

EASTERN HILLS COUNTRY CLUB REDEVELOPMENT STUDY
ADVISORY GROUP MEETING 3 – NOTES
4:00 P.M., BLUEBONNET ROOM, MAIN STREET MUNICIPAL BUILDING
GARLAND, TX

June 23, 2015

Committee, Staff, Consultant Team:	
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
Ed Moore, Emerald Lakes	Don Plunk, representing Henry S. Miller
Martin Glenn, City of Garland	Mark Bowers, Kimley-Horn
Neil Montgomery, City of Garland	Karen Walz, Strategic Community Solutions
Will Guerrin, City of Garland	Monica Heid, Prologue Planning Services
Observing:	
Councilman Steve Stanley	Rylan Yowell, Provident Realty Advisors
Jeff McKenney, representing Henry S. Miller	

The meeting began with a welcome, an explanation of the purpose of the meeting and a description of the process that would be used to evaluate the various scenarios for redevelopment of the golf course property. The purpose, as explained by the consultant team, was to seek agreement on a draft preferred development plan or “Hybrid Scenario” that meets the objectives of all stakeholders as defined by the committee.

Three scenarios had been evaluated by the consultant team—

- The existing zoning and entitlements (Scenario 0);
- The Friends of South Garland scenario, entitled “The Preserve at Eastern Hills,” which will include a variety of recreational activities and no living units (Scenario 1);
- The developer’s scenario, “Eastern Hills Village,” which will be a residential development with an amenity center (Scenario 2).

The consultants explained that the evaluation was based upon the level of detail provided by the committee members for each scenario, but was generally described by the consultant team as a “high level” evaluation. Each scenario was compared to the evaluation criteria and the strategic objectives agreed upon by the Advisory Committee at its first meeting.

An overview of each of the three scenarios was presented. Scenario 0, which described development under the existing zoning and focused on the permitted residential use, assumed approximately 80 lots (the zoning requires a minimum 2-acre minimum lot under Agricultural zoning), with no specific provisions for buffering or recreational/open space amenities since the ordinance is silent as to any of those requirements.

Scenario 1, The Preserve at Eastern Hills, according to the committee members in support of this concept, will target users in the Eastern Hills area, other parts of South Garland and the surrounding

area. The proponents do not expect financial incentives from the City but will request its full support. They feel the development will be a destination use compatible with the surrounding neighborhoods that will provide long-term benefits, including increasing property values and services the people in the area want and need.

The development will include an 18-hole, par 3 golf course, a miniature golf course, putting course, driving range, swimming and tennis facilities and restaurant/banquet/classroom/meeting space, as well as a farmer's market and a number of other community-oriented spaces and activities. There would be no residential uses and, therefore, no new streets.

Scenario 2, Eastern Hills Village, would contain 550 single-family homes on lots ranging from 5,000 to 8,400 square feet in size. The development would target single people, married couples with and without children in the home, and retired persons. People in the surrounding area could pay a fee or purchase a membership to use the swimming pool, which would also be open to residents of the new neighborhood. Sidewalks interior to the property would be open to the public.

No public investment is expected from the City and value will be added through the sale of new homes and additional tax revenues once the land is redeveloped. The developer feels that the new neighborhood will also enhance and grow the retail services in the area. The homes would be constructed on 123 acres and recreation and open spaces uses would take up approximately 23 acres. Approximately 40 acres is in the floodplain.

After this summary, a discussion of a point by point comparison between the existing zoning and entitlements scenario (Scenario 0), Scenario 1 and Scenario 2 was conducted by Karen Walz. The discussion was based on a detailed matrix divided into several issue categories. Maps and graphics were used to facilitate the discussion and to demonstrate the impacts of Scenarios 1 and 2 on physical features, property values in the surrounding area, the proposed buffers under each plan and residential densities (for the Eastern Hills Village proposal and the nearby neighborhoods; no residential units are planned for Scenario 1, so the issue of density did not apply).

