

**Bluebird Grove
Planned Unit Development
Narrative**

As part of the Application for our new project called Bluebird Grove, I have put together this narrative on a few key discussion points.

Reason for going with the Planned Unit Development platting process as opposed to a conventional straight platting process.

When I first contacted the City about developing the property, I asked why their ordinance required such wide lots. I asked this question because most developing cities in the Twin Cities have changed their ordinances to allow narrower lots. The reason for narrower lots is affordability. The answer I was given is that the City prefers the Developer to apply for new subdivisions under the Planned Unit Development (PUD) process. Under the PUD process the two parties (Developer and City) negotiate between themselves, and the process is supposed to be a “win/win,” with a positive outcome for both the Developer and the City.

Under a normal straight plat (non PUD), the Developer can develop the property requesting a variance if needed. A variance can be granted by the City Council, but the Developer has no guarantee of the variance being granted. Without a variance the property qualifies for 16 lots. If the variance was requested, it would be for the lot on McMenemy. The city ordinance for a straight plat requires that a lot is a minimum of 85 feet wide. The lot on McMenemy is 164 feet wide. In order to make two lots out of the 164 feet, technically, it would need to be 170 feet wide. The variance required to do this would either require a single lot variance of 6 feet or two lot variances of 3 feet each. Keep in mind that numerous adjoining properties on McMenemy are much narrower than 85 feet. If the variance was granted on the lot on McMenemy the project would have 17 lots under a straight plat.

As I mentioned earlier, I prefer smaller lots that are more in line with lot widths of lots being developed today. A straight plat requires a lot that will fit a home that is up to 65 feet wide. I am requesting lots that allow homes to be up to 60 feet wide. By going to 65 feet wide lots, it will allow us to develop 19 lots in the project. I also am asking for a reduced side yard setback. The current side yard setback from each home to the lot line is 10 feet. I am requesting that this setback is reduced from 10 feet on each side of the home to 5 feet on the garage side and 10 feet on the home side.

The PUD process is designed to be a win/win between the City and the Developer. In the paragraph above you will see that the Developer is gaining (depending on how you look at it) either two or three extra lots. You now ask, "What is the 'win' for the City?"

The City currently has water lines that dead end at the end of the road on Williams Street, Tessier Trail and Bear Avenue North. Dead end water lines are not desirable for cities. If the water lines have a break, large areas of the City are without water until repaired. They also can have bacteria growth due to being stagnant. Cities prefer what they call looping. Looping is the connection of multiple water lines. Looping has no stagnant water and allows for continued function during times of repair. As part of the PUD, all dead end water lines will be looped.

As part of a straight plat the only landscaping requirement is one tree per lot at the time of construction of each home. The end of Bear Avenue North, when platted, had a provision for a future road extension. As part of the PUD, I'm proposing significant additional landscaping along the new road extension. This landscaping is shown on the Landscape plan in our PUD submission.

The City, for years, has been talking about a trail from Tessier Trail and Bear Avenue North to Bear Park. Because the trail will be crossing wetlands in two separate locations, it will require an elevated boardwalk design. This type of a trail is very expensive to build. As part of the City's win, I will donate the required land and participate in the construction costs of building the trail.

I also have agreed to work with the City on travel routes and access for construction traffic. By doing so, this will minimize the impact on the adjoining neighborhoods.

Working with neighbors on Bear Avenue North.

As part of the Neighborhood Meeting on November 2nd, 2020, it became very obvious that some of the adjoining property owners on Bear Avenue North were opposed to extending the cul-de-sac at the end of the road. After the meeting was over, I spent over one hour with some of these residents hearing their concerns and talking about different ways of minimizing the impact of the road extension. I thanked everyone and gave them my contact information and cell phone number in case anyone wanted to contact me to work on a solution.

Since this initial voice of opposition, I have traded emails, phone calls, and met with some of the residents trying to find a solution that works for all. Below are the options that I presented at our last meeting:

1. Plan as presented with landscaping and buffering.
2. Possible shared driveway.
3. Purchase of a portion of land that will minimize impact on residents.
4. Purchase of one of the residents homes.
5. Moving of garage.

The residents didn't even want to discuss the above options. Below are the options that they offered:

1. No build.
2. Cul-de-sac coming off Tessier Trail by means of a bridge crossing the wetlands.
3. Sale of a portion of my land to either the City or the neighbors.

As part of our last correspondence, I informed them that the price of the bridge crossing the wetland was cost prohibitive. I also gave them a price and terms for which I would sell the eastern portion of the property. I also explained that "no build" is not an option.

I am of the belief that the best solution is a combination of landscaping and buffering along with a 286 sq. ft. purchase of land from one of the property owners. I have informed the property owner of the 286 sq. ft. that I am willing to pay a "crazy high" number for the land. He is not interested in discussing and has not returned my phone calls or emails.

All communication has now stopped other than a phone call from their attorney.

Flooding Concerns

As part of the Neighborhood Meeting and Sketch Plan hearings, a number of residents have talked about some flooding of their back yards and expressed a concern that the new project will make it worse.

The topography of the current undeveloped land directs all rainfall and snowmelt directly to the neighborhood wetlands. These wetlands are the wetlands that cause the backyard flooding. As part of

our new development, the property has been engineered to retain storm water and snowmelt. This retention is being handled by a series of storm water ponds. The ponds will not eliminate all runoff to the wetland but they will greatly reduce and slowly discharge to the wetlands. It's safe to say that the post development will have less impact on flooding than the current state of the property. All engineering will be checked by numerous government agencies.

Wetland Buffer Variance

The City's preferred configuration and location of the connection of Tessier Trail will encroach on the wetland buffer of the adjoining wetland. In order to minimize the impacts of this encroachment, we have incorporated design solutions to minimize the impact. We have designed a snow shelf along with a retaining wall. This will allow a man-made and natural vegetation area that will achieve the same objective.

Construction Schedule

The property is being developed and built by a family business. It is anticipated that streets and utility work will be completed in early summer 2021. Home construction should begin mid-summer 2021.

Sales of homes will be market driven. A two to three year build-out is expected.