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November 22, 2013

File: 215611510 430

Attention: Ms. Margaret Tusing
Manatee County
Building and Development Services Department
1112 Manatee Avenue West
Bradenton, FL 34205

Reference: The Villages of Amazon South - Special Approval Request

Dear Ms. Tusing,

On behalf of our Client, Neal Communities of Southwest Florida, LLC, we respectfully request special approval for the following Land Development Code waivers:

- 1. Policy 2.2.1.11.4 which requires all projects for which gross residential density exceed one dwelling unit per acre, or in which any net residential density exceeds 3 dwelling units per acre, shall require special approval.**

The applicant requests Special Approval for a project with a gross residential density of 1.66 dwelling units per acre. This proposed density is below the maximum allowable density of 3 dwelling units per acre in the UF-3 future land use category. Other nearby residential developments have been approved with similar densities to what is proposed with this development. Parrish Plantation, located at SR 62 and US 301 was originally approved in 2007 with a density of 1.85 dwelling units per acre. SR 62 Holdings, LLC/Cone Ranch, also located east of US 301, along SR 62, was approved in 2009 with a proposed density of 1.7 dwelling units per acre.

The *How Will We Grow?* Report describes activity centers as nodes of exchange located near large residential areas. These exchanges may include residential, commercial and retail, as well as employment, depending on the location. Activity centers typically include a greater mixing of uses, both horizontally and vertically, and include higher densities and taller building heights. Parrish was identified as an activity center in this recent report. The report says that Parrish naturally lends itself to being a future activity center because of the arterial and collector roadways in the area.

The proposed density of 1.66 dwelling units per acre is low density residential development and is consistent with and less than the approved densities of recently approved nearby residential developments. Development that includes a potential mix of residential, office and commercial will help further the goal of creating an activity center in Parrish.

- 2. Policy 2.2.1.11.4 (a) and 2.2.1.11.5 – All mixed and multiple-use projects and community serving non-residential projects require special approval.**

The applicant seeks approval to have the option of developing up to 60,000 square feet of non-residential uses, particularly commercial/retail and office/medical uses to meet the needs of nearby residents. The two commercial parcels identified on the PSP are appropriately located within commercial nodes, consistent with the requirements of the Comprehensive Plan.



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Policy 2.2.1.11.5 of the Comprehensive Plan enables properties at the intersection of an arterial and a collector roadway, as defined in Chapter 5, to seek Special Approval to allow for development of community serving non-residential uses. The intersection of 97th Street East (Moccasin Wallow Road) and future Ft. Hamer Road is an ideal location for more intensive commercial development because both roads are classified as arterial roads on Map 5-B of the Comprehensive Plan. Additionally, the second commercial parcel is within the commercial node for Road FF, a proposed collector roadway, and US 301, which is an arterial road, as identified on Map 5-B of the Comprehensive Plan. Considering these two commercial nodes, it is appropriate to locate more intensive commercial uses on roadways that are designed to handle higher volumes of traffic on a daily basis. The planned development mixed use zoning district and the review process enables the applicant to propose a mixed use community that incorporates residential, commercial and office uses. Appropriate site design, dimensional criteria and landscape buffers will ensure appropriate development of larger commercial uses near or adjacent to residents. Having such uses nearby promotes walkability within a community and reduces travel times. Finally, uses like home improvement stores or department stores are a significant distance from Parrish today. Providing for the option of neighborhood or community serving uses within these commercial parcels broadens the range of uses that may be contemplated for these parcels, so the needs of the community can be met through site development.

3. Policy 2.2.1.11.4 (c) and 2.10.2.2 - Non-residential projects that exceed 30,000 square feet requires Special Approval.

The applicant requests Special Approval to allow a maximum of 60,000 square feet of non-residential development (40,000 square feet of commercial and 20,000 square feet of office). As large residential developments continue to be developed in this area, commercial development becomes ever more important, in order to provide current and future residents with goods and services that are needed on a daily basis, while minimizing the distance and number of vehicular trips residents must take.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter. Please contact our office with any questions you may have regarding this submittal.

Regards,

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