The matrix divided the issues into the following categories and topics:

- *Definition of Alternative Scenarios* (theme; intent; residential summary; non-residential / recreational summary; density [residential units / per acre])
- *Physical Development Compatibility* (public service and GISD impacts; protection of natural features and assets; public safety impacts; physical constraints to the proposed development; traffic implications; walkability)
- *Development Form and Character* (compatibility with the surrounding neighborhoods; buffering between the proposed development and existing neighborhoods; areas for landscaping, walls, buffers; consumption of water and energy; ability to repurpose the proposed structures [resilience]; support for local people and businesses)
- *Economic / Fiscal Analysis* (market supportability of each scenario; economic viability of each scenario; impact on property values in adjacent neighborhoods)
- *Strategic Objectives* (as identified by the Committee in an earlier meeting; all of the objectives are contained under the matrix headings above)

Under the *Definition of Alternative Scenarios* item, Mark Bowers explained how the density calculation for Scenarios 0 and 2 was made (by allowing for approximately 10% of the land for street right-of-way and permitting floodway and areas with heavy tree cover to be incorporated into lots in Scenario 0).

With regard to Scenario 1, the Friends of South Garland committee members said that to approve this concept would be honoring a promise made in the past relative to the character of this area of town.

Questions discussed under the *Physical Development Compatibility* heading included the orientation of garages. The developer's representative said that side- or swing-entry access is planned for all garages, and the neighborhood representatives expressed concerns about the safety of cars backing into the street and on-street parking adjacent to narrow lots. They also felt traffic to The Preserve was likely to occur mostly during off-peak hours, in contrast to traffic for Eastern Hills Village.

With regard to crime, there was some discussion of the fact that crime in the EHCC area is low, but crime in the Broadway area nearby, which is developed with a higher density, is greater. The group agreed that the character and age of the homes was a major factor in the higher crime rate in the Broadway neighborhood.

In reply to a question from the consultants, The Friends representatives said that they had some of the economic information necessary to do a more detailed analysis but needed access to the property to determine how much it would cost to renovate the clubhouse, if that is the direction they choose, and to renovate the greens, cart paths and other aspects of the golf course. In addition, it was suggested that the details of the ordinance between the Cities of Garland and Dallas be explored to determine what uses could take place in the take area for Lake Ray Hubbard.

In the discussion of *Development Form and Character*, the consultants were asked to confirm the size and number of the smaller lots adjacent to the southeast corner of the property, which back to the open space provided by the golf course. Ed Moore and the neighborhood representatives felt that the comparison of the lot sizes in the surrounding area to the Scenario 2 proposal demonstrated that the developer's alternative did not meet the compatibility criteria.

Under the heading of *Economic and Fiscal Analysis*, Bob Schwarz said that the neighborhood could provide the information they had developed to support the economic viability of their proposal but not until they were able to access the site to view the condition of the property and improvements. Don Plunk said that as a representative of the party that has the property under contract, he would not object to the neighborhood visiting the property if the owner would agree. Plunk agreed to contact the owner and request that the committee members be able to access the property. It was also suggested that the consultants look into Brookhaven and Dallas Athletic Center as golf/recreation facilities more similar to The Preserve concept (Scenario 1). The Friends representatives also asked the consultant team to explore the value of a new home necessary to cover the lot costs, which Jerry Reynolds estimated to be about \$150,000 under Scenario 0 (existing entitlements).

In discussing the *Strategic Objectives*, the Friends group questioned the conclusion that Scenario 2 would improve the property values of the surrounding homes. The consultant's conclusion was based on a comparison of Scenario 2's anticipated home prices and the value of homes in the surrounding neighborhoods. The neighbors felt that the loss of the golf course views and open space would decrease surrounding property values. The neighborhood representatives also requested that the items in the matrix be separated into an analysis of two distinct issues—City/GISD services and traffic impacts—rather than combining them in a single item. They also asked that the City calculate the cost of providing services for the Scenario 2 development.

Bowers and Walz concluded by stating that since no consensus had been reached on a hybrid scenario for development of the property and presentation to the community, a fourth Advisory Committee

Meeting should be held before the Community Open House, with the objective of creating a hybrid scenario that has committee agreement. It was agreed that this meeting should occur after the neighbors have access to the property. This approach requires a change in the project schedule. July 14 was set as the tentative date for Advisory Committee Meeting 4.* One or more Council briefings will also take place nearer to the end of the study process.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:55 P.M.

NOTE: *Since the Advisory Group Meeting, the schedule of activities has been changed. Committee members will be advised by City Staff of the proposed dates for the upcoming events.*