

## MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 8, 2020 PLANNING & ZONING MEETING

- 6-a **ZON19-00954 District 5.** Within the 5600 to 6000 blocks of East Thomas Road (north side) and within the 3600 to 4000 blocks of North Recker Road (west side). Located north of Thomas Road and west of Recker Road. (109.8± acres). Minor General Plan amendment to change the Character Type from Parks to Neighborhood. This request will allow for the development of a single-residence subdivision. Desert Vista 100, LLC, applicant; City of Mesa, owner. **(Companion case to ZON19-00806 and Preliminary Plat “Reserve at Red Rock”, associated with items 6-b and 6-c).**

**Planner: Evan Balmer**

**Staff Recommendation: Approval**

**Summary:** Staffmember Evan Balmer presented case ZON19-00954, ZON19-00806 and preliminary plat “Reserve at Red Rock” together. Mr. Balmer explained the request includes a General Plan amendment, rezoning and preliminary plat.

The request for the General Plan amendment changes the General Plan character designation from Parks to Neighborhood Character Type. Of the total acreage of 136± shown on the map, approximately 109± acres, which is the subject of the request, is being requested to change to the Neighborhood Character Type. The 109 acres will remain as Parks and Open Space character designation. The idea behind keeping the 109 acres is for it to serve and provide open space to the public. It also serves as a buffer between existing development on the northern side of the property and the subject request.

The request includes a PAD (Planned Area Development) with the rezoning. Some of the PAD deviations being requested include modification to required minimum lot size; lot width and increased depth of the lots within the development; setbacks to garages; and, minimum street setback with specific requirements. Per the City’s Zoning Ordinance, the purpose of a PAD is to create a distinct, high quality development and this project includes such high-quality development standards such as preserving natural character of land, building and site design and private streets. Although not in the Desert Uplands area, the site plan has incorporated a lot of those concepts into the development by clustering lots around washes, keeping trails, lots of open space and adding major amenities in the development.

The applicant also completed a robust citizen participation plan with the first meeting attended by 31 residents. The second meeting included residents of Red Mountain with 126 residents attending. The questions and concerns discussed at the meeting include increased traffic, access points to the site, and use of the Red Mountain Ranch park. Mr. Balmer stated the developer proposed the ability to utilize the red mountain park, but such uses would be a private agreement between the developer and the HOA of Red Mountain Ranch. He also informed the Board that the proposed development will include amenities for the residents if the agreement is not reached to use the Red Mountain amenities.

Sean Lake, 1744 S. Val Vista, spoke on behalf of the owner Blandford Homes. Mr. Lake stated the developer spent a great deal of time fitting the project within the contours of the property and capitalized the view of Red Mountain. He explained the developer had completed an extensive neighborhood outreach and involvement to present the project. There were meetings with the surrounding residents of the entire Red Mountain Ranch,

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surrounding property owners and businesses. Mr. Lake stated the applicant also attended and presented the project to the Red Mountain HOA and answered questions from the association members.

Mr. Lake stated as the developer designed the project, they looked at lot sizes in the Red Mountain Ranch development, and brought the smallest lots located on the southwest corner of the property and transitioned to larger lots within the middle of the property. He explained in consideration of preserving open space, the applicant kept approximately 67 acres of the site as part of that open space. He also stated that Blandford Homes has purchased the property but will be deeding back to the City of Mesa a portion of the property on the north side so that the City will own and have a public park assessable to all citizens of Mesa to enjoy. And there will be amenities within the development that will include a club house and pool area as well as trails in and around the development. In addition, there will be two separate entrances, one off Recker Road and the other from Thomas Road. The entrance on Thomas Road was designed so that when someone is entering, they will directly see the view of Red Mountain.

Resident George Schafer, 4055 N. Recker Road #2, spoke in opposition of the project. Mr. Schafer feels there will be an increase in traffic in the area if the project is approved. He asked the Board to clarify is there will be installation of a stop sign or signal at Star Valley Street and, also if the park in Red Mountain Ranch will remain private. Mr. Schafer expressed concerns with the development being located close an industrial development to the north.

Bryan Smith, 4004 N. Ranier, spoke in opposition to the project. Mr. Smith inquired if the development will be gated and will there be a parking lot to the trail head for the area to be developed as a park. He stated the existing road is already congested and without a parking area, parking will occur on the streets. He also informed the Board that the sign stating a new "*park is coming*" is still up on the property and should be removed.

Kay Carl, 4055 N. Recker Road, #6, spoke in opposition to the project. Ms. Carl stated she is concerned about increased congestion and traffic with the additional housing. She is also concerned about the use of the Red Mountain Ranch park and questioned why anyone would want to live in the new development with the industrial business nearby.

Sandy Fan, 6264 E. Star Valley Street spoke in opposition to the project. Ms. Fan presented 3 separate signed petitions to the board. The petitions addressed; 1) control the nature of the improvements so that the Red Mountain Ranch park maintains the views they currently enjoy; 2) suggested the hiking trail to have parking lot with an entrance off of Thomas Road; and, 3) they request another park be provided.

