

Sumter City-County Planning Commission

March 23, 2011

PD-04-15 (Rev 4), Hunters Crossing (City)

I. THE REQUEST

Applicant: Pinnacle Properties LLC of Sumter

Status of the Applicant: Owner

Request: Revise existing approved lot plan to remove rear alleyways, modify community open space plan, and convert 41 of the approved 44 ft. wide lots to 20 – 37 ft. lots and 21 – 60 ft. wide lots.

Location: Vicinity of Mason Rd. and Stamey Livestock Rd.

School District: 2

Size of Property: 152.92 acres

Present Use/Zoning: Residential/PD

Proposed Zoning PD

Proposed Use of Property: Residential Subdivision

Tax Map Reference: 202-00-01-039 and others

Adjacent Property Land Use and Zoning: North-Agricultural/AC
South-Commercial/GC
East-Agricultural/AC
West-Agricultural/AC

II. BACKGROUND

The Hunters Crossing Planned Development is a mixed use planned development (PD) encompassing over 152 acres of land on the east and west side of Mason Rd. between Broad St. and Hwy. 521. The development was originally approved in 2004 to accommodate a mix of commercial and residential development and to date has only seen development in the residential

portion of the PD. There have been three previous revisions to this planned development since the original approval; the current proposal will represent the fourth revision. The following is a synopsis of all previous revisions:

Revision 1:

- Increased the number of approved lots from 366 lots to 540 lots.
- Changed approved lot sizes from 257 lots @ 65 ft. x 125 ft. and 109 lots @ 100 ft. x 100 ft. to the following
 - 84 lots @ 44 ft. x 100 ft.
 - 234 lots @ 44 ft. x 125 ft.
 - 105 lots @ 50 ft. x 100 ft.
 - 36 lots @ 50 ft. x 125 ft.
 - 81 lots @ 65 ft. x 125 ft.
- Implemented a traditional neighborhood development design through the inclusion of rear alley access on the portion of the development between what is now known as Ruger Dr. and Musket Tr.
- Decreased the required side yard setbacks from 5 ft. to 3.5 ft. and from 10 ft. to 3.5 ft.
- Reduced the front yard setback on parcels with rear alley access from 20 ft. to 15 ft.

Revision 2:

- Removed the home daycare prohibition in the specified uses and added home daycare for up to five (5) children as a permitted use.

Revision 3:

- Revision 3 was a staff level revision as a minor change that permitted 60 ft. lot widths in Phase 3, Section 1 of the development because it resulted in a decrease in the overall number of lots approved for this section and was a lot width that was within the approved spectrum of lot widths approved in Revision 1.

This 4th revision to the planned development as submitted includes the following:

- Deletion of rear alley access on all portions of the PD that have yet to be platted.
- Replace 41 of the approved 44 ft. wide lots with 20 – 37 ft. (as small as 3700 sq. ft.) lots and 21 – 60 ft. (as small as 6,000 sq. ft.) wide lots.
- Revise the design of open space in Phase 3, Section 2.

III. COMPATIBILITY WITH THE 2030 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The 2030 Comprehensive Plan designates this area as Suburban Development (SD) and is influenced by Conservation Preservation (CP).



