onto the subdivision will be a right-in, right-out if I'm not mistaken. If the design says that there is a median there, I don't know, I haven't seen the design for Sonoma Ranch so I'm not aware of it.

Sells: There is a median.

Nasir: There is a median, right.

Lee: There's an existing median.

Nasir: This will be design and built.

Sells: Be built.

Lee: Will be. Okay.

Nasir: It says the design for the VAD right, for Sonoma Ranch. Okay. So that entrance will be a right-in, right-out. As I said I'm a little uncomfortable
with the block length of the middle of the block which surpasses what we have been discussing what's moving forward to City Council.

H-Rogers: There have been a lot of discussions about the block length and how it's defined. I believe during negotiations with the developer back and forth there have been some discussions about how that needs to be defined, whether or not it's the road segment at the intersection or if it's measured from the back of the lots. My understanding is based on all of the negotiations this was suitable for this particular project, but moving forward we may need to provide some clarification in terms of what that means, but I'm going to let everybody else continue and we'll discuss that a little bit more. Were there any other topics?

Nasir: No, that was it.

H-Rogers: Okay. I'm going to move on, Fire.

Dubbin: Okay. I was also concerned with the block that Engineering mentioned. I think at first I didn't realize that we're under the new proposed PUD, the one that's under review right now. The one that's up for Council. But when I reviewed the block length that's in the proposed Amendment there are conditions for a block length longer than 750; pedestrian access near the midblock, access to major streets, traffic calming elements, no cul-de-sacs, and then the 36-foot back-of-curb, back-of-curb around that block, and then the parking restricted which is at intersections of all the streets. So I'd kind of like to know why that isn't in place. That's my question for the developer.

H-Rogers: I'm going to go ahead and continue around the room with staff and then I'll go ahead and let the developer respond to some of these concerns. Utilities.

Montoya: We don't have concerns at this time.

H-Rogers: Okay. And MPO.

Wray: We do not have any comments.

H-Rogers: All right. With that I'll go ahead and let the developer respond to any of the comments and then perhaps we can just have discussion amongst staff and the developer. Mr. Moscato or Chad.

Moscato: Well as you mentioned Katherine we had extensive discussions as to how to define block length. This was presented as a sample, a test case to analyze how we would calculate block length and it was decided in those discussions that block length would be determined by the intersection
adjoining the block. So that you wouldn't have to cut through that, what you call a long block, but by virtue of this intersection coming up here, this intersection coming up here, those would determine the block length. It was also discussed that the possibility of putting a trail through there, pedestrian connection, and it seemed to raise more issues than it solved. As I've mentioned in discussions with staff, if we had been told that block length was going to be calculated in a different way than what we were told, we wouldn't have been so willing to agree to the block length provisions that have gone forward to P&Z and now pending before Council. We did make many adjustments to entrances and other roadways to bring this in compliance with what we believed the block length provisions were as they were discussed in many meetings.

Dubbin: I don't think I was present in some of those meetings. And I have to say that I've explored the issue of block length at length since this has been submitted because initially I didn't really see it as an issue, I thought it was kind of self evident, that the block was the block, and would never consider that a road near that block would be used to measure it. We've since explored the APA, the American Planning Association definition that measures the block length at the rear lot line and that seems to be an industry standard. I've got no issue with that. I don't want to reinvent the wheel but it wasn't our intention to have narrow streets along a block that's almost 1,000 feet long.

Moscato: Well but the access to any houses along here would come from here and here, so effectively it's half this length because of the cut-through on either side.

Dubbin: I agree that that's helpful, but it's not the block length.

Moscato: But functionally there's no difference in terms of access, in terms of response time, you get to the same point regardless of whether there's a street through there or not.

Dubbin: I think it doesn't meet the connectivity goal that we're trying to achieve with the narrow roads.

Sells: This is the picture we used to come up with those conditions. We sat with this picture and came up with those conditions.

Moscato: In fact we've gone beyond the discussions that we had based on this layout. We've already gone beyond what we believe were the parameters set by those discussions.

Dubbin: Well and I think that Fire should've been involved in some of the discussions earlier because it wasn't our intention to have the narrow
roads. I mean by that explanation that means that the block length would have to be almost 2,000 feet before the 36-foot back-of-curb to back-of-curb would be a requirement and that's not anybody's intent. Because then you could stagger two short blocks and a long block, and two short blocks and a long block indefinitely and still have the 32-foot roadways along a very long block.

