

Swapping golf for homes

Dreamland Villa course could be razed for 228 two-story homes

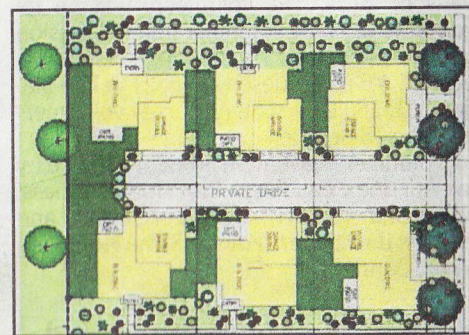


Independent Newspapers/Richard H. Dyer

The Dreamland Villa Golf Course, above, could be replaced with 228 two-story homes, shown in an architect's site plan to the left, in a plan to be discussed Feb. 19 by the Mesa Planning and Zoning Board. Cluster homes are planned, as in an architect's rendering below. The board on Jan. 15 continued discussion to the February meeting on rezoning the property to remove the Maricopa County senior overlay; and a preliminary plat, or map, for the new single-residence housing subdivision. The nine-hole course is generally northwest of East Albany Street and North 57th Place, south of University Drive. See story inside.



Submitted graphic



Submitted graphic

Mesa planning board in February to discuss removing age restriction overlay for new homes near Dreamland Villa

By Richard H. Dyer

Independent Newspapers

Plans for replacing the Dreamland Villa golf course with 228 two-story residences and removing an age 55-and-up senior overlay will be discussed by the city of Mesa planning board in February.

The nine-hole course is generally northwest of East Albany Street and North 57th Place, south of University Drive. Adjacent unincorporated Maricopa County housing subdivisions of Dreamland Villa and Velda Rose have age-restricted, 55-and-up senior overlays.

The Mesa Planning and Zoning Board was to consider the project Jan. 15 but the developer's attorney, W. Ralph Pew of Pew and Lake PLC, asked for a month's continuance to Feb. 19, according to a letter e-mailed to John Wesley, Mesa planning director.

The continuance will allow the applicant time to work with city staff on design criteria for a requested Residential Small Lot 2.5 zoning classification in a Planned Area Development, according to the letter signed Mr. Pew.

"The purpose of this request is to allow the applicant additional time to continue working with city of Mesa staff in develop-

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— Richard Wiland
Dreamland Villa resident

ing a project which is consistent with the residential density envisioned by the General Plan for this area and to more fully implement the design criteria established for the RSL2.5 zoning category except as may be modified through justifications provided in the PAD," he wrote in the letter dated Jan. 14.

Several residents who said they were from the Dreamland Villa and Velda Rose housing subdivisions met briefly with Mr. Pew before the Jan. 15 meeting and agreed to provide him with their e-mail addresses for future correspondence. One local resident, the leader of the group, declined to comment on their concerns.

Top complaints of area residents are that the housing subdivision will allow families, and concerns with traffic in the neighborhood, Staff Planner Lesley Davis said at a Jan. 14 board study session. Two neighbor-

hood meetings were held, she said.

The removal of the age 55-and-up senior overlay also is a concern of local residents, John Pawloski, a resident of Dreamland Villa, said in a phone interview Jan. 16. He said he attended both neighborhood meetings and plans to attend the Feb. 19 planning board meeting.

Losing the golf course is another concern, Dreamland Villa resident Richard Wiland said in a phone interview Jan. 16. He mailed a copy of the notice of public hearing with a letter to the *East Mesa Independent*.

"Two-hundred-and-twenty-eight homes in that little area. We hate to lose the golf course, hate to see them close it down. Nine-hole golf courses are really hard to find," he said in the phone interview.

Traffic, noise from families and lack of

parking are also concerns, Jole Jones, part of a grassroots effort passing out petitions against the project, said in a phone interview.

"Over 800 signatures on it, objecting to the high-density zoning. By Feb. 19 I think we can double that number," she said.

The developer should keep the age-restricted zoning, she said.

"Now to come in with family, to put children in the middle of our project, is a concern," she said. "Sounds like we hate kids. We don't; we all have them."

The property is designated as medium density residential in the city's General Plan, for six to 10 dwelling units per acre, Ms. Davis said at the study session. The developer is seeking 7.2 dwelling units per acre.

Each home would have a private yard, fenced by a 6-foot block/masonry wall; and a 4-by-8-foot front porch, she said. Each motor-court entrance will come off of a public loop drive around the development, she said.

"The prospective builder is proposing to build what they're calling a garden-court housing product," Ms. Davis said. "It's sometimes called motor-court or cluster building. What it is, is it features six homes

Homes

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that front on a shared courtyard and then they have a motor-court-drive entrance that they all share."

The 32-acre area is slated to be developed by Williams Lyon Homes, according to a document prepared by Iplan Consulting and provided to the planning board. A loop street network connects private drives with Albany Street. Residents will have close access to 56th Street, University Drive and Main Street. Similar homes have been built at Lyon's Gate Gilbert, according to the document.

