

**STILLWATER PLANNING COMMISSION SUMMARY  
SPECIAL MEETING OF April 6, 2021  
IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE OKLAHOMA OPEN MEETING  
LAW, THE AGENDA WAS POSTED April 2, 2021 IN THE  
MUNICIPAL BUILDING AT 723 SOUTH LEWIS STREET**

MEMBERS PRESENT

Brad Rickelman, Chair  
Jana Phillips, Vice-Chair  
Mike Shanahan, Member  
Brett Allred, Member  
Preston Bobo, Member

STAFF PRESENT

Dennis McGrath, Assistant City Attorney  
Lanc Gross, Development Review Manager  
Rian Harkins, Senior Planner  
Chelsey Jones, Administrative Assistant

MEMBERS ABSENT

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER.

Chair Rickelman calls the meeting order at 5:30 PM. Commissioner Rickelman explains the procedures and process for the meeting.

2. PUBLIC HEARING:

- a. Stillwater Habitat for Humanity, **PRELIMINARY PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT (PUD21-01)**, requesting review and approval of a preliminary planned unit development to rezone from the currently zoned as Light Industrial (IL) district to Residential Single Family Small Lot Planned Development (RSS-PD) and create fourteen (14) residential lots and one (1) common area on a portion of property address as 505 E. 18<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Harkins

Rian Harkins, Senior Planner presents PUD21-01, asks if there are any questions of staff, and says that the applicant and agent are both present to speak on the item.

Chair Rickelman opened the public hearing and asked that anyone that was there to speak in favor of the proposal please speak. Chair Rickelman asked if Stephen or the applicant would like to speak first.

Stephen Gose, Gose & Associates 113 E 8<sup>th</sup> Ave and comes to speak on the following:

- Here on behalf of the applicant
- Seeking approval of a preliminary planned unit development for 14 homes at 19<sup>th</sup> Ave and Fern
- Pocket Neighborhood with smaller lots
- Community space in front of the homes for a community garden or grass areas to play.
- Access off of Fern
- Common parking area
- Homes around the perimeter
- Site is currently a lay-down yard and storage area for Habitat for their home building operations. There is currently a metal building on the site which used to be an old construction yard. There is a lot of gravel

parking and lay-down areas.

- Habitat Restore operations is immediately to the north, to the east are single family homes, to the west is a mobile home park, and to the south is Stillwater Creek.
- Water and sewer will be extended into the site from Fern, and they are working with electric for the layout of those utilities.
- There will be screening on the west and north with a 6ft opaque fence, the screening on 19<sup>th</sup> and Fern is intended to be hopefully semi opaque not a solid wood fence.
- Some of the variances they are seeking with the PUD are reduced lot sizes and setbacks, parking at a rate of two spaces per home instead of one per bedroom based on what Habitat has provided on their past homes and what they are seeing in the market, and modifications in the zoning from light industrial to single family homes.
- The site plan changed from what he is showing compared to what is in the packet. They have rotated the south lot clock-wise one lot and moved the storm shelter/playground area towards the entry to get the trash enclosure and mailboxes closer to the street.
- There are four two-bedroom homes that have been put on mixed with the threes and fours.
- They turned some of the homes to where the yards incorporate the 20-25ft utility easements that will be on the north and south.

Hilary Hunt, Habitat for Humanity spoke on the following:

- The project of the genesis was from a lack of building and land space for Habitat.
- They have built 40 homes in Stillwater and were seeing their land options dwindle.
- Long desired to build a community driven housing development and the opportunity to make use of some underutilized land in Stillwater that they had access to.
- The community design is made to foster neighbor connections.
- They would all be Habitat partner families that go through their two year vetting process and sweat equity process that they use to identify and qualify their home owners.
- They look forward to partnering with other agencies that would help them in developing the community garden aspect and also they view what would eventually become a home owners association as a sort of leadership development opportunity for their home owners that would be in this development.

Chair Rickelman asked if there were any questions from the commissioners.

Vice-Chair Phillips states that she had a few notes written down from the packet but that Mr. Gose had addressed most of them that were concerning the fencing, sidewalks, dumpsters, and where there is hardscape and where there is green. Mr. Gose responds and uses the site plan provided to show the sidewalks, parking, and drive that would all be hardscapes; and in the front of each of the homes there is a fairly large covered porch to create outdoor living spaces that are still private but open into the common areas to allow the neighborhood connection.