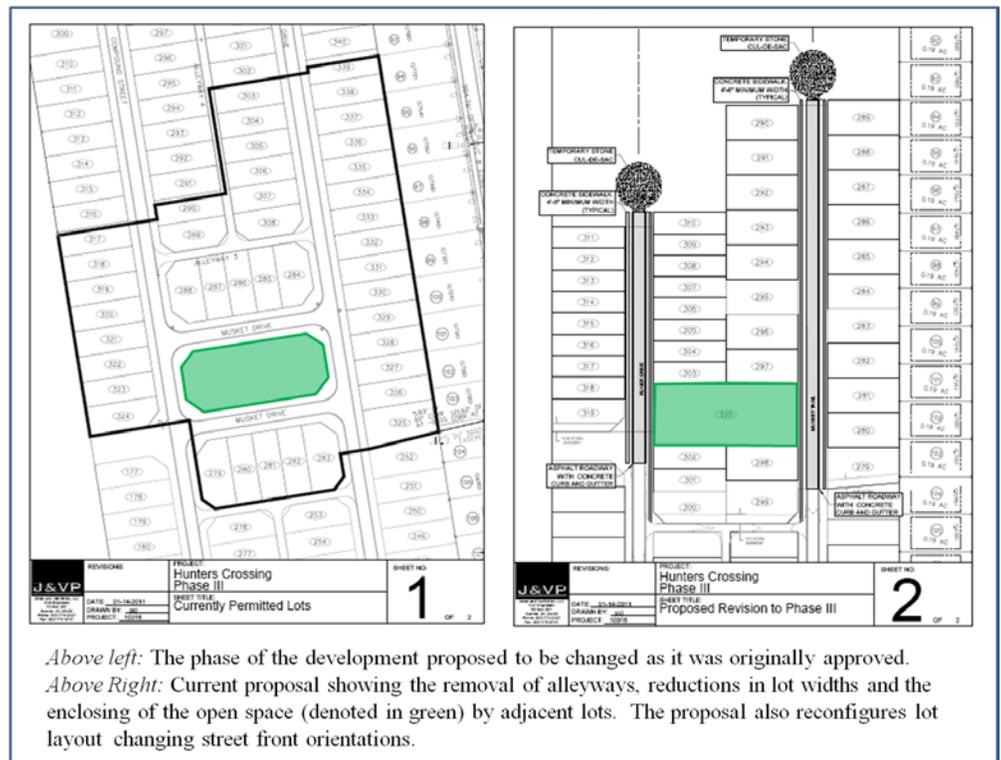
Designated Conservation Areas protect and preserve environmentally sensitive areas and prime agricultural lands from residential, industrial and commercial encroachment. Throughout the County, these areas should be preserved to ensure protection of environmentally sensitive natural resources including floodplains, streams, wetlands, water bodies, state parks, historical buildings and sites, gardens, woodlands and established natural recreational areas. Protection of these natural and agricultural resources contributes to the community’s overall health and sustainability.

The Suburban Development Area encompasses a large area surrounding the historic core of Sumter. The area is characterized by the influences of modern suburban development: the separation of distinct commercial, residential, and industrial areas. Functionally, this pattern of development amounts to a strict separation of homogenous residential enclaves; strip commercial corridors and; finite, stand alone, employment centers. The pattern requires multiple automobile trips for all aspects of life: work, play, worship, and shopping. Moreover, the development pattern dictated the expensive expansion of public services, schools, and utility infrastructure to serve a more spread out community. It is largely inefficient and costly to local government and its citizens.

The primary objective of the Suburban Development designation is to scrutinize and manage the existing development patterns, foster intentional mixed-use development and identify new commercial and industrial locations where form and design are a focus, all in a more efficient manner. Hunters Crossing subdivision is the residential portion of a larger +/-152 acre mixed use commercial and residential development. The Hunters Crossing subdivision is Phase 1 of overall development and is a single-family detached residential development on small lots. When the adjacent commercial development comes to fruition there will also be adjacent retail, office and multi-family uses that round out this development.

III. PROPOSED REVISION

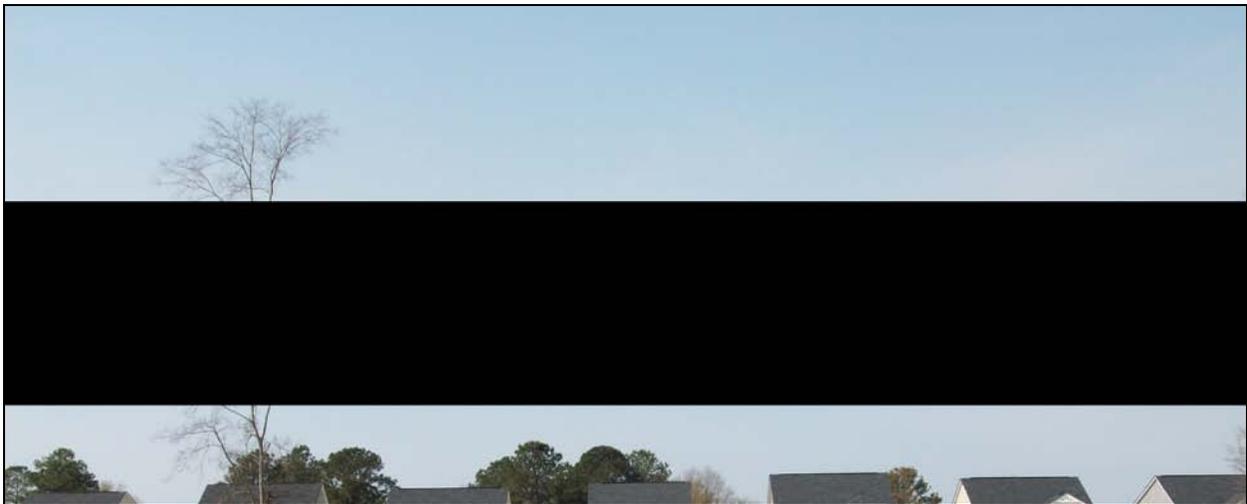
As shown in the graphic to the right, the proposed revision would change the approved lot layout for a 41 lot section of the planned development. The lot plan on the right (sheet 1 of 1) shows what is currently approved versus the lot plan on



the right (sheet 2 of 2), the proposed revisions.

