

**New Smyrna Beach City Commission Meeting
Dec. 8, 2020**

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<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCFnPWTUfup3BtTrUyHaJisA>*

1. City Commissioners voted unanimously to approve the final subdivision plat and Development Plan for Sarinna Lakes, a single-family residential, Planned Unit Development (PUD) proposed on the east side of Sugar Mill Drive, north of SR-44.

The site is undeveloped now, and is owned by Meritage Homes of Florida, Orlando. Plans call for 91 lots to be developed on the 31-acre site. The project's PUD was approved in 2017, but Assistant City Manager Brian Fields said a boundary line dispute ... now resolved ... delayed the property's development until now.

Several years have passed since the original approval, so Fields said staff members reviewed the project again to verify it met the requirements of recent ordinances and updates. As a result, they also asked developers to submit a new traffic impact study.

Also, he noted the PUD was established before New Smyrna Beach adopted a more restrictive ordinance to calculate dwelling unit densities on property that contains wetlands. The development, proposing 3.3 units per acre, complies with the ordinance.

"There are elements of this plan, such as lot size (50'), that we are trying to move away from as a city," Mayor Russ Owen observed. "This Commission has worked hard to try to improve and raise those standards. But because of the legal structure we're operating under, we can't necessarily apply all of those changes retroactively to something that was approved in 2017."

Lee Susewitt, land development manager for Meritage Homes, said home sizes would range from 1,600 to 2,600 square feet. It will be a similar project to Coastal Woods "down the street," he said, adding, "I would be looking to start development right away and start selling homes in 2021." He said the community also would feature "dark sky street lighting" which illuminates roadways but doesn't shine upward.

2. The City Commission unanimously voted to authorize the city manager to negotiate with Coronado Community United Methodist Church to purchase church-owned property at 214 Columbus Ave.

The lot, which has a house on it, has an asking price of \$377,000. It is adjacent to a public parking lot that the church owns and leases to the city, providing parking for the Coronado Civic Center as well as nearby businesses. Commissioners advised City Manager Khalid Resheidat they wanted any purchase deal to include the church extending the city's parking lot lease for another 10 years. The current lease runs out on Nov. 17, 2021.

A spokesman for the church told the Commission they had received a full-price cash offer, but wanted to give the city a first opportunity to buy the property.

Resheidat said it was "essential" for the city to acquire the property because of its strategic location. City officials must get two independent appraisals before making the church an offer on the parcel. The city's Parking Fund would provide money for the purchase, as it was created to address future parking needs.

"I see a lot of nice trees on the property," Vice Mayor Jake Sachs noted. "Can we conserve some of these trees?"

Resheidat answered if the city demolishes the house (which is not a contributing structure in the beachside Historic District) to create surface parking, "we will try to maneuver and meander around the existing trees that appear to be in good shape and are good size."

Mayor Owen said he thought the city could protect the trees on the property and do a small amount of landscaping along the sides to screen off the parking lot from an adjacent house and Columbus Avenue.

3. City Commissioners voted to approve a number of changes to different parts of the city's land development and building code regulations, including streamlining the permitting process and increasing the requirement for finished floor heights above the base floodplain.

* Commissioners voted 4-1, with Commissioner Jason McGuirk dissenting, to update New Smyrna Beach's Floodplain Management guidelines to comply with the latest regulations from the National Flood Insurance Program, along with Florida Building Code requirements governing construction within a Special Flood Hazard Area. Complying with the National Flood Insurance Program ensures the city maintains its high rating and benefits residential and commercial property owners with lower flood insurance premiums, said Assistant City Manager Fields.

Commissioner McGuirk suggested the new floodplain rules could do "a lot of things that are not necessarily intended, and he cautioned it would affect many homes built decades ago whose owners may want to renovate and add on. His colleagues were wary of that issue as well, but staff members said the new rules would still permit some renovations and improvements to homes that don't meet the new standard.

The city's adopted changes to floodplain regulations include requiring the finished floor of buildings located in a floodplain to be two feet above the base flood elevation for a 100-year flood, up from the existing standard of one foot.

* Another change concerns what Fields called floodplain-compensating storage, which only applies to sites of more than one acre. He explained if a developer owns property that's in a floodplain area, and that owner wants to fill in part of the property, current requirements state if you fill in a gallon of water storage in the floodplain, you have to provide storage on site for another gallon to offset what was filled. The new requirement is more stringent: if you fill a gallon of water storage area, you must offset that by providing 1½ gallons of storage on site. Also, the effects of this filled-in area would be limited to no more than 50 percent of the existing floodplain. "The goal here is to incentivize development to protect and leave the existing floodplain in its natural state, where we think it's most effective," Fields told the Commission.

He said staff members also will look at regulations relating to grading of soil on adjacent lots to prevent those property owners from being affected by a neighboring home built to the new, higher finished floor standard.

* In another matter relating to development, Commissioners unanimously endorsed a number of updates to administrative procedures for submitting documents for land development approvals. They learned the Development Services Department has been streamlining the process to get building permits over the past year, slimming down the time period for development reviews, reducing paperwork, and adopting online/electronic processing of applications.

4. The City Commission acted on the first readings and public hearings on several other proposed changes to land development regulations, all of which will have a second (final) reading and public hearing on Jan. 12. Those include:

- Voting 4-1, with Vice Mayor Sachs dissenting, on the first reading of an ordinance allowing Mobile Food Dispensing Vehicles (i.e. Food Trucks) at certain limited locations, and assigning them as a permitted use in the Light Industrial (I-1) Zoning District. Currently, the city only allows mobile food vending associated with a special event, which was done to protect brick and mortar restaurants and other businesses that sell food. However, Gov. Ron DeSantis signed a law in July 2020 to prohibit counties and cities from banning mobile food dispensing vehicles, so the city's rules needed to be modified.
- Voting unanimously in favor of the first reading of ordinances rezoning, changing the future land use and creating a large scale Comprehensive Plan amendment for about 10 acres of land known as the Sea Star properties. The land would change from a commercial use and zoning to conservation. The Sea Star properties are on the south side of SR-44, east of South Walker Drive. The acreage was purchased by the city in October 2020 with funds from the Turnbull Creek Land Preservation bond referendum, which voters approved in November 2018.
- Unanimously agreeing on the first reading of an ordinance updating and creating a large scale Comprehensive Plan amendment for the Recreation and Open Space Element of the plan. Consultants began taking an inventory last year of city parks and recreational facilities to prepare a Parks Master Plan. The consulting group made a number of recommendations, such as requiring new residential subdivisions to provide areas for publicly accessible parks and/or play areas, continuing to develop a citywide bicycle path system and developing a five-acre (minimum size) park west of I-95. Consultants also suggested that the city consider its aging population and increase desired parks and recreation facilities tailored to senior citizens.
- Listening to the first reading of ordinances proposing to annex, rezone and change the land use for 0.43 acres at 1309 Washington St. The property currently is zoned in the county as Urban Single-Family Residential (R-4), and would change to the city's zoning of Single Family Residential (R-2).

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