Vice-Chair Phillips asked about the fence along 19<sup>th</sup> and Fern. Mr. Gose responds that it will be boxed in with an opening on either side that won't be gated; the fences along 19<sup>th</sup> and Fern will allow for privacy for the rear yards but use a dog-eared fence or the off-set pickets so that you have privacy but still have airflow; and 19<sup>th</sup> isn't highly traveled but there is a good amount of traffic traversing from Perkins over to Main but nothing like on the arterials.

Vice-Chair Phillips asked about the neighborhood garden that Mrs. Hunt had mentioned. Mrs. Hunt states that they envisioned the area between the two sidewalks that separates the front porches from the parking space

lends itself to some raised beds with potential partnerships with Our Daily Bread and OSU’s landscape and horticulture departments that might come and mentor their home owners; they look forward to hosting gardening parties and opening those to the community and using that as a community driven space; and it offers leadership opportunities for the home owner and education for the community.

Vice-Chair Phillips thanked Mr. Gose and Mrs. Hunt stating her questions had been addressed.

Chair Rickelman asked if there were any questions.

Commissioner Bobo asked Mrs. Hunt what the turnover time was on the home ownership from the people that have completed their program. Mrs. Hunt asked if he was referring to the time from which the home owner applies for home ownership. Commissioner Bobo asked how long they normally keep the home. Mrs. Hunt states that they have a unique mortgage system with a second mortgage; Habitat sells the homes at cost and the full sales price reflects the market value and the appraisal; also included a second mortgage that is forgiven at 10 years granted it is the owner’s primary residence; they also write in a first right of refusal so that if a family ever leaves that home, Habitat has the first opportunity to buy that home back; and of the 39 homes that Habitat has built in Stillwater there are only two of those homes that aren’t owed by Habitat home owners.

Chair Rickelman asked if there were any other questions from the commissioners; none respond. Chair Rickelman asked if there was anyone else who would like to speak in favor of the proposal; none respond. Chair Rickelman asked if there was anyone who would like to speak in opposition to the proposal; none respond. Chair Rickelman closed the public hearing and asked for staff to present the findings and alternatives.

Rian presented the findings and alternatives and asked if there were any questions of staff.

Chair Rickelman asked if there was any further discussion from the commissioners.

Commissioner Shanahan commended Habitat for Humanity and their architect for this PUD and said that affordable housing pocket neighborhood concept is a great idea; they have seen one of these already in early March with the SUP on North Jefferson except that was directed toward rental and this is directed toward home ownership; and this is a great idea and should be encouraged more often.

Chair Rickelman asked if there was a motion.

**Vice-Chair Phillips moved to accept findings and recommend that City Council approve the proposed PUD and map amendment as presented; Commissioner Allred seconded the motion.**

Roll call:	Rickelman	Phillips	Shanahan	Allred	Bobo
	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

**Time: 20 minutes**

3. MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS FROM STAFF, PLANNING COMMISSIONERS, OR CITY ATTORNEY:
  - a. Presentation of public feedback for the 6<sup>TH</sup> Avenue Corridor Study. **Harkins**

Chair Rickelman states that we have a presentation of public feedback for the 6<sup>th</sup> Ave Corridor Study and asked for staff to present.

Rian Harkins, Senior Planner comments on the following:

- That the 6<sup>th</sup> Ave Corridor Study is a project that encompasses an area from Western to Perkins Rd and from University south to 9<sup>th</sup> Ave.
- It is a companion project to the engineering design for upgrades to 6<sup>th</sup> Ave being done by ODOT and EST currently and are reaching 15% design for that project.
- This companion study takes a broader approach to look at alternatives for transportation of other modes such as pedestrian and bikes in this study area so that we can maintain better cross connections from one side of 6<sup>th</sup> to the other and also how we can redevelop areas along the corridor and the study area to facilitate better growth and opportunities.
- Tonight there are three of the staff members from the team lead by Confluence, Marshall Allen, Terry Berkbuegler, and Christopher Shires who can give an update to where we are at and answer some questions.

