



Betty Jo Mahan <bettyjo.mahan@knoxmpc.org>

[MPC Comment] Re: Connection of Hidden Meadows and Golden Meadows Subdivisions

1 message

Gerald Green <gerald.green@knoxmpc.org>
Reply-To: gerald.green@knoxmpc.org
To: William Akers <mosesthecat@comcast.net>
Cc: bradanders@comcast.net
Bcc: commission@knoxmpc.org

Tue, Aug 9, 2016 at 1:37 PM

Mr. Akers,

I am glad you appreciated my response even though I failed to convince you of the value and benefits of connectivity. I can understand your concerns and do agree that connectivity can increase traffic on some streets. This likely will be the case on your street, as it appears from the KGIS maps that your street was designed and constructed as the stub street to connect to the abutting property rather than as a cul-de-sac.

Having streets without sidewalks serve as a multi-modal corridor accommodating vehicles, bicyclists, pedestrians is common in Knox County due to the lack of sidewalks. That is the case in my neighborhood, where motorists have become familiar with walkers and bikers (who are their neighbors) sharing the street and who drive more slowly due to this fact.

Looking at the KGIS map, I wonder if the future residents of Hidden Meadow subdivision will make the long circuitous trek through Golden Meadows when the access on the proposed Hidden Meadows street to Gray Hendrix Road is much shorter and more direct. I would speculate that residents of Golden Meadows would be more likely to use the Hidden Meadows street as it would provide a more direct route to Gray Hendrix Road.

Although I can only guess what goes on in a criminal mind, I am not convinced that more connectivity leads to more crime. I recall one of my law enforcement friends stating that connectivity results in more eyes on the street, making the connected neighborhoods less attractive for criminal activity. I will see if I can find any documentation of this.

As I am not familiar with your neighborhood I will plan to visit tomorrow to see the street system and evaluate the potential for connectivity between Golden Meadows and Hidden Meadows. Your concerns will be forwarded to the Planning Commission, which will make the decision in this matter.

Regards,
Gerald Green

Gerald Green AICP

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On Mon, Aug 8, 2016 at 5:12 PM, William Akers <mosesthecat@comcast.net> wrote:

Mr. Green,

Thank you for your quick response to my email. With the conditions in today's society, we need a smaller concept rather than a larger one. Connectivity between these two subdivisions I feel are wrong for the following reasons:

First of all as I stated previously, we have walkers, runners, dog walkers, bike riders, kids playing, all in our streets.

Let me emphasize the phrase, "in our streets". We don't have the luxury of sidewalks which give these activities a safe place to occur.

Second, there is a 90 degree curve very close to where the proposed connection will occur. This poses another unsafe element to this proposal. I feel certain drivers who are unfamiliar with our streets will come out of HM subdivision at a rapid speed and accidents are bound to happen. I might mentioned that at that exact location is a house where there is several small children.

Third, to address your comment about access/egress in the event of an emergency, you referenced the need for more than one point. Currently in HM there are two points at which emergency vehicles can use and one point in GM which is it has always been. I'm sure these are more than adequate for any emergency which might occur.

Lastly, in today's world there still remains the possibility of criminality occurring. I don't know if this is a "benefit" of connectivity, but I'm certain it isn't. Connecting these two subdivisions will give these perpetrators an easy access of escape.

In this very uncertain world, I don't feel that connecting these two subdivisions is a very prudent or safe idea. I urge you to reconsider this proposal and state our case before the Planning Commission. Also I invite you to come to our neighborhood and see for yourself what I've tried to convey in my emails.

Unfortunately due to previous commitments, I will be unable to meet with you this week. Since I have stated my case in my emails and I am hearing impaired, I don't feel a meeting would be necessary.