Built-in design elements are required by the city of Mesa with RSL2.5 base-zoned properties, Ms. Davis said.

"So they are required to comply with six additional design elements within the subdivision to justify the reduced lot size that they are proposing, but it helps them get to a higher density for a single-residence product," she said.

Varied elevations are needed in a housing subdivision with small homes, she said.

"We feel that due to the size and housing type that they've got in the subdivision – they are very small homes – it would be very easy with these two-story homes for it to feel kind of like there's a canyon that you are driving through or

in-between when you are in those private spaces between those homes; you want to make sure you don't feel like you are being swallowed up by two-story homes that are fairly close together," she said.

Chairman Randy Carter held up a color graphic of two-story homes and said, "This is what they are proposing for their diversity?"

"Yes," Ms. Davis said.

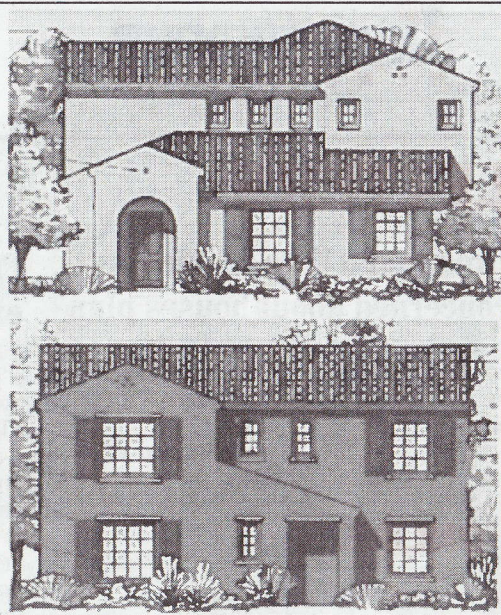
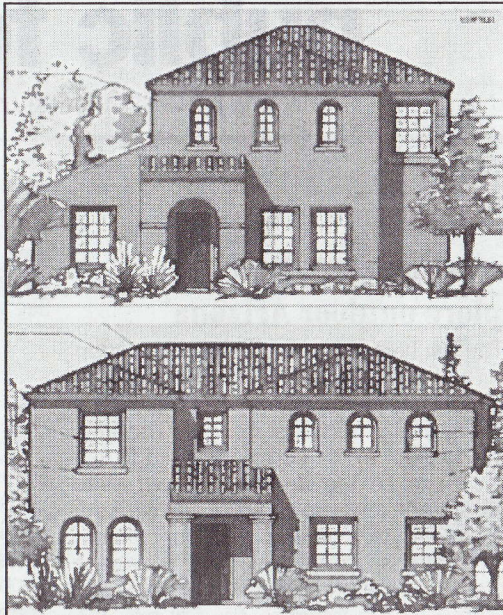
"Not enough diversity. From my view," Mr. Carter said.

A board member commented on the number of homes to be on the property.

"My initial reaction – that's a lot of product," board member Michael Clement said at the study session.

"I'm thinking of the access. That's a lot of traffic. Like how many more sardines can they put into this?" Mr. Clement asked. "I would anticipate some pretty vocal neighbors on this."

Three items on the Jan. 15 agenda pertained to the 32-acre project at 5656 E. Albany St., but only two were continued to the February meeting. The Mesa Planning and Zoning Board on Jan. 15 voted to recommend that the Mesa City Council approve rezoning the property from Maricopa County R1-8 to city of Mesa RS-9 AS (Age Specific) to establish city zoning on property annexed in 2008. The owner is Dreamland Golf Limited Partnership LLP and the applicant was the city of Mesa. Voting for the recommendation were Chairman Randy Carter and board members Brad Arnett, Vince



Submitted graphic

Elevations for the Farnsworth housing subdivision were in an architect's rendering in a document from Iplan Consulting and provided to the Mesa Planning and Zoning Board.

diBella, Lisa Hudson, Suzanne Johnson and Michael Clement. Vice Chairwoman Beth Coons abstained, citing a potential conflict of interest.

The two items that were continued to the February meeting were: rezoning the property from RS-9AS to RSL2.5 PAD, which would remove the Maricopa County senior overlay; and a preliminary plat, or map, for the new single-residence housing subdivision of Farnsworth.

The Mesa Planning and Zoning Board meets

at 7:30 a.m. the third Tuesday of the month for a study session and 3:30 p.m. and 4 p.m. the third Wednesday for a study session and meeting at the lower and upper Mesa City Council Chambers, 57 E. First St. Agendas are at www.mesaaz.gov/planning.

Post your opinions at arizona.newszap.com. Managing Editor Richard Dyer can be contacted at 480-982-7799, via e-mail at rdyer@newszap.com or on Twitter at RHDyer.