Moscato: Right. But we're not talking (inaudible) here, we're talking this plan. And this isn't 2,000 feet.

Dubbin: No. It's not, but it is greater than 750 feet by any measure.

Sells: 590 and 381, but that's the way that the block lengths were discussed when we talked about that. That was the discussion.

Dubbin: It was not a discussion that I was involved in and I can't accept measuring block by the block that's nearby. I mean the block is the block. And I think if we ... you know we can go back and forth on this. I can't support it the way it's submitted right now. I maybe suggest that we postpone it until next DRC and we can have this discussion with Fire involved but right now I can't support it, not with this block and the narrow roads. By the conditions as I understand them the PUD, it should be a 36-foot back-of-curb, back-of-curb around it and right now it's 32-feet.

Lee: Can I add my opinion about that?

H-Rogers: Sure. Go ahead Soo.

Lee: If we're going to move forward based on the proposed layout I believe with better, the traffic's going to be required to review more specifically for the traffic calming because it's too long and then we expect that we're going to have some safety issue, specifically the speeding issue onto these two, the long stretch. Instead of having a shorter block punched through like this or if they want to go by this then I have to look at how it's going to be. How are we going to mitigate any speeding issue further?

H-Rogers: Okay.

Lee: And then also I don't, I just joined this meeting, I didn't review this one, so based on some of the information I got from, they had turned out and there's a little bit of concern about the safety at each intersection, specifically for the clear sight triangle shown on here which I don't know whether that's the official document you submitted. It is? Okay then I have a little bit of concern about the safety, clear sight triangle to access from your lot to Peachtree Hills. There's another street on the south side,
you have a 30 by 30 so I cannot remember, I cannot identify the street name.

Mathews: Sirocco.

Lee: So that might be okay but this one probably the Peachtree Hills, that one probably we have to look at one more time.

Sells: What's your concern Soo?

Lee: Concern is I cannot see the property line, it's 30 by 50, but because this is new development so we have to look at the ISD and then based on the ISD probably this will not meet the ISD because of AASHTO and because of the Traffic Code, we have to meet the ISD too. So we have to look at both the ISD and then the clear sight triangle per our City Code.

Sells: Do you see that the roadway is another approximately 20 feet away from the clear sight triangle? Peachtree Hills Road, the traffic lane is about 20 feet away.

H-Rogers: The Peachtree has that, there's a linear park and a trail system that's quite significant on that side, so there's I don't know, how many feet wide is that Chad?

Mathews: This is facing east.

Nasir: This is the intersection, east, Peachtree.

H-Rogers: So along Peachtree there's an extra big parkway essentially.

Gonzales: You'd have a five-foot parkway, you have a 15-foot concrete channel, and then you have the multiuse path as well as two landscaped median areas as well.

H-Rogers: Before you actually hit the intersection.

Lee: It's going to help but I think I still better double check to make sure we meet both ISD and the clear site triangle per City Code.

Nasir: On the City Code side ...

Lee: I believe this was based on the City Code.

Nasir: Yes.

Lee: But this one doesn't show any ISD, the clear sight triangle per ISD.
Nasir: So this is a collector, Peachtree is a collector.

Sells: Minor arterial.

Nasir: Minor arterial. Okay so then that's 50, 50 by 30. So they have met our Code.

Lee: Right. That's what I'm saying. This is per our City Code but also this one should meet the ISD per the AASHTO ISD. And the same thing for this corner which is the Sonoma Ranch and the Peachtree clear sight triangle show the 40 by 40, I believe that's not the (inaudible). Because Sonoma Ranch is the principle arterial.

Nasir: Yes, that's what it is, arterial, and arterial is 40 by 40.

Lee: 40 by 40, but same thing, there no ISD on here. So this, the lot 43 should be, we have to restrict and some of the specifically the northwest corner we have to restrict some of the structure. If anybody wants to put in any structure or any landscaping on that area we have to limit that on this corner.

H-Rogers: Just a clarification. Soo are these items that can be dealt with at final plat and during construction drawings? Or do you believe that there will be significant design changes to this preliminary plat, this final section?

Lee: Preliminary plat is going to be fine but I want to put in a note.

H-Rogers: Okay.