John Sell, 4055 N. Recker Road, #3, spoke in opposition to the project. Mr. Sell expressed concerns with the additional traffic congestion, asked that the main entrance for the development be located off Thomas Road, as Recker Road has a large amount of pedestrian activity in the area and feels additional traffic could become a safety issue.

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David Bender, 7755 E. Sugarloaf Circle, spoke in opposition to the project. Mr. Bender stated his concern is the loss of open space and future park in the area. And stated has no comments about the conceptual plans of the project but request the construction of a landscape median on Thomas road.

Nadia Ahluwalia, 4016 N. Ranier, spoke about the project. Ms. Ahluwalia spoke in opposition to the development. She believes if the developer has concerns about access to the open space, the developer builds only up to Star Valley Street.

Eileen Lukes, 4055 N. Recker Road, spoke in opposition to the project. Ms. Lukes stated concerns include how the City plans to address the additional needs of the water use as a result of the development. She was also concerned about the increase of student enrollment in the surrounding schools, additional police and fire needs.

Chair Dahlke asked staff to respond to the concerns about traffic and the parking for the new trail head. Staffmember Evan Balmer stated the Transportation Department has reviewed the project and have been involved from the beginning of the review. Mr. Balmer also informed the Board that he spoke with the Traffic Engineer again to discuss the capacity for additional traffic and the City's Transportation Department confirmed there is adequate capacity on the road to handle the additional trips to be generated by the development. In addition, Thomas Road is a five-lane arterial, and the access point on Recker is placed in the middle of the development which will limit traffic on Recker and not all the residents will enter off Recker Road. Mr. Balmer also informed the Board that the City is finalizing the details of potential development of the park north of the property. And the Parks Department will work through the City's normal process with a final approval by Council.

Boardmember Allen inquired if a parking lot is being considered for the park along the north side of the property. Staffmember Balmer responded that the northern portion of the property has been identified as being a park and the details are still being worked through. Boardmember Crockett clarified if there will be a public participation process for local resident's provide input on the design of the park. Mr. Balmer responded this will be spearheaded by the Parks Department and as the plans get closer, it should go through a public process.

Dr. Appiah explained the public parks are reviewed through the Parks Department and the city will follow the required process. He also reminded the Board that the recommendation tonight does not include proposed development of the portion being identified as the park. He also answered the question about the school district's input and informed the Board that as part of the application process, staff sends the request to the school districts for their review and comments. In this case, staff did not receive any responses from the school district. Also, all development applications are sent to all city departments for review and comment and ensures all concerns are addressed prior to scheduling the case for hearing.

Boardmember Sarkissian requested clarification on the designation of the property being planned for a park and the current change. Mr. Balmer responded that the property was purchased many years ago by the City with the intention of it becoming a park. However, it went through two park bond elections and the citizens voted against funding for it. The City then decided to put the property up for auction last year and Blandford become the

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highest bidder and was awarded the purchase.

Boardmember Boyle clarified the school district was notified and verified this would not have any detrimental impact on the surrounding schools. Dr. Appiah confirmed that the school district was notified and did not provide any comments in objection to the development.

Boardmember Allen inquired if there are any dedicated pedestrian lanes on Recker Road. Mr. Lake responded to the concerns of the citizens that came to speak against the project. He explained that access into the development off Recker Road is north of Star Valley Road. And this is because they did not want it to align with the road into Red Mountain development. In addition, it is one of the reasons the development was designed with lots closer to the entrance off Thomas and Recker to alleviate excessive traffic on either road. He also addressed the noise concerns from the industrial facility to the north and stated they conducted two noise studies on the site and found it to be within residential guidelines and noise standards. In response to whether there will be a parking lot or not to the park, Mr. lake stated this is a City decision and not part of this application process.

Boardmember Crockett clarified they are working with Red Mountain HOA to share the park as a joint use agreement and confirmed the HOA would need to be in agreement. Mr. Lake stated that the proposed development has adequate amenities even without the agreement. He stated if the HOA agrees for the joint use of the park, they would agree to provide a certain amount of improvements to the HOA park and pay a portion of their dues for maintenance for their park. Overall, the issues are private agreements that have to be resolved separately from the land use case.

Boardmember Boyle appreciates the way the development is utilizing the orientation to take advantage of the view of Red Mountain.

Boardmember Villanueva-Saucedo stated that she appreciates the attention to the natural environment and use of the open space. Ms. Villanueva-Saucedo reminded the public that the park space is not the purview of this board.

Boardmember Crockett agreed with the other boardmember's and feels this is a high quality development. The developer has listened and proactively addressed the issues brought up by the surrounding residents and feels this will be a quality development.

Boardmember Allen motioned to approve case ZON19-00954. The motion was seconded by Boardmember Crockett.

Vote: 7-0 Approved

Upon tabulation of vote, it showed:

AYES – Dahlke, Astle, Sarkissian, Boyle, Allen, Crockett and Villanueva-Saucedo

NAYS – None

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**Note: Audio recordings of the Planning & Zoning Board Meetings are available in the Planning Division Office for review. They are also “live broadcasted” through the City of Mesa’s website at [www.mesaaz.gov](http://www.mesaaz.gov)**