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Canopy Hill, the 110-acre multi-use housing development proposed for land near Union Grove High School, now consists of a total of 311 units: 188 single-family lots, 10 duplex two-story townhomes, 8 duplex ranch style townhomes and 10 multi-family rental units, as shown in this updated image.

Village of Union Grove image

By Rachel Kubik

Sept. 19, 2020

UNION GROVE The large Canopy Hill development, proposed for an area northwest of Union Grove High School, has once again had its plans tweaked.

Canopy Hill is a 110-acre, multi-use housing development that was originally suggested in 2007 but was delayed due to the Great Recession.

The project is to stretch from Highway 41's intersection with 8th Road and south to its intersection with 11th Avenue, and then one-half mile west.

The revised plan, presented to a joint meeting of the Union Grove Village Board, Plan Commission and Community Development Authority on Sept. 8, consists of a total of 311 units. Planned are 188 single-family lots, 10 duplex two-story townhomes, eight duplex ranch style townhomes and 10 multi-family rental units proposed. In addition, there will be 18 acres of park land and a future phase for senior living. This is a reduction of about 40 from 2017 plans.

Mount Pleasant-based Newport Group currently owns the property. Kenosha-based Bear Development is serving as the developer and indicated it will be owning the multi-family portion of the development. Brookfield-based Pinnacle Engineering Group is their engineer and JLA Architects is the architect.

Bear Development is aiming to break ground this coming spring. Construction of the homes is to be phased in, over about eight years.



Project history

In 2019, Bear Development presented plans consisting of a total of 523 units: 203 single family lots, 240 market-rate multifamily units and 80 senior independent and assisted living units. Village officials worked with Bear Development over the next several months to align the project with the desires of the community.

“The developer has been very receptive,” Village Administrator Mike Hawes said in an email.

After considering public feedback, a new plan that addresses several main topics was developed.

These topics include an increase in housing diversity, owner-occupied housing and a decrease in rental housing. There also was interest to include a walking trail that can service the park area and create a usable park and nature area.

The most recent concept plans presented on Sept. 8 now has 188 single-family lots, 60 duplex two-story townhomes, 8 duplex ranch style townhomes, 60 multi-family rental units, 18 acres of park land and plans for senior living.

In July, the concept plan also included land for “future public service operations.” However, due to project economics and an interest in senior housing, it was replaced with senior housing.

Bear Development has not presented well-defined plans for the senior housing component yet. It could be independent senior living, assisted living or a combination of the two. At this point, Bear Development has only estimated that 50 senior housing units will be built around 2023.

The developer will also be addressing where vehicle parking for the park area will be.

There is a 0.2 acre “buffer” area planned for the land behind three homes on Highway 45 near 7th Avenue. The buffer won’t be developed and instead will be transferred to the village or individual homeowners, Hawes said.

Bear Development plans to submit zoning applications in early October to be considered by the Plan Commission in November. Those applications will include rezoning, planned unit development, a certified survey map and preliminary plats. The project will also require an approved storm water management plan, development agreement and the creation of tax increment financing district No. 7 to overlay the existing TID No. 4. TIDs provide tax funds to finance infrastructure costs upfront. Affected taxing districts recoup those costs after the TID sunsets.

Bear will also need to submit a more detailed site plan regarding the nature area, as a part of zoning applications. “Given the hilly terrain, it will more likely be a more passive recreation area as opposed to developed park facilities,” Hawes said.

Village President Mike Aimone said in an email that he is excited to see how the project evolved in the past year to better meet the desires of the community in terms of housing diversity, park space and connectivity the village wanted to see.

“From an economics perspective, the project reimburses utility debt from the early 2000s, provides permit and connection fee revenue to defray municipal services and it adds considerable tax base down the line,” Aimone said. “It also makes our Downtown area and commercial corridors more attractive for businesses serving our community.”