

New housing development brought before city council for public hearing

By Michael Manny August 25, 2020

FLAGSTAFF, Ariz. – After much discussion, an empty property at 1002 N. Fourth St. could soon be home to a new housing and business development.

The Flagstaff City Council held a public hearing to amend the zoning code of an undeveloped 13.65 acre parcel of land from medium density residential to highway commercial during its August 18 virtual meeting. Patrick St. Clair, current planning manager for the city of Flagstaff, gave a presentation on the proposal and answered questions for council.

The property owner, Flagstaff at Fourth, LLC, a subsidiary of Scottsdale-based real estate development firm [Caliber Companies](#), is proposing a horizontal mixed used development.

According to [proposal documents](#), the development would include four four-story apartment buildings, a 4,756 Square foot clubhouse, 6,000 square foot commercial building and recreational space.

The apartment buildings, referred to as “The Elkwood Flagstaff Apartments” in submitted site drawings and other project documents, will include 224 total units. Each building will include nine studio apartments, 31 one bedroom/bathroom units and 16 two bedroom/bathrooms models.

Of those units, 22 (10 %) have been designated as affordable housing, that will accept housing choice vouchers from the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing Vouchers will be accepted as well, according to St. Clair’s presentation.

Councilmember Jim McCarthy discussed what he has been hearing from his constituents, noting that there are a few concerns that people frequently express.

“When I’m out in the community and I talk to people, that there’s three main ideas that come across to me. One is that people are really tired of large buildings in Flagstaff, the other is that they don’t want sprawl here,” McCarthy said.

McCarthy though, went on to voice his support for the proposal.

“We need reasonably priced housing here in Flagstaff, we sorely need it,” McCarthy said. “So, when I look at this project, I see that first of all, it is not student housing. A lot of people are really sick of high density student housing, this is not student housing.”

The commercial building part of the project is required to be built to a “vanilla shell” finish according [to St. Clair’s report](#). With this agreement, heating, ventilation and cooling (HVAC) units, lighting, bathroom plumbing, electrical outlets and concrete floors will be finished before a tenant moves in.

The [site](#) is surrounded by Northland Preparatory Academy, Knowles Elementary School and Sinagua Middle School, as well as the Sinagua Heights neighborhood. Vice Mayor Adam Shimoni expressed concern about children in the area crossing the street at Butler Avenue to get to the nearby schools.

“I think that there needs to be a crossing at that point, or we’re just going to continue to see kids playing Frogger trying to cross that road,” Shimoni said.

Councilmember Jamie Whelan said that she was also concerned about children crossing the street to get to the nearby schools, as well as the impact on traffic in the Butler Avenue and Fourth Street area.

“It just feels like once again, when we have a community that is saying traffic, traffic traffic, we’re putting the cart before the horse and these developments are coming in, and we have no way of dealing with them for years until our capital improvements are done.” Whelan said.

A capital improvement project to widen Butler Avenue from the project site on Fourth street is currently in the works, according to the presentation.

While there were no public comments during the hearing, [five emails](#) from the public have been received since the project was introduced in two neighborhood meetings, October 29, and December 19, 2019.

Dewey Kettering sent in a comment to council regarding the development October 17, 2019, and lives in the nearby Sinagua Heights neighborhood. In an email, Kettering said the buildings will impact the view in his neighborhood.

“If allowed four-story structures atop the property will be above the tree canopy, affecting the view shed of those in proximity,” Kettering said. “With the high density the traffic will also increase significantly.”

When reached for comment, Caliber Development Project Manager Courtney Bring said the height of the buildings should not be an issue.

“We feel that we’ve really gone out of our way to design it in a way that will be instantly appealing, and not an eyesore,” Bring said.

The Council, with the exception of councilmember Austin Aslan, voted to read the Direct to Ordinance Zoning Map amendment by title only, and will vote to adopt ordinance 2020-21 during their Sept. 1 meeting.

Sources:

Dewey Kettering, resident, Sinagua Heights. deweykettering@gmail.com

Courtney Bring, Development Project Manager, Caliber Companies.

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City council phone number: (928) 213-2015

Paper:

<https://www.buildcaliber.com/flagstaff-apartments-az.html>

<https://flagstaffaz.new.swagit.com/videos/74807#1700961>

(Documents attached at bottom)

https://agenda.flagstaffaz.gov/docs/2020/CCMTG/20200818_1075/4763_3rd_ZMA_Staff_Report.pdf

[lides.pdf](#)

[https://agenda.flagstaffaz.gov/docs/2020/CCMTG/20200818_1075/4763_Flag %40 Fourth CC_Slides.pdf](https://agenda.flagstaffaz.gov/docs/2020/CCMTG/20200818_1075/4763_Flag_%40_Fourth_CC_Slides.pdf)

https://agenda.flagstaffaz.gov/docs/2020/CCMTG/20200818_1075/4763_Emails_from_the_Public.pdf