



City of Rochester Hills
AGENDA SUMMARY
NON-FINANCIAL ITEMS

1000 Rochester Hills Dr.
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Legislative File No: 2010-0346 V4

TO: Mayor and City Council Members

FROM: Ed Anzek, Director of Planning and Economic Development, ext. 2572

DATE: February 1, 2013

SUBJECT: Final Preliminary Plat – Vistas of Rochester Hills (formerly known as Rochester Meadows Subdivision), City File No. 99-011, a 47-lot subdivision on 22 acres located east of Rochester Road, south of Avon

REQUEST:

Approval of the Final Preliminary Plat for Vistas of Rochester Hills, a 47-lot subdivision located south of Avon, between Rochester Road and John R. The site will be accessed from Avon Road to the north and Pembroke Drive from the south, via the Eddington Farms Subdivision, and all units will front on the internal street system.

BACKGROUND:

The applicant received Preliminary Plat approval from City Council on May 17, 2006. The applicant subsequently received three Extensions of the Preliminary Plat Approval, the last one until May 17, 2010. The Final Preliminary Plat was approved by City Council on October 18, 2010, once the Engineering Construction documents were approved. The current applicant acquired the project shortly after the Final Prelim Plat approval and renamed it Vistas of Rochester Hills. When initiating the Final Plat Approval process at the State, the applicant learned that the Final Preliminary Plat had expired two weeks prior on October 18, 2012 (a two-year approval window by State standards). The Construction Plans had been approved, an LIP issued, other permits were obtained, clearing and grading commenced, and infrastructure was installed. The City considered this as an active project and vested in their right to develop since the LIP had been issued. The State standards require that a Final Preliminary Plat not be older than two years, regardless of local permits, processes or policies. Discussions among Staff were that the only path available was to reapprove the Final Preliminary Plat to give a more current approval date so the applicant could proceed with approvals at the State level.

What has been built is what has been approved, so the request at this time is to grant Approval of the Final Preliminary Plat. At its January 15, 2013 meeting, the Planning Commission unanimously recommended that City Council Approve the Final Preliminary Plat with several conditions being added. Also in accordance with changes in state law notification of adjacent residents and a Public Hearing is also required with any Plat or Site Condo. Several neighbors came to the meeting and spoke about concerns with the detention basin. One of the conditions required that the applicant, the City's Engineers and Planning Staff meet with the neighbors onsite, prior to going to City Council, to see if there was an agreeable way to screen the pond. Please refer to the attached Planning Commission Minutes for further details.

A meeting was held onsite on January 25, 2012 with 5 neighbors representing 3 homes. The developer was present along with Allan Schneck, Paul Davis, Roger Moore, and Tracey Balint from Engineering and me. During that meeting several concerns were discussed with the most pressing being some means to screen or enhance the appearance of the "gabion" baskets used as the separation between the 2 detention basins. Gabion baskets are rock-filled wire baskets shaped as a large block being about 3'w x 3'h x 4' long.

The second condition involves turf block being used as the hard surface for the access drive for servicing the detention systems. The use of "gravel base with turf block" or a "gravel access drive" was used on the site plans of the plat approval process inconsistently. As the Engineering construction documents were developed and approved the designation of "gravel access drive" in accordance with acceptable Engineering standards was proposed and approved and built. The Planning Commission conditioned on January 15, that the turf block be installed.

During the meeting, Planning and Engineering staff members offered that a better way to make the access drive look like grass now would be to spread topsoil across the gravel that is in place, then seed and straw. The area will look like a grassy lawn yet the need for a base will be present should equipment ever need to gain entry to the basin. In reviewing this approach there would be no adverse impact to drainage or access to existing trees. The developer has expressed concerns about the cost of the turf block being installed now after he followed the approved drawings using gravel. The developer did support the improvements of topsoil and seeding to meet the same objective and he would incur this cost.

In regards to the screening; the residents offered several suggestions from trees, both deciduous and coniferous, to an arborvitae screen wall, to planting ivy on the gabion baskets to make them look "green". Staff conferred with Gerry Lee, Forestry Manager as to what specie he would recommend to meet the screening objective. Gerry offered that an arborvitae wall planted at 6' in height with proper spacing will grow in 5 years to be in the 9-10' height meeting a proper screen with height and width meeting the objective of being "solid". Anything closer will grow into one another and choke them out. Gerry's recommendation is attached.

The developer has agreed to install the arborvitae screen wall as proposed by Mr. Lee.

To summarize the 3 conditions:

1. Met with the neighbors January 25, 2013.
2. Developer will install arborvitae screen wall at his expense while enabling access for equipment as detailed by staff. The access will be a 15 foot section in the screen wall at the eastern end of the access drive.
3. The developer would like to ask the turf block condition be revised to consist of a level topsoil base application with seeding and straw to create a lawn look. Staff supports this approach as we contend it would be "greener" than using turf block which results in about a 50/50 grass and concrete surface area.

There have been no changes to the Final Preliminary Plat. There remains over an acre of open space and using the lot size averaging option, the average lot size is almost 13,000 square feet. The street layout allows for the extension of Robinson Dr. in the future with tee-turnarounds at each end. Once the applicant obtains approvals from the State, the Final Plat will be submitted to City Council for their approval.

RECOMMENDATION:

The plat plans are technically compliant and are the same as those approved previously; therefore, Staff and the Planning Commission recommend approval of the Final Preliminary Plat for Vistas of

Rochester Hills Subdivision (City File No. 99-011). Subsequent to the Planning Commission's conditions; staff has worked with the neighbors and developer to propose an arborvitae screen wall and topsoil and grass finish to the access drive gravel bed that has been installed in accordance with the approved Construction Documents.

APPROVALS:	SIGNATURE	DATE
Department Review		
Department Director		
Mayor		
City Council Liaison		



Ed Anzek <anzeke@rochesterhills.org>

Screening

1 message

Gerry Lee <leeg@rochesterhills.org>
To: Ed Anzek <anzeke@rochesterhills.org>

Fri, Feb 1, 2013 at 11:32 AM

Ed,

I suggest using arborvitae for screening the pond location you identified. Forestry uses 6-7 foot, B&B, Emerald Green (3-4' wide x 15-20' tall) or Nigra (4-5' wide x 20-30' tall). They should be 9-10' tall in 5 yrs, if they are properly planted, watered and fertilized. The arborvitae should be able to withstand the deer browse enough to provide good screening.

Gerry

--
Gerald Lee
Forestry Operations Manager
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