

FLOOD PLAIN PERMIT COMMITTEE MEETING
201 West Gray, Building A, Conference Room D
Monday, December 15, 2014
3:30 p.m.

Minutes

PRESENT: Scott Sturtz, City Engineer
 Susan Connors, Director of Planning/Community Development
 Ken Danner, Subdivision Development Manager
 Jane Hudson, Principle Planner
 Neil Suneson, Citizen Member
 Sherri Stansel, Citizen Member

OTHERS PRESENT: Todd McLellan, Development Engineer
 Cydney Karstens, Staff
 Charlie Thomas, Applicant
 Mark Daniels, Applicant
 William Mattoon, Resident

The meeting was called to order by Scott Sturtz at 3:30. It was noted that Chairman Shawn O’Leary was not present and Sturtz would fill in as chairman for this meeting. All other members were present and a quorum was established.

Item No. 1, Approval of Minutes:

Sturtz called for a motion to approve the minutes from the meeting of December 1, 2014. Motion to approve minutes by Connors. Seconded by Danner. Approved 6-0.

Item No. 2, Flood Plain Permit Application No. 554:

Sturtz stated that the application was submitted by the Norman Utilities Authority and is a request to replace a sanitary sewer interceptor line generally located on the east side of North Porter Avenue between Rock Creek Road and Lift Station “D”. A portion of the northern part of the project is located in the floodway/floodplain of Woodcrest Creek. Sturtz introduced Todd McLellan, Development Engineer, who would be going over the Staff Report. McLellan introduced the applicant Charlie Thomas with the Norman Utilities Authority.

McLellan showed a graphic and gave a description of the proposed sanitary sewer replacement including the surrounding structures and project limits. The Project is planned to be bid in January 2015 with construction starting later in the spring of 2015. A portion of the project, approximately the north half is on the fringes of the Woodcrest Creek floodway/floodplain.

The existing 10 and 18 inch sanitary sewer mains will be upsized to 16 and 24 inch lines, respectively. New sanitary sewer mains will be installed by the “pipe bursting” method in the urban areas and by the open cut method in the non-developed areas. Pipe bursting involves winching a steel bursting head with new HDPE pipe attached through the existing pipe

usually from manhole to manhole. The bursting head breaks apart the existing clay pipe in the process. New services are installed by excavating down to the main at the individual service locations. In open cut areas the existing pipe will be removed and the new pipe placed in the same trench. Some of the existing manholes are badly deteriorated and will be replaced as part of this project. Excess excavated materials will be removed from areas within the floodplain.

This project is in a tributary to Little River and therefore is in the Little River Basin.

McLellan showed an aerial photograph outlining the areas of the project. He pointed out which areas would be pipe bursted and which areas would be the open cut method. It was noted that the pipe under Tecumseh Rd. is already of adequate size and will not require any replacement work. McLellan also gave an overview of the cross-sections of the area. He pointed out that just north of the Vinyard area, the project will be crossing the existing creek channel and they will be placing riprap on each side of the creek bank. An equal amount of material will be removed so there will be no net increase in the material in the floodplain.

Applicable ordinance sections were noted to include: 4(b)(1)(a) fill restrictions in the floodplain; no fill will be brought into the floodplain as part of this project. 4(b)(10) Utilities constructed to minimize flood damage; the sanitary sewer pipe joints and manholes have gaskets making the system watertight. The entire system is leak tested prior to going into service. 4(b)(12) In/exfiltration of floodwaters in utility system; pipe joints have gaskets making the system watertight. Manholes in the floodplain will be sealed and bolted down, as well as the whole system being leak tested prior to going into service. (a)(viii) No rise considerations; the applicant's engineer has certified that the project will not cause a rise in the BFE. Based upon the information provided, staff recommended that this project be approved.

Sturtz asked for comments from Charlie or Mark from Norman Utilities Authority who had none. Sturtz opened the floor for comments from the committee. Suneson requested McLellan display the first slide and asked for clarification on the location of the lift station. Suneson clarified that the Little River Floodplain was in this area. He asked if there is anything that would be going on between the area of the lift station and the black line signifying the project boundaries. Charlie Thomas stated that there is a new line that already exists that will be tied onto with this project and that there is a new manhole at the beginning of where the dark line is on the map. Suneson asked if anything was going to be done in the Little River Floodplain. Thomas confirmed that work would just be in a tributary of the Little River Floodplain.

