

**MINUTES  
CITY OF DARIEN  
PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION MEETING  
March 4, 2015**

**PRESENT:** Chairperson Beverly Meyer, Ron Kiefer, John Laratta, John Lind, Lou Mallers, Ray Mielkus, Pauline Oberland, Ken Ritzert, Michael Griffith – Senior Planner

**ABSENT:** Susan Vonder Heide, Elizabeth Lahey - Secretary

Chairperson Meyer called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. at the City Hall – City Council Chambers, Darien, Illinois and declared a quorum present and swore in the audience members wishing to present public testimony.

- A. PZC 2015-02: Carriage Green Country Club, 8700 Carriage Green Drive. Petitioner seeks an amendment to the special use approving the Carriage Green Country Club, Ordinance O-31-72, in order to construct a practice facility, including teeing area and practice greens.**

Mr. Michael Griffith, Senior Planner, reported the petitioner wishes to construct a practice facility to be located adjacent to the ponds to the west and northwest of the club house. He reported the plan includes netting along both sides of both teeing areas.

Mr. Griffith reported the proposed practice facility is located within the wetland and 50 foot wetland buffer area surrounding the wetland. He reported DuPage County must certify the plan complies with the Countywide Stormwater and Floodplain Ordinance before the City can issue a permit. Mr. Griffith reported the City Engineer will review the grading plan to ensure compliance with stormwater management.

Mr. Griffith reported he received a couple emails supporting the proposal and also an email concerned with the netting and safety.

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Mr. Bob Bergdoll, CEO, Carriage Greens Country Club, stated Carriage Greens is proposing a practice facility with a north and south practice area. He stated the north area will be for youth programs, lessons, academy and the south area for area warm up before public golf.

Mr. Bergdoll reported Carriage Greens wants to bring the teaching of golf to the community. He stated Carriage Greens is going through a cultural change and no longer deemed an outing golf course. He further stated Carriage Greens is a diamond in the rough and this year the staff has been mentored on equipment and the course will be following the same care as Hinsdale Golf Club and Butler National.

Mr. Bergdoll stated they will be bringing the course to a higher standard and putting in the practice facility. He stated they have been approached by two golf schools and look forward to

encouraging youth golf. He further stated long term this change is something that Darien can be proud of.

Commissioner Oberland questioned if the 18<sup>th</sup> hole would remain.

Mr. Bergdoll stated hitting to the range is over 300 feet and there is also safety netting there.

Commissioner Oberland questioned year round golf.

Mr. Bergdoll stated they put in temporary greens and they have twenty carts on hand if for any reason the weather would change they would be ready.

Chairperson Meyer questioned if the course would have lighting.

Mr. Bergdoll stated there will not be lights.

Commissioner Kiefer questioned the flooding in the wetland. He stated he is concerned about the netting and securing it in the ground.

Mr. Bergdoll stated Dupage County did not have any objection with the wetland. He stated they did require that the netting to be three feet from the ground in order to allow animals to pass. He reported the range is 15 feet above the area and the poles will be 8 feet down with concrete and dirt above.

Commissioner Ritzert asked if he had a sample of the netting.

Mr. Bergdoll provided a sample of the netting to the Commission.

Chairperson Meyer questioned if they were aware of the high water level in the wetlands.

Mr. Bergdoll stated they performed a wetland survey and it is well fed. He stated if the water is low it is fed through the well and it is used for irrigation on the course.

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Chairperson Meyer questioned what the course plans on doing if there is a torrential rain.

Mr. Bergdoll stated if rain over flows, the north side of the range is 15 feet above the water level. He stated none of the area is floodplain.

Commissioner Mallers questioned if the area to the west ever experiences any flooding.

Mr. Bergdoll stated that as far as he is aware there is no flooding to the yards.

Commissioner Oberland stated the proposal does not appear to be adding anything to the area.

Commissioner Kiefer stated he was concerned that the addition of the poles will add to the flooding because there will be less opportunity to soak the water.

Mr. Griffith stated because the project is in the wetlands the County and the City Engineer will have to review it for drainage.

Commissioner Mallers questioned how this proposal going to affect the existing wetland.

Mr. Griffith reported the petitioner will have to get approval from the County.

Chairperson Meyer opened the public hearing to anyone wishing to present public comment.

Dale Schaefer, Creekside Lane, stated his home is across from where the action is going to take place. He stated that he purchased his home in 1998. He displayed photos of his backyard.

