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Multifamily unit planned development moves forward

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Bethel Place conceptual site plan
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WEATHERFORD — A 200-unit multifamily planned development is moving forward following Weatherford city council approval of a developer’s agreement, zoning change and general plan amendment Tuesday.

The 4-1 vote, with Mayor Pro Tem Heidi Wilder opposed, was cast following a public hearing during which several neighboring residents spoke out against Bethel Place, to be located at the southwest corner of BB Fielder and Bethel roads.

Two residents, who live off Briarwood in the area of the planned development, said they had concerns with infrastructure, including heavy traffic, and sewage and drainage issues. One resident said she had not received any notification of the development.

Bethel Place, developed by Trulife Communities, was discussed by council members last month, and the item had been tabled to allow for the developer’s agreement, any outstanding questions by council and a final vote on the zoning amendment.

Wilder Tuesday reiterated her concerns over allowing an amendment from a 50-foot setback from the arterial street to 25 feet, as well as adjusting the minimum standard of carport parking and traffic.

Councilman Matt Ticzkus echoed Wilder's statements on traffic in that part of town, noting that "it's difficult to imagine putting this [development] there would help, but I believe in private property rights as well. They have the right to develop this."

Councilman Kevin Cleveland said it was important to point out that some of the traffic issues are state issues — the city has no control over Bethel Road, Interstate 20 or its access roads — and to keep an open mind on the setbacks, adding that this is a proposal the council hasn't seen before.

Regarding drainage, the city's engineer said the developer will be required to do a downstream assessment, and detention ponds have been proposed, but the developer would still have to analyze the effects.

"This is a new product, but it's a product we see growing across the nation," Mayor Paul Paschall said. "As our community grows and emerges, we're just going to have to understand that not everybody wants to live on land and property, or in just a neighborhood with three-acre lots like we do."

Bethel Place is described as a modern cottage-style residence in a community layout, including 40 one-bedroom duplexes, 80 two-bedroom cottage homes, 34 three-bedroom cottage homes and 46 three-bedroom multifamily buildings in various configurations. Walking patios will connect individual residences to community parking areas and amenities, including a community room/detached clubhouse, pool, fitness center, playground equipment, paved trails, a pickleball court and more.

"In looking at the general use plan map, this property was originally in the general plan as suburban living, urban living and manufacturing and warehouse," Paschall said. "And based on what we heard tonight, the citizens in here don't want anything to happen here."

"There's people here that own this property and that have the right to develop this property to a certain degree and to a certain standard, and while we might not like what's going on as a group of citizens, we also have to be aware that other people have the opportunity and the right to develop their property, too."

Regarding the notification process, Director of Development and Neighborhood Services Kaleb Kentner said state law dictates anyone within 200 feet of the edges of the property must be notified, as well as a notice published in the local newspaper and posted before meetings, all of which had been completed.

Under the terms of the agreement, the developer must close on or before July 1.

In other business, council Tuesday:

- Held a public hearing regarding a zoning change request for a multifamily and commercial development off Bethel Road and W. Interstate 20. No action was taken as the applicant withdrew their request on Feb. 14.
- Approved a conditional use permit for an animal crematorium to be located at 200 TD Studio Lane.
- Recognized Girl Scout Troop 4849 and leader Dana Pierce.
- Recognized Schick's Trailer Sales in Weatherford, which opened in 1997 and has been serving Weatherford and surrounding areas since 1999.
- Read a proclamation naming Jan. 23, 2022 as Dr. Charles Wetherbee Day, recognizing the Victory Baptist Church pastor for his 30 years of service.

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