Sturtz asked if the committee had any other questions. Suneson had some questions about the application itself and noted it would be a preview to some comments he wanted to make later in the meeting during discussion. He stated that on page three of the floodplain permit application, 1st diamond, the application calls for a typical cross-section showing the channel of the stream, elevation of land areas adjoining each side of the channel, cross-sectional areas to be occupied by the proposed development, and high-water information. He questioned that there were no cross sections of the channel itself included in the packet. The cross section

along the new line was provided with the committee packets but not of the stream, there are several places where the new line is in the flood plain and there were no cross sections of the stream itself provided with the packets. Thomas stated that in the application they specifically referenced the City of Norman specs and standards. Thomas further explained that the city has standard specifications and typical construction drawings that all contractors are obligated to abide by. Those standards don't specifically address cross sections of the channel itself but in the areas where the channel is touched, cross sections were included. It would be an extra expense to generate cross sections all the way down the line when the work is being done on the outer fringe of the channel floodplain. City staff pointed out on maps where the new line would be crossing the channel and explained that cross sections of that area are included in the packet.

Suneson pointed out that on page three of the floodplain permits application, 3rd diamond, the application calls for plans (surface view) showing elevations or contours of the ground; pertinent structure, fill, or storage elevations; size, location, and spatial arrangement of all proposed and existing structures on the site; location and elevations of streets, water supply, sanitary facilities; photographs showing existing land uses and vegetation upstream and downstream, soil types and other pertinent information. Suneson stated that didn't see topography on any of the sheets he had in the packet. Sturtz stated that the P and P sheets show topography along the line that the applicant is proposing. Suneson clarified that he was looking for a surface view or topographic map in order to meet the application requirement.

Suneson also pointed out that on page three of the floodplain permits application, 4th diamond, the application calls for a profile showing the slope of the bottom of the channel or flow line of the stream. Suneson was concerned that the interceptor is very close to the channel and there was no profile of the channel provided. McLellan explained that this information is provided on the cross section document.

Suneson requested clarification for the notation % GIS added on page three of the floodplain permits application, 8th diamond, the application calls for a certified list of names and addresses of all record property owners within a three hundred fifty foot radius of the exterior boundary of the subject property not to exceed 100 feet laterally from the Special Flood Hazard Area. The radius to be extended by increments of one hundred linear feet until the list of property owners includes not less than fifteen individual property owners of separate parcels or until a maximum radius of one thousand feet has been reached. Thomas clarified that the notation was c/o GIS and the GIS department generates the list for the mailing list.

Suneson pointed out that on page four of the floodplain permits application some sections were left blank. The second bullet which states "Is located in a Special Flood Hazard Area. Firm zone designation is (blank)." McLellan stated that should be AE and apologized for the mistake. The same bullet also had "100-Year flood elevation at the site as (blank)." McLellan explained that with this project the elevation varies and there is no way to list a base elevation like you could with a smaller construction project in a more limited geographic area.

The third bullet on the application also had a blank next to the portion reading, “the proposed development is located in a floodway. FIRM Panel No. (blank.” Suneson commented that he would like to see those items completed on the application.

Susan Connors asked if the information on the application is similar to the information received on other applications. McLellan explained that this application is very similar to other pipe bursting projects and interceptor line projects that have been completed.

Sturtz opened the floor to public comment. William Matoon, a resident at 3113 Millbury Rd., had received a notification letter and inquired if this project would affect his property. Matoon stated that he has a manhole in his yard and wanted clarification if there would be tunnel work or excavation at the surface for this project. Thomas clarified that Matoon was within the notification area but not the specific project area and his property would not be affected by this project.

Sturtz asked for a motion. A motion was given by Suneson. Connors seconded the motion. Motion passed 6-0.

For clarification Mark Daniels asked if Suneson is requesting contours on the plan view map going forward on applications. Daniels explains that including the contours will make the map hard to read. Sturtz explains that the city has one floodplain permit application to fit multiple types of construction projects and that some information is more pertinent to different types of projects. McLellan read a portion of the floodplain ordinance from section five, Floodplain Permit Administration, section 8 that stated, the committee may require the applicant to furnish any or all of the following information as it deems necessary for determining the suitability of a particular site for the proposed use and the information becomes part of the application and is retained with the application. It then goes on to list what those things are. Suneson stated that the ordinance states the committee may require the different components for the project and questioned who on the committee makes the call for what information needs to be required. There was discussion from multiple individuals about the project discussed today and whether more materials/information should have been included with the application. It was determined the correct call was made and the materials submitted with the application were sufficient.