This portion of Hunters Crossing was originally conceived as a Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) design, with a network of back alleys and a central open space surrounded by the street network creating cross access on an otherwise very long (approximately 37 lots) uninterrupted block of houses. The original plan creates a central green space that can be utilized by the residents in this portion of the development and gives an additional sense of space through the implementation of the alley network. The phase of Hunters Crossing under review is the site of the narrowest lots with the smallest lot area currently permitted (4,400 sq. ft.) and as such, the open space as originally designed helped to mitigate the impact of smaller lot development in this phase.

The latest proposal (sheet 2 of 2) discontinues this TND approach through the elimination of rear alleys and the removal of mid-block street access around a central open space. As proposed, the community open space becomes sandwiched between four (4) residential lots and loses much of its functionality. From a design perspective this proposal is poorly conceived, and creates a density and lot area seen nowhere else in this development or within the Sumter Community.



The request is to convert 41 of the approved 44 ft. wide lots to 20 – 37 ft. lots as small as 3,700 sq. ft. in size, and 21 – 60 ft. wide lots. While Planning Staff has no issue with increasing the lot width on 21 parcels to 60 ft., our primary concern is with the proposed 37 ft. wide lots.

The current builder within the development proposes to place the same product currently being constructed on the 44 ft. wide lots, shown in the photo above, on the proposed 37 ft. wide lots. In the current development to the immediate south of the area targeted for revisions, there is approximately 15 ft. between structures. With a reduction in lot width, the spacing from structure to structure will be compressed, almost halving the amount of open space between units, additionally each lot will lose at minimum 700 sq. ft. in area.

As part of the analysis of this request, Planning Staff has requested a typical lot layout showing the largest building the parcel could accommodate. A typical lot layout was not provided by the

applicant at the time of publication of this report however information has been provided regarding the largest product planned for the 37 ft. lots. The graphics on the following page show the dimensions and typical appearance of said product.



Sq. ft.: 1,626 sq. ft.
Plan Name: Townsend
Rooms: 3 Bedrooms, 2.5 Baths
Style: Single Family

The Townsend floor plan with one-car garage is the largest dwelling (26 ft. x 55 ft.) proposed for the requested 37 ft. wide parcels. Structure dimensions are shown to the right.



The two-story structure is approximately 1,626 sq. ft. in size counting both floors, the overall footprint of the building is 1,430 sq. ft. resulting in approximately 39% lot coverage not counting driveways or accessory structures.

The Hunters Crossing subdivision meets the minimum 25% open space requirement for a planned development but it is primarily met through the provision of sidewalks on at least one side of the street. Frankly, this approach does not meet the spirit or intent of usable open space. For a project with 540 lots, Hunters Crossing is woefully under planned in the open space category. And, as lots get smaller the more critical usable open space becomes. While changes in density could be compensated for through design aesthetic and provision of real usable open space, the overall development as conceived does not make accommodations for the type or style of open space that becomes necessary when density is increased to the level currently proposed.

IV. TRAFFIC REVIEW

The roads impacted by the Hunters Crossing development are Mason Rd., Broad St. (US 76/378), Camden Hwy. (US 521), and Stamey Livestock Rd. The 2009 average daily traffic (ADT) these roads are as follows:

- Mason Rd. – 4,000 ADT operating at level of service (LOS) ‘A’
- BROAD St (US 76-378) – 24,200 ADT operating at LOS ‘B’
- Camden Hwy (US521) – 11,500 ADT operating at LOS ‘A’
- Stamey Livestock Rd. – 2,900 ADT operating LOS ‘A’

The phase proposed to be implemented in this request will generate an additional 230-249 trips per day beyond the current traffic load. On December 24, 2004 a Traffic Impact Study (TIS) was

undertaken for the residential portion of the Hunters Crossing Subdivision. At that time, the lot build-out plan for the development was 369 lots. In revision 1 of the planned development, the number of approved lots increased from 369 to 540 lots. As such, the current traffic study on-file must be revised with appropriate mitigation recommendations implemented prior to final plat approval for the 370th lot. Additionally, this TIS does not take into account the impacts of any commercial development slated in Phase 2 of the PD. When Council approved Revision 1, no condition required an update of the traffic study.

