

EASTERN HILLS COUNTRY CLUB REDEVELOPMENT STUDY
ADVISORY GROUP MEETING 2 – NOTES
4:00 P.M., BLUEBONNET ROOM, MAIN STREET MUNICIPAL BUILDING
GARLAND, TX

May 13, 2015

Committee, Staff, Consultant Team:	
Amanda Moreno, representing owner Victor Ballas	Jeff McKenney, on behalf of Don Plunk, representative for Henry S. Miller
Jerry DeFeo, Friends of South Garland	Bob Schwarz, Friends of South Garland (ex-Council member)
Sydney Hunka, Friends of South Garland	Jerry Reynolds, Friends of South Garland
Martin Glenn, City of Garland	Ed Moore, Emerald Lakes
Neil Montgomery, City of Garland	Mark Bowers, Kimley-Horn
Will Guerin, City of Garland	Karen Walz, Strategic Community Solutions
	Monica Heid, Prologue Planning Services
Observing:	
Councilman Steve Stanley	Richard Berg, Provident Realty Advisors
Bill Anderson, Dowdey Anderson	Rylan Yowell, Provident Realty Advisors

The meeting began with all of the participants introducing themselves. Using a PowerPoint presentation, Mark Bowers explained that the objective for the meeting was to come to an agreement on two alternative scenarios for further evaluation by the consultant team. He reviewed the meeting agenda and an outline of the study process—

- Data collection/mapping/analysis
- Community input process
- Development and review of alternative scenarios for presentation at a community open house
- Selection of the preferred scenario for presentation to the City Council

Monica Heid presented a recap of information presented at the previous meeting—trends in the golf industry, the City’s analysis of reopening EHCC as a public or semi-public course, infrastructure in the area—and findings from the stakeholder interviews, along with new information, requested by the Committee during Meeting #1, regarding:

- Food/beverage and venue rental operations at golf courses (these operations are a convenience to members and often do not break even unless these amenities are a special focus of the golf course and the facilities are very high-end)
- Findings from GISD on school impacts (the District does not anticipate a problem with the 250-300 students that might live in a neighborhood of 500 homes)
- Existing crime (since 2011, Crime District 51 has experienced mostly property crime—burglaries and theft with burglary-motor vehicle occurring most frequently at approximately 3 incidents per month)

Bowers summarized the input from Advisory Committee Meeting 1 on April 8, including the neighborhood's primary concerns regarding the development and the objectives of all of the parties—neighborhood, property owner, developer and the City.

Karen Walz then began a discussion on two scenarios—Scenario 1, prepared and presented by the Friends of South Garland, and Scenario 2, prepared and presented by the potential developer.

Bob Schwarz described Scenario 1, which he said was developed by a 7-member steering committee from the Friends of South Garland group (Friends). They envision a family-oriented recreation facility that would appeal to all ages and offer a variety of activities. The development would feature:

- An 18-hole, par 3 golf course around the perimeter
- Cart paths
- Push golf carts
- A high-end miniature golf course
- An outdoor pool
- Tennis courts (outdoor and possibly indoor or covered courts)
- A clubhouse with a restaurant
- Ponds (which could continue to be stocked with fish)
- Picnic tables
- Walking trails
- An enhanced entrance (at the existing entryway location)
- No new streets

The facility would be available on a membership basis, probably on a tiered dues structure, and there would be a monthly fee as well as an initial membership fee. The Friends group stated their beliefs that many residents of surrounding neighborhoods will join the facility, which would give it a larger potential membership base than many country clubs.

Other committee members from the Friends group suggested that the existing clubhouse could be renovated and become an attractive venue for weddings, banquets and other events. Other potential activities suggested were a gym, pro shop with apparel sales, a sports medicine doctor, garden areas and the possibility of food trucks and/or a farmers market on the weekends. The consultant team was asked to look into the Harris Mini Golf website (www.harrisminigolf.com) and an indoor tennis facility in Mesquite.

In discussing some of the issues related to Scenario 1, Schwarz addressed:

- Compatibility – Under this plan, the surrounding neighbors would see the same thing they see today (a golf course)
- Economic Value – The center of the property would be reserved for non-residential, income-generating activities—income from memberships and fees, facility rental and the operation of various activities by individual entrepreneurs
- Public Investment – No City funds were assumed in the planning done by the Friends committee

Scenario 2 was presented by Jeff McKenney, who represented the developer who has the property under contract for \$6.25 million. He said it had been determined that a golf course would not be feasible, but that a residential development, Eastern Hills Village, would be a good use of the property. Under this concept:

- About 40 of the 178 acres would be retained as open space throughout the property (ponds, drainage areas and setback around the perimeter of the site; no golf is planned)
- Four or five different types of single-family detached housing would be built
- Lots would vary in width from approximately 50' to 70' unless a 10-acre section near the center of the residential area becomes a townhome development targeted to a specific age group, in which case those lots would be narrower (it was confirmed that the concept being proposed now does not include any townhomes)
- Larger lots would be located on the perimeter of the development near the existing homes
- The topography of the site would be respected
- The neighborhood would not be gated and all streets would be public
- A second access point for emergency use may be added
- The trails, lakes and pocket parks would be open to the community without charge; other facilities could potentially be accessed on a membership/fee basis
- There would be a new pool and a clubhouse

He said their calculations indicated that the land acquisition, development costs and reservation of open space would require 500 lots to be profitable. Development costs will be greater than usual because a number of retaining walls would be required to preserve the topography of the site as the developer intends.

McKenney said a study commissioned by the developer showed that there was a market in South Garland for a development of this type, which would enhance the tax base for the City and most likely provide support that would help attract better retail to the Broadway commercial area nearby.

As to some of the core issues related to Scenario 2:

- Compatibility – Under this plan, open space buffers of varying widths were planned adjacent to existing neighborhoods
- Economic Value – The market study indicated a demand for a development/housing of this type
- Public Investment – No City funds were assumed in the planning done by the potential developer

The committee agreed that the two options presented were appropriate for further analysis by the consultant team. The consultants asked for more detailed information on each of the scenarios— number of units/acres and percentage of acreage for each use indicated on each of the scenarios, as indicated on a matrix used during the discussion.

Bowers confirmed with the Committee the evaluation criteria as follows:

- Is the scenario market supportable?
- Is it economically viable?
- How does it affect property values in adjacent neighborhoods?
- Can the demand for City and GISD service demands be met?
- Are the natural features/assets of the site being protected?
- How does the design contribute to the future desirability of South Garland?
- How effective are the buffers between this site and surrounding neighborhoods?
- Will the development be safe? (a new criteria added at the meeting)

Bowers and Walz concluded by talking about the tentative time, date and location for the Community Open House—6:00 PM, June 23, South Garland Baptist Church—where the consultant team and the committee will present the Alternative Scenarios for public review. This meeting will take place after Advisory Committee Meeting 3. The preferred scenario will also be posted on the City’s website and comment will be accepted via email or SurveyMonkey.

After the Open House, the City Council will be briefed on the preferred scenario(s) and the input received to date and will be asked for their feedback. This is expected to be a work session item during a regularly-scheduled Council meeting. The tentative date for this session is July 6. Though work session items do not include comment from the general public, the Committee will be included in the presentation and discussion on this project.

Will Guerin agreed to circulate an email to Committee members in order to determine the best date for Advisory Committee Meeting 3.

There was no other business and the meeting was adjourned at 6:38 PM.