Connors stated that if a specific question is raised ahead of time the committee could request more information from staff to bring to the meeting if it is desired. She went on to explain that for all of the city’s committees and commission, staff has to make some determinations on what information is relevant for that specific application. Suneson asked if notes could be added to the application explaining that certain areas are not applicable if that is the case. Sturtz commented that the staff’s ultimate goal is to provide enough information to make an informed decision.

Item No. 3, Miscellaneous Discussion:

It was noted the filing deadline for the January 5th meeting is Wednesday, December 17th. To date there had not been any applications submitted.

Suneson stated he had some comments to make on the Bishop Landing development application that was approved at the floodplain committee meeting on December 1st. He apologized and stated he wasn't as up to date on the floodplain ordinance as he feels he should have been. Looking at the application several times since and reading through the ordinance Suneson expressed that there were a couple things he thinks that should have been brought up by the committee that were not. In particular the general standards with regards to fill restricted in the floodplain. The ordinance states the use of fill should be limited to the elevation of individual residential/non-residential structures including driveways, repair public roads and bridges, and river or stream bank stabilization. Suneson explained that in his interpretation the use of the word limited means fill can only be used in those three ways. Suneson stated if he had looked at that section in terms of the Bishop's Landing development, he wouldn't consider that development an individual residential structure. He also stated he wasn't sure if the parking garage would classify as a non-residential structure since the developer marked it as commercial on the application.

Suneson also noted that the committee didn't discuss the fact that they are going to change the width of the floodplain more than 10%. Sturtz commented that Sherri Stansel pointed the 10% requirement out at the last meeting and the item would have to go to council for discussion as stated in the floodplain ordinance. Suneson stated he missed that requirement before and if he had been aware it would have raised more of a red flag for him than it did. Sturtz complimented Stansel for making the catch and pointing it out to the committee at the meeting. Sturtz also stated if the application is one going through for preliminary plat that it goes to council as part of the preliminary plat and that it would be going to council January 27th. Connors noted that is the preliminary date and explained that it could change and be in February. January 27th would just be the first opportunity for the item to go to council if the applicant and everything stayed on schedule. Sturtz stated that it is a rare occasion that for an application to come through with this specific stipulation. Stansel commented that it may be the first time since the ordinance was re-written. Sturtz again stated he was grateful that it had been pointed out.

Suneson stated that in hindsight it's such a large and expensive project that he should have spent much more time examining the project and reading through the ordinance to make sure he was fully aware of all the details. He stated that if the committee had talked about the different ordinance issues at the meeting his vote may have been different and he apologized for coming in unprepared for the amount of discussion that should have taken place.

Stansel commented that the committee was not specific in it's discussion of fill in the floodplain and restrictions as far as fill goes. The committee also did not discuss the definition of fill. She stated that this Bishop Landing development application is a good example of something that would have come through the committee before the floodplain ordinance was redone. Stansel commented the desire to stay above FEMA's minimum floodplain requirements. Sturtz commented that we are above minimum FEMA standards. Suneson commented that he wants to make sure we are not setting a standard going forward with the Bishop Landing development application. Sturtz stated that legal is looking into the discussion and staff is waiting for their final opinion. He followed up that there are several things in the ordinance that have become somewhat outdated and could use some updating.

Suneson agreed and stated that some definitions could also be clarified. As an example Suneson noted the parking structure on the Bishop Landing development application and whether it would be defined as a structure according to the current definition. Connors explained that the parking structure was marked as commercial on the application because in the building code a multi-family structure is considered commercial. This development does not have any actual commercial components as far as retail. It's just the way it's processed through the building permitting process.

Stansel commented on FEMA's clustering guidelines and that she could see other ways to develop this area but acknowledged that was ultimately up to the developer.

Sturtz called for a motion to adjourn. Connors motioned to adjourn, seconded by Suneson. Motion was approved 6-0. Meeting adjourned at 4:06 p.m.