At full residential build-out in Phase 1, Hunters Crossing will generate approximately 6,000 trips per day. There is currently only one access point that meets paved City road standards located on Mason Rd. Once on Mason Rd, a majority of the traffic (60%) will access Broad St., a four-lane divided highway with an unsignalized intersection, where the two roads meet.

Alternate access to the development could be made available from Stamey Livestock Rd. at Old Field Rd. if the existing road was upgraded from dirt and clay to pavement. This would alleviate the amount of traffic going to Broad St. via Mason Rd. thereby directing traffic to a signalized intersection where Stamey Livestock Rd. and Broad St. intersect.

The current single access point presents safety and congestion problems and there has been no timeline indicated as to when alternate access to the subdivision, through the completion of Old Field Rd. will be implemented. Currently there are 272 platted approved lots with one paved access and two subpar, almost impassible emergency access points connecting to Mason Rd. and Stamey Livestock Rd.

We strongly recommend that specific timing for the completion of these two remaining access points be addressed as part of this request. Planning Staff has discussed the timing issue with the applicant's representative. To date, no firm timeline has been proposed for implementation of a secondary permanent access to the subdivision. Moreover, Hunters Crossing received zoning approvals to construct 540 units with no transportation mitigation or conditions to help the local road network. Current City Policy insists that development mitigate its impacts.

V. SUBDIVISION-PLANNED DEVELOPMENT REVIEW – MARCH 8, 2011

Three issues were discussed at Technical Review related to the following: fire access, open space plans and the typical lot layout for a 37 ft. wide lot.

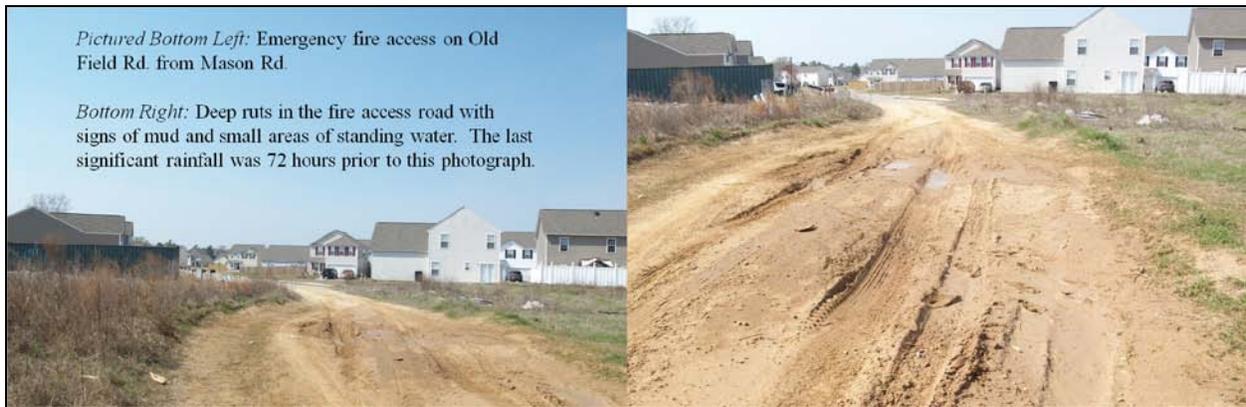
Fire Access – Robbie Rickard, Fire Inspector for the City of



Sumter stated that he has serious concerns about the safety of and ability for a Ladder Truck to access the subdivision from either end of Old Field Rd.

The subdivision currently has 272 approved platted lots with only one paved access from Mason Rd. As shown in the graphic on the previous page, there are two other locations on the property that at some point will become paved roads integrated into the fabric of the subdivision.

Neither of the two unpaved access points meets safety standards for a ladder truck to safely get into the subdivision in an emergency. Both accesses are sand and clay and have not been stabilized through the addition of gravel or other durable surface. As shown in the photographs below, these dirt drives are susceptible to rain and could cause access issues for a fully loaded ladder truck during a storm event.



On a March 1, 2011 meeting with the applicant’s representative, Planning Staff discussed the issue of fire access and overall subdivision access. At that time, Staff requested that the applicant present a timeline for installation of one or both paved access points on Old Field Rd. To date, the applicant has given no indication on the timing for installation of one or both fully paved access points. Due to the existing number of dwellings already constructed within the subdivision, upgrades to fire access should be addressed through the establishment of a finite date for installation of paved roads.

