

Reno City Council Meeting, 11/28/2018, 6:00 PM

Daybreak Development re-zoning request\*

Wood Rogers representative (Dunling?) was allowed to open the topic and made the following points.

- The Daybreak project will increase the flood storage capacity from what it is in its natural state.
- The wetland area will actually increase.
- The housing mix is a good fit for the area and follows the Reimagine Reno plan.
- There's a critical housing shortage and there are only 4400 buildable lots available in Reno.
- The Reno Planning Commission approved their plan wholeheartedly.

The representative of the Reno planning staff supported the development.

- Flooding, traffic and Mercury contamination issues have all been addressed.
- The TM Flood Management authority hired a consultant to review the flood analysis.
- The developer has come to agreements with the Reno Fire Department (RFD) and Parks Dept.
- The developer will sell land for a school to the school district at market price.

Councilwoman Brekhus asked about why different flood models were used in the analysis. Steve Strickland (Wood Rogers engineer) said that one was used for larger coarser features and one was for smaller features with more detail. The flood model combines the Truckee River flood model and the Southeast Connector flood model. Simpler models are used for small flows within the development.

Jay Aldean (Truckee River Flood Management Authority) made the following points.

- Reno and Washoe County have not remapped the area for flooding per the latest FEMA data. This may be because it will show that more homes are in the flood plains.
- There is new flow-rate data.
- He had made some comments (questions? Concerns?) to the developer that have not been addressed.
- There are a number of issues that need to be addressed before he can say their flood mitigation scheme is adequate.
- The ground water is only 1-4' below the surface. There is not a lot of room to make additional floodwater storage.

Councilman Delgado "I don't know why this project is before us now given the number of concerns that have not been addressed. I'm concerned that we may be making a situation like the North Valleys."

Councilwoman Weber "We build routinely in flood plains so I would ask Councilman Delgado to take a step back comparing this project to the situation in the North Valleys. From what I've heard the mitigation in that area (Daybreak) is appropriate."

Councilwoman Duerr "This area is called a critical flood zone. What does that mean?"

Mr. Aldean “Our flood model doesn’t go down that far. The intent was to prevent building in the flood plain.”

Steve Strickland “We can’t address flooding issues that are off our property.”

Fire Chief Cochran “We have tentative agreement with Daybreak developers that mitigates our concerns. They will provide a ladder truck company that would handle the increased call volume.”

The public comment period split into supporters, who had a financial stake in the project, and the public that was uniformly opposed. The supporters were realtors, builders, developers, and trade representatives. The supporters all argued that we needed the jobs and the housing. There were 7 opponents that made the following points.

- Reimagine Reno specifies not to build in a flood plain.
- The Army Corps of Engineers said not to build on this specific site.
- Nine tributaries feed Steamboat Creek and they are all subject to flooding.
- The developer has done no recent testing for Mercury contamination after their earlier tests showed some high levels of contamination.
- Who will be responsible to clean up the Mercury?
- This area is not like any other area in the Truckee Meadows.
- Traffic on Mira Loma is already dangerously heavy. It will get much worse with this development.
- The 4700 homes may bring 9700 more cars producing a traffic crisis. How will fire and police emergency services get through?
- There is no computer model for flooding in the East Side Subdivision.
- The development will raise the flood elevation downstream in violation of the master plan.

Tom Dunn spoke representing the RFD firefighters. The development should have a dedicated station, but this is not part of their plan. Our firefighters are presently stressed: we have fewer firefighters than we did 10 years ago.

Public comment was closed and the discussion returned to the board.

Councilwoman Duerr “I spent more time with the applicant than almost anybody. I think it’s a great design. But development in a flood plain is highly discouraged. It is one of the most dangerous projects in the area. Double Diamond is in my ward and has chronic flooding problems. Flood insurance disbursements are being denied because the soil is moving when it is saturated and it is considered an earthquake event. A 50-year flood on the Truckee River can produce a 100-year flood event on Steamboat Creek. Global warming will produce more rain and worse flooding. I can’t make numerous of the required findings.”

Councilwoman Weber “This is a no-brainer. We need the housing. We need the jobs. We need the housing! This project has it all. I really don’t understand why we don’t move forward. We need this project for the City of Reno!”

Councilman Bobzien “We are policy makers and not technical experts. I’m particularly concerned about the open questions from Mr. Aldean. I can’t make the findings to move forward. It just seems like it’s not quite there. We’ve had a number of meetings about this project, but this is the first time we’ve had a deep-dive conversation.”

Councilwoman Duerr “The big question is ‘Just because we could build in the flood plain, should we?’ Do we fill up the entire area (with development) and channelize the water. The engineers can design a solution, but do we want to lose our natural sponge?”

Councilman Delgado “We are very aware of the housing crisis. We hear about it every day. But, we have committed to having a greener city. Building here would not be in accord with our plan not to build in a flood plain. Also, the traffic studies on Mira Loma and South Meadows have not been completed yet.”

Councilman Delgado moved to deny the re-zoning proposal. He was joined by Brekhus, Bobzien, Jardon, and Schieve. Weber voted against his motion.

\*These notes were taken during the meeting and may contain errors and misinterpretations. Statements ascribed to individuals may not be recorded verbatim.