



ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION MOTION FORM 20160615 008a

Date: June 15, 2016

Agenda Item: The Grove at Shoal Creek Planned Unit Development

Motion by: Peggy Maceo

Seconded by: Mary Ann Neely

RATIONALE:

Whereas, Imagine Austin sets a vision for our City to be one of complete communities that is natural and sustainable, prosperous, livable, mobile and interconnected that identifies a need for more infill parkland within walking distance of homes in many established neighborhoods, and for a variety of parkland types; and

Whereas, Imagine Austin recognizes that Austinites enjoy an easy connection with nature and have a strong environmental ethos and consider parks a core part of what makes Austin special; and

Whereas, Austin prides itself on being among the top cities in the country for parkland per capita; and

Whereas, Imagine Austin states a beautiful system of outdoor places for recreation and environmental protection will define Austin as a world class city and as we grow into a more compact city we will also have an increase need for parks and open space; and

Whereas, by strengthening our green infrastructure, including parks, open space and creeks, Austin can protect the natural environment and enhance quality of life; and

Whereas, the City of Austin's Planned Unit Development (PUD) ordinance provides a number of "Tier Two" criteria for determining the extent to which a PUD development would be considered superior, including a number of environmental criteria; and

Whereas, these "Tier Two" criteria provide a PUD developer with a number of options for addressing circumstances, conditions, and needs that are unique to the proposed PUD development location and surrounding community; and

Whereas, the Bull Creek Road Coalition is a neighborhood group formed when TxDOT announced it would be selling the site of the proposed Grove at Shoal Creek PUD and provided a written document outlining the community's priorities and concerns regarding development in this site; and

Whereas, TxDOT made the Bull Creek Road Coalition document regarding community concerns available to all bidders during the land sale process; and

Whereas, the neighborhoods adjacent to the proposed PUD have experienced a significant increase in the magnitude and frequency of flooding during recent rain events; and

Whereas, the City's Parks and Recreation Department has determined that the proposed parkland for the development does not achieve a level of superiority; and

Whereas, the community has expressed concern regarding erosion along the bank of Shoal Creek; and

Whereas, among the PUD development design features intended to achieve environmental superiority are riparian and grow zone areas along Shoal Creek and trails; and

Whereas, the PUD development has shown that these features will be impacted if erosion along the bank of Shoal Creek continues to occur as expected; and

Whereas, the surrounding community has expressed concern regarding flooding in the area and regarding the potential of the proposed PUD development to exacerbate the potential for flooding; and

Whereas, the PUD development has not identified or proposed a flood mitigation option that achieves environmental superiority, above and beyond what is already required by the City's Code requirements.

Therefore, be it resolved that the Environmental Commission recommends that The Grove at Shoal Creek PUD, as proposed, is found to lack environmental superiority; and

Therefore, be it further resolved that the Environmental Commission finds that environmental superiority is achievable and could be achieved if the following concerns were met:

-The amount and arrangement of parkland, including active park space as well as adequate space between and around the preserved trees and any intense activity associated with parkland that may adversely affect the health and long-term viability of those trees, lacks superiority via the City's Parks and Recreation Department's process, including credits given to parkland within the erosion area, and fails to meet the needs of the existing neighborhood, new residents and citizens of Austin. Flex space should be removed and 1,100 feet of street frontage and a minimum of 3 additional acres requested by the City's Parks and Recreation Department should be added.

-Comply with at least Three Star Rating building requirements. Due to the high level of density planned for the PUD development and lack of adequate parkland acres, a Two Star Rating provides less energy efficiency and innovative building requirements while a Three Star Rating of landscapes and housing enhances sustainable goals, higher resale value, and reduces environmental impact.

-The proposed drainage system fails to account for the increased flood risks adjacent neighborhoods have experienced in recent years. Designing the drainage system to the 500-year storm event rather than the typical 100-year storm event would provide an additional margin of safety for the neighborhoods given the magnitude and frequency of flood events the surrounding area has experienced in recent years.

-The Land Use Plan for The Grove at Shoal Creek PUD does not identify where drainage easements will be located and lacks details regarding restrictive covenants intended to address drainage. The PUD ordinance should specifically identify the easements and outline details of any relevant restrictive covenants.

-Air quality impacts to the surrounding neighborhoods as a result of an anticipated 19,000 additional vehicle trips served by the existing transportation infrastructure in this area were not addressed. The PUD should implement an air quality plan with input from the City of Austin's air quality staff, including an air quality monitoring system, and ensure the site has adequate mature trees to provide air quality benefits and mitigate noise pollution.

-Tree protections lack superiority. The tree plan should commit to preservation of 100% of the Critical Root Zone on all Heritage and Protected trees that remain in the site in applying the Tree Preservation

Criteria for Critical Root Zones Impacts. Furthermore, trees that line the property along the properties on Idlewild Road should be retained and protected to serve as a barrier to mitigate noise and air pollution, erosion control, and will offer increase green infrastructure on site.

-The density of the development is inappropriate for the location and should be reduced to a maximum of 2.1 million square feet by reducing the amount of retail and office space.

-Lack of adequate evaluation of erosion dynamics on this portion of Shoal Creek and a lack of any actions to mitigate erosion along the creek frontage in this PUD were not achieved. This erosion affects the Critical Environmental Feature, grow zone, parkland, trails, and trees. The developer should work with staff to conduct an erosion control study and implement erosion control measures identified through the study at the developer's expense.

VOTE 6-4-1

Recuse: None

For: Gooch, Maceo, Perales, Neely, Guerrero, Thompson

Against: B. Smith, Creel, Moya, Grayum

Abstain: None

Absent: H. Smith

Approved By:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Marisa Perales". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Marisa Perales, Environmental Commission Chair