Mr. Schaefer stated it has been an enjoyable experience overall living in the area. He further stated there is water in the area and that his back yard flooded three days last year. He further stated the golfers have to go around the flooded areas. Mr. Schaefer stated the proposal will affect property values. He also stated the ground below is very saturated and he is concerned that it will bring additional water to his yard.

Mr. Frank Noverini, Creekside Lane, questioned why Wight and Company is not available to answer any questions. Mr. Noverini stated the 13<sup>th</sup> hole driving area is too close to the homes and there are going to be balls hitting the homes if someone shanks the ball. He stated the value of the homes will be decreased.

Kelly Glisan, Lake Ridge Drive, stated the family of the trust cares about Darien and the community and that want to keep Carriage Greens a golf course and not sell out to a developer. He stated the best use for Carriage Greens is to keep it a golf course. Mr. Glisan referenced other communities who turned their land into Section 8 housing and a religious institution. He stated Carriage Greens generates tax dollars and that the petitioners are willing to put in a million dollars without asking the City for any assistance. He further stated he would like the Committee to consider supporting this proposal.

~~Don Carkhuff, Creekside Lane, referenced Cog Hill and asked the Committee to envision the netting. He stated it is an insult to the people who live in the area to have their view destroyed.~~

Steve Knorps, Creekside Lane, stated he respects the people and Carriage Greens but he is concerned how the proposal will not depreciate the property values. He stated there will be 40 foot high nets which will deter people from purchasing homes in the area.

Mr. Knorps stated he is concerned for safety and flooding. He stated he has water to his back door when it rains. He further stated he has already spent thousands of dollars fixing his foundation. Mr. Knorps stated he cannot see messing with wetlands and that they are not adding value but devaluing the homes in the area.

Byron Wyns, Wight & Co., engineer for the petitioner stated they are not disturbing the wetlands. He stated they are only working within the buffer. Mr. Wyns stated they are

reshaping the existing area with minimal fill. He further stated there is turf grass there now. Mr. Wyns stated that they will be submitting full engineering with staff.

Commissioner Laratta questioned the stability of the residential land and the golf course land.

Mr. Wyns stated there is groundwater and they will be conducting a boring to test the soil to see if it is structurally stable and to handle the loads. He stated there will be an engineered solution in order to install the poles.

Commissioner Lind asked if the petitioner has had preliminary discussions with the County regarding drainage. He asked if there is a better design to improve the area to control some of the water that is there now and possibly making a deeper pond.

Mr. Wyns stated without doing some major grading it would be problematic. He stated presently the water is draining to the pond and they can put in some native plantings for a small buffer area to the areas where they would be putting in the netting.

Commissioner Lind asked if the County is aware of the spongy ground referenced by the homeowners.

Mr. Wyns stated he was not aware.

Commissioner Lind questioned if there are any other more palatable netting.

Mr. Wyns stated the black netting is the most disappearing material. He stated it is lightweight and minimizes the number of poles.

Commissioner Lind stated he is not a golfer or designer but asked if the layout cannot be oriented towards the homeowners.

Mr. Wyns stated it has to be in a north south direction in order for it to be useful.

~~Mr. Griffith stated several of the residents are questioning the plan is filling in the floodplain or the wetlands. He asked the engineer to elaborate on what actually is occurring.~~

Mr. Wyns stated the area is not in a floodplain and they are not filling in any area prone to flooding. He stated any fill will be outside the wetland boundary and they will be doing some grading in the buffer area but still maintaining overall drainage towards the pond. Mr. Wyns stated there is already turf grass and the County is allowing turf grass and reshaping in the buffer area.

Commissioner Ritzert questioned if the grade will be raised.

Mr. Wyns stated they will raise the grade slightly in the peninsula area. He stated the fill is minimal and will not take up volume because it is not in a flooded area. He further stated they

are outside the floodplain. Mr. Wyns stated a lot of the water near the pond is groundwater and a low lying area the area so it stays saturated.

Commissioner Kiefer questioned if is where the netting is going.

Mr. Wyns stated that is where the netting is going that as stated, soil borings will be done and designed to take care of what soils are there.

Frank Kalisk, Royal Oak Road, stated that he is a 40 year Darien resident and would not like to see Carriage Greens as anything but a golf course but he would not like netting in his backyard. He asked if there is an alternate plan instead of the netting.

Terry Knorps, Creekside Lane, stated she is a realtor and has lived in Darien over 30 years. She stated she is all for Carriage Greens but the homeowners who live there did not sign up for this. She stated she cannot sell something that she does not believe in and asked the PZC to consider the homeowners and devalue of the homes.

There was no one else in the audience wishing to present public comment.