Regards,

William Akers

Sent from XFINITY Connect Mobile App

----- Original Message -----

From: Gerald Green

To: Akers home

Cc: bradanders@comcast.net

Sent: August 8, 2016 at 9:02 AM

Subject: Re: Connection of Hidden Meadows and Golden Meadows Subdivisions

Good Morning Mr. Akers,

Thank you for your email regarding the proposed connectivity between the proposed Hidden Meadows subdivision and Golden Meadows subdivision. I understand your concerns as I have heard them expressed by many who are not aware of the benefits of connectivity. Commissioner Brad Anders emailed me to relay concerns he had heard about the proposed connection between the subdivisions. I am copying my reply to Commissioner Anders here:

Connectivity is one of those items that benefits everyone but which no one seems to want. The benefits include enhanced safety (more than one point of access/egress in the event of an emergency), decreased response time for emergency responders, improved traffic circulation and management, enhanced physical health of residents (by providing more opportunities for walking and biking), and more sustainable communities. Here are links to documents that describe connectivity and its benefits:

<http://www.lvpc.org/pdf/streetConnectivity.pdf>,

<http://pedshed.net/?p=71>,

http://documents.atlantaregional.com/transportation/tp_SRTP_Toolkit_Connectivity.pdf,

<http://www.aging.ny.gov/livableny/ResourceManual/Design/IV1i.pdf>,

I currently live in a neighborhood in which development began in the 1920's and that is connected to neighborhoods developed decades later. Rather than being a detriment, this connectivity provides more options for me to travel to and from my home and enables my wife, dogs, and me to walk through different neighborhoods improving our physical health and strengthening our social connection to the community as we meet and talk to a variety of neighbors. For most of my life I lived in an even older neighborhood that enjoyed strong connectivity to other neighborhoods. I did live briefly in a cul-de-sac neighborhood that had very limited connectivity. My strongest memory of that neighborhood is when a

tree fell across the only access road, blocking all traffic until a couple neighbors and I were able to remove the tree.

Our responsibility as staff at MPC is to make recommendations that will enable a strong, sustainable community. To do this we must look to the future and often try to swim against the tide of current practices. As staff, we believe that connectivity among neighborhoods is one of the elements that will help ensure that our neighborhoods are sustainable and still viable in the future. For that reason, and because of the benefits of connectivity, staff will continue to recommend that new neighborhoods be connected to adjacent neighborhoods whenever feasible. While we as staff make recommendations, it is up to the Planning Commission as to whether to accept and approve these recommendations.

In this case, the reconsideration of the connection between Hidden Meadows and the adjacent neighborhood is a bit complicated. The approval of the concept plan for the development included a condition that the connection be provided. The developer agreed to this and the connection is indicated on the final plat submitted for approval, which is on the agenda for next week's MPC meeting. If the Planning Commission agrees that this condition should be removed, the consideration of the item will have to be postponed and a revised final plat, with the connection removed, will have to be submitted for approval. The Planning Commission is copied on this email so that they are aware of this option.

As noted in my email to Commissioner Anders, I feel that connectivity provides many benefits to our community, some of which will become more evident in the future. Also, as noted in that email, the Planning Commission will be the body that determines whether the connection will be required. I will pass your concern on to the Planning Commission for their consideration as they review the Hidden Meadows subdivision. Also, I would be happy to meet with you to discuss this matter further. I could meet with you this afternoon after 2:00 or Wednesday afternoon after 3:00. Please let me know if you would like to meet and, if so, if one of these times work for you.

Thanks again for your email.

Regards,
Gerald Green

Gerald Green AICP

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On Sat, Aug 6, 2016 at 8:53 AM, Lesley Akers <mosesthecat@comcast.net> wrote:

Dear Mr. Green,

My name is William Akers and I live at 2638 Sherwin Road in the Golden Meadows (GM) Subdivision. This email serves as a request for your assistance with stopping the connection of the two aforementioned subdivisions. I have no knowledge as to the laws/rules as they apply to the connection of subdivisions, but as a resident of GM I submit that this action will pose a traffic issue for my subdivision.

First of all there are no sidewalks in GM and the residents have to use the street for activities, i.e., dog-walking, children playing games, etc. Also this is an older subdivision and the streets have not been re-paved in over ten years. With the suspected amount of traffic on our streets due to the connection, they will in no time become damaged and hazardous.

Second, the Hidden Meadows (HM) subdivision has already two ways to enter and exit and a third is really unnecessary. The residents of HM probably would not use the GM exit. It would be used by drivers who wish to avoid the school traffic (which is another traffic issue that should be addressed as well).

Third, we have always felt safe in GM because not having an exit at the back of the subdivision prevented the possibility for crime. Crime activity has been very low in GM since I moved here in 1991 and making this connection will definitely give perpetrators an easy escape route.

I would appreciate meeting with you and discussing the matter further.

Sincerely,

William Akers

Sent from my iPad

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This message was directed to commission@knoxmpc.org