



September 28, 2011

Memo

To: North Liberty Planning Commission

From: Dean Wheatley, Planning Director

Subject: Request of Midwest Home Builders to approve a rezoning from RS-4 (Single-family) to RM-8 (Multi-family) for property generally located east of Dubuque Street and north of West Penn Street, at the end of Copeland's Meadow subdivision and development.

(Legal: Lengthy, north portion of Lot 2, Prizler's First Addition)

Your North Liberty city staff has reviewed the subject submission, and offer comments presented in this memo. The staff review team includes the following personnel:

Ryan Heiar, City Administrator

Tracey Mulcahey, Assistant City Administrator

Tom Palmer, City Building Official

Scott Peterson, City Attorney

Kevin Trom, City Engineer

Dean Wheatley, Planning Director

Background and Statistics

This request is to rezone an area currently zoned RS-4 to RM-8. A Good Neighbor meeting was held on July 27 to allow any interested party an opportunity to comment on this rezoning prior to submission. Two adjacent property owners attended and asked questions but neither objected to or supported the project as shown on a concept plan.



The developer is proposing a mix of two 4-plex townhomes and three duplexes on the concept plan submitted.

The property is shown as "residential" on the Land Use Plan, and so the request is consistent with that policy. This site was discussed at the September 2010 Planning

Commission meeting where a different developer proposing a concept with 20 units in two buildings and

access across the front of the lot to Penn Street was recommended for denial. City Council later acted to deny that request. At the time of that denial the owner was encouraged to provide access through either Copeland Lane or Savannah Village rather than Penn Street, and to reduce the site density. This proposal does show access from Copeland Lane and the requested RM-8 zoning is less dense (will support fewer units) than the previous RM-12 request. Specifically, this proposal includes 3 duplexes and 2 4-plexes (14 total units) rather than the extremely dense 20-unit proposal from last year.

In addition to the map, zoning decisions should be based on policy goals found in the Comprehensive Plan. While there are many such goals that might apply to some degree to this case, the most appropriate are probably the following:

2.1.1 Develop and implement a cohesive, efficient land use pattern that ensures compatibility, functional relationships, and complementary adjacent activities among land uses.

2.1.3 Ensure land use allocations are balanced with economic market demands and service availability.

2.1.4 Establish and maintain an advantageous property tax situation and pursue a strengthened and sound tax base through a diversification of land uses, including commercial and industrial development, as well as a variety of residential options.

2.1.10 To the extent possible, encourage the development of a variety of dwelling unit types, styles and sizes and balanced housing stock to satisfy the needs, desires, and income levels of all people and household sizes.

And finally, Commission and Council typically base decisions on extensive local knowledge of public opinion, precedents set, and specific site information.

Subdivision Ordinance Provisions Affecting This Development

The proposal is part of an older subdivision, and storm water management features will need to be developed on-site.

Zoning Ordinance Provisions Affecting This Development

The RM-8 district includes the following requirements related to this site:

1. Minimum 5,000 square feet of lot per unit.
2. Minimum 25% masonry on front building elevations.
3. Newer requirements for driveway pavement thickness have been imposed.
4. Yards: 45 front, 35 rear, 20 each side.

Staff Comments Regarding the Proposed Development Layout

Storm water impacts. Storm water from this site will need to be managed on-site, which may reduce the number of units possible.

Street/Traffic impacts. Copland Lane is a narrow private street and extending it would not usually be recommended; however, there are very few options in this case and our focus will be to ensure the best possible turn-around accommodations.

Land use impacts and adjacent properties.

Development to the west, north and south is either existing or approved multi-family. Development to the south along West Penn Street is single-family residential. Impacts from this proposal are expected to be minimal because the developer has wisely planned duplexes along the south side of the parcel to blend better with the existing and planned single-family residential than larger units might.

Land use and zoning recommendation. In rezoning considerations, *suitability* and *compatibility* are key issues in addition to land use policy. In this case, the site is physically suitable for multi-family development. It is compatible with land uses existing and proposed on 3 sides, and it is impractical to believe the site could be developed for any other use.

In summary, the requested zoning and concept plan are a good fit for the location, and the concept plan is consistent with surrounding multi-family development. Staff recommends approval of the request with the following conditions:

1. That the developer/owners agree in a written document addressed to the city that development on the site will be generally consistent with and no denser than the concept plan.

Note: Access for this development is critical, and so proof of an access agreement with the Copeland Meadows owners is required prior to final City Council action on this request.

