

P&Z Report – October 25, 2022

The Honorable Danny Beyer
and Members of the City Council
Dallas Center, IA 50063

Dear Mr. Mayor and Members of the Council:

The Dallas Center Planning & Zoning Commission met Tuesday, October 25, 2022 at 6:30 P.M. at Memorial Hall. Commission members Abby Anderson, Perry Gruver, Linda Licht, Jim Pohl, Thomas Strutt and Matt Ostanik were present. Lauri Hart was absent. City Attorney Ralph Brown and City Engineer Bob Veenstra also were present and participated.

Public Communications

Bob Haxton and Julie Becker stated concerns about parkland in new developments.

The Neighborhood Plat 2 – Alternative Plan for Park Land Dedication

K&A Investment previously submitted an alternative plan for park land dedication. The Commission reviewed their plan at our July meeting and recommended approval. City Council then approved it. K&A has now said they no longer wish to follow the previous plan, and they have submitted a new plan instead.

The primary difference is that the previous proposal was approved with expectation of payment at the time of approval, but the new plan proposes to spread payments out over many years and tie them to approval of the individual final plats within the larger development.

The Commission discussed at our September meeting and deferred the topic to October to allow time to research how other cities handle this. I then spoke with six other metro cities (Waukee, Grimes, Urbandale, Clive, Ankeny and Bondurant).

- Every city I talked with allows developers to divide the payment across multiple phases/final plats. This seems to be standard.
- Waukee and Clive both advised that in their cities, if they agree to a payment instead of land, they would expect the developer to pay \$35-45,000 per acre.
- Grimes believes receiving park land is more valuable than any payment, and they only rarely make exceptions to this. If they do make an exception, they would require a minimum of \$40,000 per acre to be willing to consider it.

- Bondurant has an ordinance that requires an appraiser (mutually selected by the developer and the city) to determine the value of the park land. If a development is split into multiple phases or plats, then the appraisal process is repeated for each phase/plat.

My personal opinion after hearing this feedback is that the proposed payment Dallas Center would receive in lieu of parkland for The Neighborhood is too low. We are further out from the metro with less development activity so our land values are lower, but the payment that has been proposed is 40% of what our neighboring cities would require. Yet our city's cost to buy playground equipment or plant trees or pave a parking lot or sidewalk in a park are not 40% of what it costs other cities. Accepting such a low dollar amount ultimately decreases the benefit that our citizens receive.

The Commission discussed possibly implementing an appraisal process similar to Bondurant. Bob Veenstra also suggested that we could require a minimum dollar amount per acre or a multiplier times the appraised value to be willing to accept payment instead of parkland dedication.

The developer's representative, Shane Devick, stated that he believes his client is willing to take whatever approach the City prefers. Shane stated they are neutral on whether to make a payment to the City or dedicate additional land in the development, and they do not have a strong preference either way. If the requested price per acre becomes too high, then they would likely choose to dedicate additional land instead.

No action was taken. After extensive discussion, the Commission agreed that more time is needed to continue discussion on this topic. Perry Gruver moved and Thomas Strutt seconded to defer this agenda item to our next meeting. The motion to defer passed 6-0.

Shadow Conduit

The Commission discussed the shadow conduit requirement for new developments. Bob Veenstra explained the difference between single duct vs. multi duct conduit. No action was taken. Abby Anderson moved and Thomas Strutt seconded to defer this topic until our next meeting. The motion to defer passed 6-0.

E-1 Setbacks

The Commission continued discussion about front yard setbacks when using E-1 rural estate zoning for new single-family housing that is located directly on Highway 44 on the west side of town and for E-1 zoning adjacent to highways in general. This discussion is a continuation of previous discussion at our April 2022 meeting.

Perry Gruver shared a new sketch he created showing setbacks in the E-1 district. In Perry's sketch, if an E-1 property on a highway had a 140' front yard setback, there still would be 12,000 square feet of buildable area on the lot. The 140' setback is also similar to the average setback on all highway facing properties on Highway 44 west of the main part of town.

After discussion, Thomas Strutt moved and Abby Anderson seconded to recommend the proposed ordinance to City Council stating that the E-1 district have a 140' front yard setback when located on a highway (and to strike the word "state" from the ordinance so that the requirement is for all highways, not only state highways). The motion passed 6-0.

Respectfully submitted,
Matt Ostanik
P&Z Commission Chair