Open Space – as part of this proposal, the applicant proposes to remove the road network from around the open space and make it an interior lot instead of a central open space. The community open space previously approved is designed to be bounded by two portions of Musket Dr. as a standalone open area acting as a “central” park. As previously stated, At the March 1, 2011 meeting with the applicant’s representative, Planning Staff discussed the importance of keeping the central open space accessible on all sides and suggested implementation of two one-way streets to keep the open space separate from adjacent parcels. At the March 8, 2011 technical review meeting, the applicant’s representative suggested implementing an 8 ft. wide sidewalk on the north and south side of the open space as proposed on sheet 2 of 2 shown on page 3 of this report. After discussion of the design and use implications of the space, Planning Staff believes this is not a preferred alternative to the previously approved stand-alone open space.

Based on subsequent conversations with the applicant’s representative, it is Staff’s understanding that plans are being developed that reconfigure the proposed open space so that the road network is implemented as originally approved. As of the publication date of this report, revised plans have not been provided to Planning Staff.

Lot Layout – As shown in the proposed lot layout on page 3, Staff has concerns about compressing the open space between units. As shown in the image to the right, the existing street rhythm creates a sense of space while still achieving density, based on the current proposal a reduction in lot width will result in approximately half of the space between structures being eliminated. The request to alter the approved lot plan through the removal of alleyways while increasing density in one portion of the development raises concerns of “how close is too close” in a development that meets the bare minimum requirement for open space. Consider the minimum lot width for single-family development in all of the City’s zoning districts: R-15 – 100 ft.; R-9 – 75 ft.; R-6 – 60 ft.; and GR – 60 ft. Again, consider minimum lot area: R-15 – 15,000 sq. ft.; R-9 – 9,000 sq. ft.; R-6 – 6,000 sq. ft.; and GR – 6,000 sq. ft. This request proposes 3,700 sq. ft., 37 ft. wide lots. While deviations to ordinance requirements can be supported—clear justification combined with design advances are necessary.



Pictured Above: Typical 44 ft. lot development south of the area proposed for changes in lot width. It is estimated that there is at least 15 ft. between structures as currently developed.
Pictured Below: Close up of building spacing on 44 ft. lot.

Planning staff has requested a lot typical in order to better form an opinion. As of the publication date of this report, this information is still pending.

VI. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

When reviewing complex changes to previously approved developments, careful consideration must be given to how those changes impact the overall development. There are a variety of issues at play in this request which have brought to light larger issues related to the development.

The changes proposed to lot layouts that include the reduction in lot widths and the removal of portions of the street network and vital open space are of concern. A 3,700 sq. ft. parcel for a +/- 1600 sq. ft. dwelling is exceedingly small and dissimilar to any detached single-family development currently present in the community. In general, the tradeoff for smaller lot sizes is

the provision of well designed quality open space that has not been proposed as part of this request. At this time, Planning Staff does not believe the applicant has provided sufficient justification for a reduction in lot widths from 44 ft. to 37 ft.

In addition, there are safety concerns related to access in this development. Access issues can only be addressed through the provision of a concrete timeline for implementation of additional paved access points. There has been serious concern expressed about the utility of Old Field Rd. for emergency access due to substandard dirt and clay road beds that are susceptible to washing out and filling with water. 300+ residential lots being accessed by a single point that meets all safety standards puts undue stress on the transportation network and is a formula for disaster should there be a medical or fire emergency when alternate emergency access routes are impassible due to weather conditions.

VII. PLANNING COMMISSION – MARCH 23, 2011

The Sumter City-County Planning Commission at its meeting on Wednesday, March 23, 2011, recommended approval of this request to remove rear alleyways, and to convert 41 of the approved 44 ft. wide lots to 20 – 37 ft. wide lots and 21 – 60 ft. wide lots in the Hunters Crossing Subdivision located in the vicinity of Mason Rd. and Stamey Livestock Rd. subject to the following:

- Submission of a site plan with a redesigned street network around the community open space as shown in the plan titled “Hunters Crossing Phase III Currently Permitted Lots” Sheet 1 of 2 prepared by Jones and Van Patten, LLC Civil Engineers dated 01-14-2011.

VIII. CITY COUNCIL – APRIL 19, 2011 – FIRST READING/PUBLIC HEARING