Mr. Bergdoll addressed the devaluation of the home comments. He stated that the netting is 92% error and almost invisible in sight and in depth for protection. He further stated the professionals have designed the netting for protection. Mr. Bergdoll stated the homeowners knew they were at risk for golf balls when they purchased their homes on a golf course.

Mr. Bergdoll stated devaluation is a matter of opinion and suggested the property value will increase. He stated that he too is looking for a home on the golf course. He stated the proposed changes at Carriage Greens will increase valuation of the homes and provide junior amateur tournaments. He further stated they cannot provide tournaments without a practice area.

Commissioner Oberland questioned if it was possible to provide arborvitae or trees to hide some of the netting.

~~Mr. Bergdoll stated they are open to working together. He stated the netting will not be there year round.~~

Mr. Griffith stated a landscape plan can be a condition of approval.

Commissioner Mallers stated he lives on the fourth hole and Carriage Greens is important to him. He stated he applauds improving it and making it more name recognizable but he is concerned with the devaluation and the floodplain and stormwater. He stated he is uncomfortable and would like input from the City Engineer before we can move forward. He further stated that there still seems to be a lot of unknowns.

Mr. Lind stated the County's concern is the stormwater and not the netting.

Commissioner Laratta stated he is torn because of the resident concerns. He stated he needs more information.

Commissioner Kiefer agreed. He stated this Commission listens to views of the residents. He stated that he agrees to improving the business but not at the cost of the residents.

Commissioner Ritzert stated they are improving the golf course for the people of Darien. He questioned why they cannot use a different ball and eliminate the netting.

Mr. Berdoll stated the Cayman Ball is a lighter ball but the velocity is still there.

Commissioner Oberland stated the golf course can be sold to a developer and there can be homes out the back yard. She stated there has to be some kind of compromise to agree on it.

Commissioner Mallers asked if more information can be provided.

Mr. Griffith stated there is an option to continue and ask the developer to come back with a landscape plan, engineering plan and more details regarding the County's review.

Commissioner Kiefer stated he would like the petitioner to address the concerns of the homeowners.

Mr. Neil Christensen stated he attended a meeting at the golf course held on Sunday and suggested extending the outreach to the residents.

Mr. Griffith stated the Sunday meeting was not a City arranged meeting.

The petitioner stated each notice was hand delivered to the names on the petition and bordering the property. He stated that they were trying to reach out to communicate with neighbors. He stated that they will certainly do it again.

~~Commissioner Mallers made a motion and it was seconded by Commissioner Laratta to continue the meeting subject to the petitioner providing an engineering plan, landscape plan and how they are addressing the wetland issues.~~

**Upon roll call vote, THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY 8-0. Commissioner Vonder Heide was not present.**

Mr. Griffith stated that the City will send out a notice 15 days prior to the residents on the notification list. He stated that staff encourages the petitioner to meet with the residents as well.

## MINUTES

**Commissioner Lind made a motion and it was seconded by Commissioner Mielkus to waive the reading of the February 4, 2015 Regular Meeting Minutes.**



Upon voice vote, **THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY 8-0.** Commissioner Vonder Heide was not present.

Commissioner Ritzert made a motion and it was seconded by Commissioner Kiefer to approve the February 4, 2015 Regular Meeting Minutes.

Upon voice vote, **THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY 8-0.** Commissioner Vonder Heide was not present.

**CORRESPONDENCE**

None.

**OLD BUSINESS/PLANNER'S REPORT**

None.

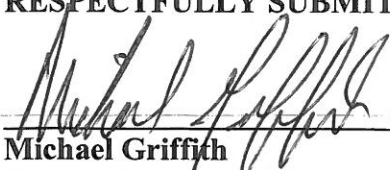
**NEXT MEETING**

Mr. Griffith announced that the next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, March 18, 2015 at 7:00 p.m.

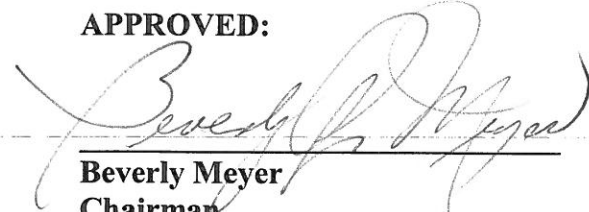
**ADJOURNMENT**

With no further business before the Commission, Commissioner Kiefer made a motion and it was seconded by Commissioner Mielkus. Upon voice vote, **THE MOTION CARRIED unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 8:30 p. m.**

**RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:**

  
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Michael Griffith  
Senior Planner

**APPROVED:**

  
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Beverly Meyer  
Chairman

