

Greenville wrestles with expanding subdivision that has only one way in and out **Duke Behnke** - Appleton Post-Crescent

GREENVILLE - How big is too big for a residential subdivision with a single access point?

The 47 homeowners in Country Meadows have lived with Everglade Road as the lone entrance and exit in their subdivision for years.

But a developer's proposal to add 35 homes to Country Meadows, without opening a second access point, has the homeowners up in arms.

They're concerned additional traffic from the new homes will compound safety issues and that construction vehicles will tear up Everglade, as it's the only way in and out.

"Everglade is busy," homeowner Tyler Ernst said. "Now you stack 30 more homes in there? You can't walk or do anything."

"The allure was to live in a quiet neighborhood," said homeowner Jennifer Mueller.

What is the status of the developer's proposal?

The developer, North Appleton Properties, requested the village rezone 32 acres from agricultural use to single-family residential use to accommodate the first addition to Country Meadows. It also sought approval for the preliminary plat.

The Village Board last week tabled both matters. Board President Jack Anderson said that before Greenville proceeds, it needs to define the access and safety issues and whether improvements are needed to Everglade, which is a rural road with ditches and without sidewalks or streetlights.

"We need to be smarter about how we're doing these things, and I don't think we're there yet on this one," Anderson said.

Planning Commission forwards mixed recommendations

The Planning Commission voted 3-2 to deny the rezoning and 4-1 to approve the preliminary plat. Both are recommendations to the Village Board, which will have the final say.

The village's future land-use plan shows the land in question as suitable for suburban residential development, and the preliminary plat complies with all ordinances. The village doesn't require a subdivision to have more than one access point.

Commission members Anderson, Leanne Meidam-Wincentsen and Michael Simonds opposed the rezoning. Meidam-Wincentsen also voted against the preliminary plat.

Meidam-Wincentsen said she wouldn't have approved the Country Meadows subdivision as it exists today, much less with the addition of 35 homes.

"I cannot, in good conscience, make this subdivision more unsafe," Meidam-Wincentsen said.

Is a developer responsible for fixing a preexisting problem?

Village Administrator Travis Parish said the new subdivision, by itself, would have two access points – Everglade and Morning Glory Lane – but it would funnel back into the existing section of Everglade.

"Unfortunately, the existing subdivision went in with only one access," Parish said. "Probably the time to address the two accesses was at that point. We can't put higher standards on the next developer than we require from other developers."

Parish said the Glen Valley Drive subdivision had more than 200 homes with a single access point until other subdivisions developed around it.

"It's not necessarily unprecedented that there has been only one way in and out," he said.

The Village Board has discussed rewriting its ordinance to require more than one access point, but no change has been made.

Safety concerns remain at the center of debate

Access to the subdivision could be jeopardized if an emergency response blocks Everglade. That risk exists today, but residents contend it would be exacerbated with an additional 35 homes.

"It's super unsafe to get in and out of our neighborhood to begin with," homeowner Lisa Gaupp said.

Parish said the proposed subdivision would improve safety by providing a loop for buses, snowplows and emergency vehicles. "No longer would buses have to back up," he said.

The new subdivision also would have curb and gutter and sidewalks.

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