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Debra Hanna, *4th Ward*

Matthew Mayner, *5th Ward*

To: Planning & Zoning Commission
From: Mayor Brad Bleichner
Date: February 5, 2026

Subject: Mayoral Concerns regarding Jackson Green 7th Addition Preliminary Plat

Executive Summary

I am writing to outline significant concerns regarding the proposed layout for the Jackson Green 7th Addition. While, as a city, we support the continued growth of housing in Independence, we must ensure that new infrastructure serves the long-term financial and safety interests of the community. After reviewing the Preliminary Plat for this project, I recommend that the Planning & Zoning Commission request a revision of the layout before approval.

My primary concerns center on connectivity, long-term maintenance liabilities, and safety conflicts along Enterprise Drive.

1. Connectivity and Emergency Access

The current proposal features a single access point from Enterprise Drive terminating in a cul-de-sac (Brookslie Court) that is approximately 700 feet long. While this length is technically under the 750-foot maximum allowed by the International Fire Code, the design presents unnecessary risks and inefficiencies, and is currently a violation of City Code 175.37, which requires cul-de-sac's to be no longer than 500-feet. Some other items of concern:

- **Emergency Access:** A single access point creates a vulnerability. If the entrance at Enterprise Drive is blocked, emergency vehicles cannot enter.
- **Maintenance & Service Delivery:** Dead-end streets are inefficient for city services. They require time-consuming maneuvers for snowplows, garbage trucks, and school buses. Snow removal is particularly difficult in cul-de-sacs, especially if the turning radius is tight.
- **Water System Reliability:** Cul-de-sacs complicate water looping, which is preferred for maintaining fire flow and water quality.

Recommendation: I strongly urge the Commission to require the developer to explore connecting Brookslie Drive directly to 6th Avenue SW. This connection would improve traffic flow, enhance safety, and eliminate the inefficiencies of a dead-end design.

2. Conflict with Planned Trail Infrastructure & Arterial Access

The City has recently received a grant to install a trail along the north side of Enterprise Drive, which is programmed for our FY2027 budget. The current plat proposes three to four individual driveways (Lots 15, 16, 17, and potentially 18) exiting directly onto Enterprise Drive.

- **Pedestrian Safety:** Allowing multiple residential driveways to cross a public trail creates inherent conflict points between vehicles and pedestrians or bicyclists.
- **Driveway Spacing Standards:** Our City Engineer notes that under SUDAS guidelines for a Minor Arterial in a residential district, the driveway spacing from the intersection should be 145 feet. The current layout places the first driveway at approximately 127 feet, which does not meet the standard.

Recommendation: To improve safety and meet spacing standards, I recommend requiring a shared private access drive that runs parallel to the street or combining driveways. This would consolidate the access points into a single entrance, significantly reducing the conflict with the future trail and traffic on Enterprise Drive.

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3. Infrastructure Efficiency and Fiscal Sustainability

We must view this development through the lens of long-term fiscal sustainability. The current plan asks the City to accept approximately 1,200 linear feet of new street and utility liability to serve only 20 lots. With an average lot size of 0.48 acres, the density is low relative to the infrastructure required.

- **Irregular Lot Geometry:** The curvature of the proposed road creates several irregular, pie-shaped lots (specifically Lots 3, 4, and 5) and excessively deep lots (Lots 1 and 2). These are often inefficient for homeowners to maintain and difficult to assess equitably.
- **Improved Yield:** I understand that by straightening the alignment of Brookslie Drive to connect to 6th Avenue SW, the developer could possibly regularize the lot shapes. This could potentially increase the lot yield from 20 to 24 or 26 units, increasing the developer's profit while simultaneously improving the City's tax base per mile of road maintained.

4. Lack of Maintenance Access to Public Infrastructure (Lot C)

The Preliminary Plat designates Lot C to be dedicated to the City of Independence for Stormwater Management. However, this lot appears to be "landlocked" behind private residential lots (Lots 7-10) with no dedicated access easement from the public right-of-way.

As currently designed, City crews would be unable to access this stormwater facility for mowing, dredging, or inspection without trespassing on private property.

Recommendation: Require the developer to dedicate a minimum 20-foot access easement extending from Brookslie Drive to Lot C. This easement must be capable of supporting maintenance equipment. Alternatively, Lot C should be relocated to have direct frontage on the public street.

Conclusion

I believe that a "through-street" design connecting to 6th Avenue SW solves the majority of these issues. It creates a safer, more connected neighborhood, resolves the trail conflicts on Enterprise Drive, and offers a better financial return for both the developer and the City.

I ask the Planning & Zoning Commission to consider these factors and encourage the developer to revise the preliminary plat to address these issues.

Respectfully,

Brad Bleichner – Mayor