

Zoning changes approved; residents concerned about traffic

[Delmar Orchard Road Proposed Subdivision 94 Homes]

Sep 8, 2017

John McVey, Staff writer- jmcvey@journal-news.net

MARTINSBURG — Deborah O’Shea wanted some clarification during a public hearing at the Martinsburg Planning Commission meeting Wednesday about plans to develop about 30 acres on Delmar Orchard Road.

“I live on Delmar Orchard Road, and we already have two big subdivisions and a school on that road,” she told the Planning Commission members. “I’m not sure how much more traffic that road can handle, how much more can be absorbed. I want to express my concern about more development on that road.”

Orchard View Elementary School is located on Delmar Orchard Road.

Diane M. Daily, the owner and manager of Boyd Orchard LLC, had submitted a zoning map amendment application for a total of about 33 acres on Delmar Orchard Road out of a larger 63-acre parcel. The property is located on the west side of Interstate 81.

The Planning Commission held a hearing to get public comment on the zoning change application per the city’s zoning ordinance.

According to the application, a private, gated community is proposed for the site, containing about 94 units as well as a recreation center, walking trails, playground and a large community open space. The targeted age of the residents would be 55-plus, according to the application.

The application requests changing the zoning of about 30.5 acres from multiple-family, low-density to planned residential, and about 2.6 acres from multiple-family, low-density to community business. The remainder of the larger parcel would remain zoned community business.

The zoning reclassification would further the goals of the city’s west side plan, according to the application.

Other residents of Delmar Orchard Road expressed similar concerns, including Robert O’Shea, who said he was concerned about changing the zoning from low-density development.

“If you pack 100 townhouses in there, that will be an additional 200 cars on that road,” he told the Planning Commission members. “Think about the quality of life of your constituents, the quality of life of lifelong residents instead of the tax base.”

No one spoke in favor of the zoning change during the public hearing.

“I completely understand their concerns,” Tripp Daily, on behalf of Boyd Orchard LLC, responded. “I know how that road can be. I had two children who went to school there and I was concerned about their safety.”

He said there would be no townhomes packed onto the property. He said the houses would be stand-alone, single-family dwellings.

“There will be no tract homes to detract from the community standards,” Daily said. “We need to change the zoning to planned residential to have a gated community.”

Planning Commission Chairman Jim Rodgers pointed out that planned residential zoning actually would reduce the number of houses permitted on the land that would be allowed with multi-family, low-density zoning.

Kin Sayre, the Planning Commission’s attorney, reminded the members that they would be voting on recommending or not recommending the zoning change to the Martinsburg City Council, which has the final say on zoning changes.

A motion to recommend the zoning change was approved unanimously.

Staff writer John McVey can be reached at 304-263-3381, ext. 128, or jmcvey@journal-news.net.

SOURCE: <http://www.journal-news.net/news/local-news/2017/09/zoning-changes-approved-residents-concerned-about-traffic/>