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City Council Passes Lake Nasworthy Development Plan

by Chelsea Schmid | Nov 11, 2013

In Brief:

- Scott Polikov, a representative of Gateway Planning presented the Lake Nasworthy development plan to City Council last Tuesday
- Council discussed opportunities made available by adopting the plan, however stressed it is only a guideline
- Many citizens spoke out in favor of the plan, only a few opposed based on water concerns
- Polikov says next step is to move aggressively into zoning
- Council passed the plan unanimously

The Lake Nasworthy development plan moved into another phase last week at the City Council meeting, when Council members unanimously approved the proposal.

Multiple local groups and authorities, planning organizations and the public have contributed to the development plan over the past 12 months, which included a \$335,000 survey to determine what to build in which areas, and gauged public sentiment on individual sectors of proposed development.

Before the Council, Scott Polikov of Gateway Planning, one of the entities that has been involved in the planning process over the past 12 months, gave a brief presentation on the objectives of the project.

Polikov began by stressing the value of the project. "I want to declare victory with you," Polikov said. "This may be the most important issue before you today...but the long-term preservation and opportunity of Lake Nasworthy is your gem and your jewel. And you've got a lot of important neighborhoods out there and a lot of business interest," Polikov continued. "In that regard, we focused on the issue of linking tourism and the neighborhoods, and I think we've met that balance."

The current plan divides development projects into five different themed zones, which include nature and education centers, water and trail sports and two commercial areas that would see the addition of resort hotels and restaurants.

Some citizens voiced concerns over the project at the last public meeting held on Oct. 21, and the majority of those worries circulated around the extent of commercialization the plan may allow for and whether development would result in property taxes rising.

While even the majority of those who expressed these views at that meeting were in favor of the project, there were still



The Lake Nasworthy development plan was unanimously passed at last Tuesday's City Council meeting. (LIVE! Photo by Lauren Lopez)

other who dissented. Not many, however, spoke out last Tuesday in favor of rejecting the plan.

“I’ve gone to all the meetings, and I’ve met with the lake residents out there, and I think the majority of them are for this,” said councilman Rodney Fleming, “This is just a game plan...it doesn’t mean that we’re going to do these things...what we’re doing, it just says that these are the spots where we could do this at,” Fleming continued.

Fleming further stated that adopting the plan would be beneficial for the future, as it would not only help developers, but may also help find developers. “If we didn’t accept this, that’s the problem I’m going to have,” Fleming stated, “because we just paid \$360,000 for a game plan that we are not going to accept.”

“I don’t have a big problem with the study,” said local farmer Lee Bell, with a heavy Texas drawl “hell, it’s a pretty good study for about \$35,000. Now, once you pay 10 times too much for it, yeah I guess, we ought to approve it. Maybe that’d make us not look too stupid,” he said, “but sometimes I wonder if I’m the only one who notices the elephant in the room?”

Bell went on to state that he believes there are a whole lot more people opposed to the study than assumed, and mentioned problems with infrastructure and water concerns.

“I would say this whole outfit depends on water,” Bell said, “and we don’t have any water. I mean, have y’all thought about maybe putting a dirt track out there?” Bell asked. “That’s maybe what we need, a dirt track.”

Other Lake Nasowrthy residents spoke in support in of the plan, but stated that it should be perhaps put on hold until storm water runoff issues are addressed.

“We’ve got anything from a six inch river to a foot by our house,” said a resident.

As Fleming stated, Polikov emphasized that the plan is just that: A blueprint for future action.

“This is a recommendation and a pathway to opportunities,” Polikov said. “That’s all this is, is a framework of opportunities. You’re not committing to anything today you’re telling the neighborhoods and the markets and the staff what the options are so you can have rational discussions down the line when opportunities present themselves.”

Polikov stated that the next objective would be for planning committees to work aggressively with the City on zoning standards so that as projects are set in motion, all legal guidelines and restrictions have been set.

Zoning issues were also a concern at the last public meeting, where some feared that changing the zones of their neighborhoods would spur rash commercialization. Both Polikov and Peter A. Ravella of PARC, another entity involved in the planning stated that public input would be a determining factor in all decisions made and encouraged citizens to speak their mind on issues that concern them.

Council moved to adopt the development plan, and it passed unanimously.