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MEMORANDUM

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL
CC: JOSHUA M. TETZLAFF, CITY ADMINISTRATOR
FROM: KEN ONDICH, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR
SUBJECT: PLANNING COMMISSION SUMMARY – CONCEPT REVIEW OF HARVEST FIELDS SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT CONSISTING OF 185 LOTS ON 63.05 ACRES ON LAND GUIDED AS R1 SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL AND RM MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL, AS PROPOSED BY JPB LAND, LLC, APPLICANT
DATE: JULY 29, 2026

Planning Commission Summary

The Planning Commission heard the above Concept Review request at their July 22nd meeting. The applicant, JPB Land, LLC, is requesting a concept review of a 185-lot single family residential development on 63.05 acres. The land is not currently within city limits, but is guided single family on the west half and medium density on the east half. The applicant intends to apply for a Planned Unit Development to allow for a more creative and efficient use of the land and proposed open spaces to allow for some lots at 42' (versus the minimum in the UDC by right which is 50') and a reduction of the side yard setback (from 7' to 6'), in exchange for additional open space and protection of environmental features (such as wetlands).

While a public hearing was not advertised, over 250 meeting notices were sent out to adjacent property owners about the public meeting and over 30 people were in attendance at the meeting, including Helena Township officials who noted that they support the annexation of the property but noted concerns about an adjacent township road. Other comments received were about phasing of the development and traffic impacts, ability to purchase adjacent lots abutting their own lots and concerns with noxious weeds on land that was cleared a couple of years ago. The applicant noted that they have not determined phasing at this time, but would expect the buildout to take about 5 years depending on market conditions. A draft excerpt of the meeting minutes are attached to this memo for reference.

It is also notable at the Park Board reviewed the concept plan at their meeting on July 14th and generally supported the concept plan including an appropriate dedication for an expansion to Heritage Park as well as a continuation of the greenway trail and interim roadside trail on Bohemia Street to connect back to Heritage Park which will allow the greenway trail to finally have a continuous route in the northeast corner of the City.

The next step in the review process, should the applicant choose to move forward, would be annexation and application for a Planned Unit Development (PUD) which would also include review of a traffic impact study. Per the Unified Development Code, no formal action is to be taken on Concept Plan reviews.

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends that the City Council review the Concept Plans for Harvest Fields and provide feedback to City Staff and the Developer. No formal action is to be taken.

Draft Minutes from the Planning Commission Meeting on 7/22/26 (as reference) regarding the Harvest Fields Concept Review:

Ondich presented the concept plan review for the proposed Harvest Fields development.

Paul Tabone and Lucinda Spanier, representing JPB Land, LLC, were in attendance. Spanier stated that they have gone through multiple design iterations, and that they are proposing a lifecycle housing community. She noted that not all houses will be built at the minimum setback measurements.

Spanier stated that every home built will have three distinct elevations and that they do not allow identical house designs to be built adjacent to one another to reduce monotony.

Seiler and Pike asked if two houses with the same floor plan can be adjacent, and Spanier stated they can be, but they must have different colors and elevations. She noted that the 42' wide lot's house design offerings are still in progress, but that they only make up 15% of the proposed lots.

Spanier stated that they ideally would begin construction in Spring 2027, with phasing taking potentially five years depending on the market conditions.

Seiler asked how long annexation may take, and Ondich stated it would be the next step. Pike asked if the prospective buyer chooses the lot and floor plans, or if the developer builds the houses and then sells them as-is. Spanier stated that they prefer to build a few houses on each lot size, and then they offer model specs to prospective buyers. Pike asked if all of the infrastructure will be built in one phase, and Ondich stated it will not. Spanier stated approximately 45 lots will be available per phase.

Pike noted that there may be increased traffic throughout the development before further phasing is complete and all roads are built out. Spanier stated that each phase will go through the Planning Commission and City Council prior to development. Seiler asked if the roads will be built to the City's requirements, and Ondich stated it would be.

Pike stated that he likes that JPB Land is both the developer and builder. He also stated that he appreciates the lifecycle community aspect of it, and that he hopes it can be economically feasible.

Meyer asked what the rough square footage of a house on the 42' wide lot will be. Spanier stated they would be between 18,000 and 24,000 square feet, slab on grade without a basement, and two stories.

Meyer opened up the floor to public comment and question, with a limit of 5 minutes per speaking time.

John Wermerskirchen, Helena Township Chair, stated that Helena Township is in favor of the annexation of the land. He stated that it would be a timely process.

Ed Nytes, Helena Township Supervisor, stated that he is concerned that W 270th St will be gravel going east towards FaithPoint Lutheran Church, and is wondering if it could be paved within the future.

Jake Parker, 806 Wencil Ave, asked if there would be the option to purchase a lot without JPB Land building on it. Tabone stated that it could be a possibility, and that they are still internally considering it. He noted that other communities have asked the same question.

Greg Pint, 1007 Lexington Ave N, asked if the development will be completed without the connection being finalized to the north and east to W 270th St and Alton Ave. Ondich noted that the traffic impact study and the phasing of the development will also impact this, but they are currently uncertain of this.

Veronica Harrison, 907 Lexington Ave N, stated that when the trees were cleared on the unannexed land, work began before 7am, which violates the City's quiet hours ordinance. She stated that the environmental impact of the tree removal was very high, and she is concerned that the proposed development will impact the tree line that is remaining. She stated she is also concerned about the concentration of the proposed housing development.

Spanier stated that JPB Land prefers to preserve as many trees as possible within a new development, and that they are easiest to maintain along the border of a development and that a good faith effort will be made to maintain them. Seiler asked if the development would be affected by the new tree preservation ordinance, and Ondich stated that it would once it is annexed into the city. Pike asked if the PUD could allow for the City to impose additional tree requirements, and Ondich stated that it can.

Meyer closed the floor for public comments and questions.

Spanier stated that JPB Land was not involved in the tree removal at this site.

Polly Cleary stated that her lot backs up to the vacant parcel, and that there has been an issue with thistle since the trees were cut. She asked if the Township can do anything about this, and Heather Taylor DuCharme, the Helena Township Clerk, provided information regarding the next Township Meeting.