Lee: Because dealing with so many issues right after we approve the preliminary plat without the restriction, specifically ISD. The reason I'm concerned about ISD is almost every new subdivision after we approve based on the ISD per the City Code, we have to deal with later about the safety issue. So one of the good examples is on Sonoma Ranch, along Sonoma Ranch there are so many subdivisions we built based on the City clear sight triangle requirement, but it doesn't meet the ISD so we end up change the type of the traffic control type, so instead of two way to the all way, sometimes we have to change our requirements so it's too much impact.

H-Rogers: Okay.

Lee: So we may going to restrict, because, for example if not addressed right now and the lot 43, anybody who's going to buy the lot 43 which is the
very northwest corner or anybody who's going to buy the lot 28, 27, and then 29, 30, most likely the three lot will be impacted by ISD.

H-Rogers: So a question for you Soo on the final plat, is it something that we need to indicate on the plat that it's an area where vegetation can't exceed a certain height or walls can't exceed a certain height. Are those the types of conditions that could be added during the final plat stage if you work with Chad, the engineer to make sure those?

Lee: Sure we can do that. I don’t hold this, but I wanted to express our concern and how much the things we’re going to deal with later if they’re not addressed right now.

H-Rogers: Were there any other concerns or comments Soo?

Lee: So, that's it.

H-Rogers: I do want to clarify something about the block length. I know that Mark had stated that Fire really hadn't been involved in the discussions but we actually included Fire in those throughout the process. I think there may have been a miscommunication however. But I did want to clarify that, that they were not excluded. With that, did you have any other follow-up comments or concerns John?

Moscato: No, other than just to reiterate that we've abided by all the block length considerations that were discussed for months and brought before Planning and Zoning Commission and were approved.

H-Rogers: One of the comments that I would like to make is that DRC is the body that can make determinations about definitions such as block lengths. As this was a test case and clearly showed that people either didn't fully understand what that meant or where we were going with that or some of the discussions that had been had, this body can basically develop a definition. So that's something that although not put on the agenda today, is something that could be added in the future. We could make a determination about this particular subdivision today, but in terms of the overall definition of a block length that's something that this body can do in the future. Specific to this development, decisions can be made about this. But moving forward for a long-term definition that would have to be dealt with in a different meeting. With that I would like to take any sort of motion for approval or otherwise.

Dubbin: Madam Chair.

H-Rogers: Yes.
Dubbin: I think because the block length question does pertain to the road widths and some of the other issues that are interrelated and because the developer is not in agreement with block length the way I understand block length to be, I would like to postpone a vote on this until we can resolve which can hopefully be next week. So my motion would be to postpone this until next Wednesday's DRC meeting.

H-Rogers: Sure. So there's a motion on the table. Is there a second?

Nasir: Second.

H-Rogers: All those in favor.

MOTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY.

H-Rogers: Any of those opposed? So it looks like it passes. That as the majority. With that, Sara we'd like to see this get scheduled for next week, it would be the next DRC. We will handle it that way.

Gonzales: Madam Chair. Question as far as the subdivision going forward to the Planning and Zoning Commission. DRC minutes would not be provided to the Commission without a recommendation. Do we move forward with it or do we postpone that at that meeting?

H-Rogers: I don't think that's a question to resolve here. That's something that we talk about after the meeting.

Gonzales: Okay.

Nasir: Madam Chair. I have a question.

H-Rogers: Yes.

Nasir: For the definition, is that something that we will bring next Wednesday as one of the items, as item number one, and then we will discuss this one.

H-Rogers: I think that's an appropriate way to move forward is to have that. If there are any other interpretations, I'm looking at Soo, which actually doesn't relate to this development that need to be brought forward at that time, it's a good opportunity to do that. So with that are there any other items of discussion today?

Lee: I have a little bit of concern about the new section proposed on Sawyer because this is the first time I've seen this one and then I see some of the section approved of Peachtree Hill. The section shows, it's divided the roadway, one side has two lanes, one is the dedicated ...
H-Rogers: So I’m going to interrupt you right now. That's an item of discussion that we'll be having at another date. We can't really discuss it today.

Lee: Okay.

H-Rogers: Because it's considered Amendment #6 which is a separate project and we didn't list it on this agenda since that's for another time.

Lee: Got it.

H-Rogers: Are there any other items of concern? No.

V. ADJOURNMENT (9:26)

H-Rogers: With that do I have a motion for adjournment?

Wray: So moved.

Montoya: Second.

H-Rogers: With that we are adjourned.

Chairperson