Terry Berkbuegler, Confluence comments on the following:

- Has a 20 min presentation to go over and that there is information and opportunity to engage online at the Speak-Up Stillwater website which will be open for a couple more weeks as well.
- Started this a little over a month ago and initially met with an advisory committee in town and then was back last week to engage with the public as well as had some one on one meetings with some key stakeholders through the corridor.
- Tonight want to introduce who they are and what the purpose of the study is touching on what Rian already hit.
- There will be an overview of the timeline and then go over the findings and what they've seen so far.
- They are still in the learning phase just beginning to get into understanding what the community's vision and priority goals for the corridor are going to be.
- Confluence is a landscape architecture and planning firm.
- Mr. Allen and himself are located at the Kansas City office, and Chris Shires is out of the Des Moines office who is the principal planner and does work in all of the offices which are located throughout the Midwest.
- Landscape architecture and planning is what they do, they are not engineers or architects.
- They team with other experts and are teamed on this project with EPS Economic and Planning Solutions out of Denver. Dan Guimond and his team are providing the market study, financial economic analysis for the project, and when they get a little further into it start developing some concepts for some opportunity sites.
- They will be testing the viability of some of those beyond just doing an assessment of where the community in the corridor is today, they'll be helping do a litmus test or vet some of these options in the future.
- They are also partnering with HDR for the transportation aspect and also on their team is Matt Evett who is their associate principal in their Kansas City office and his focus is on urban design which they'll touch on a little bit but will come in a little later as they start creating more ideas and recommendations.

Mr. Berkbuegler went over the following:

- Not ODOT project, it is a companion project and they will take the information from them and make sure that the ideas that the community has for the land use and redevelopment along and around the corridor

either don't negatively impact ODOT's priorities and then conversely that their plans don't negatively impact what the community wants to see for the corridor.

- What can be done to make a better first impression of the community for all the travelers that are coming into town and to instill a sense of pride in the community.
- The strip is more urban with a lot of signals, crossings, and traffic.
- There is an important location by the strip from a present standpoint and the campus entrance at Monroe as well as the connection from Hester or along Hester into campus which is an area they will be studying.
- Further to the west there is more of a suburban feel, there are residences along the corridor and larger frontages as well as at the Medical Center and some office type uses.
- Western is their western boundary, 177 or Perkins is their eastern boundary and they are including University Ave down to 9<sup>th</sup> Ave.
- Looking at how the current bike and trail plans overlay where some community gateways and image making opportunities might be.
- Looking at multimodal and active transportation opportunities not just on 6<sup>th</sup> but along 6<sup>th</sup> and a big topic of conversations is going to be safe crossings across 6<sup>th</sup> Ave.
- The quality of the neighborhoods is important such as the Westwood neighborhood as well as other neighborhoods along the corridor and around downtown and what does the community see as far as protecting them and or revitalizing them.
- Looking at a couple of different locations that haven't been defined yet to create some concepts based on the input from the community for what the vision would be for those places.
- Areas worth looking at are the downtown area and the Block 34 project
- The plan process is set to wrap up towards the end of the year, they are at the tail end of the information gathering phase.
- They will use all the input they are gathering to come up with some ideas and recommendations over the summer and come back to the community later in July and August and finally wrap it up this fall.
- 4 phase project and they are getting ready to kick into the vision and input phase which will include more stakeholder conversations.
- Going over the land use map note there is very little green space or official park space in the corridor. It is heavy in the residential and next for commercial.
- For urban design, when they talk gateways, are there opportunities to define the edges of the corridor or the entry points to the corridor and create a bit of a district so there is more of a downtown versus suburban district. Something that helps to identify those entry points to campus and could be iconic or selfie moments.
- Understanding that on 6<sup>th</sup> Ave., ODOT is defining the width, how many lanes, turn lanes, and those sort of things. They will be looking at some of the other corridors that parallel that as well as cross it for if the width that is on those corridors today is appropriate or if they think there is a priority corridor for some introduction to bike facilities and what that might look like.
- They are categorizing where the bikes, people, and cars go as well as the landscaping and how to fit those things that the community wants within that corridor and within the available width between buildings or right-of-way.
- Framework is the character, they want to know what the special stories are that talk about Stillwater since they are big on authenticity in their projects and making sure that if a community has an identity or brand or something that it's true to that community and it's not just something out of a catalog so when you drive through it could just be anywhere USA.

Marshall Allen, Confluence comments on the following:

- They started off with the original kickoff meeting with the steering committee with a couple of different activities.
- One of the activities was to have them supply them with just one word that they would use to describe the corridor.
- There were some more challenging words like deadly, fast, busy, slow, congested, confined, and dangerous.
- There were also some more positive words like lifeline, opportunity, and connector.
- They asked for input for potential opportunity areas within the communities, parcels or areas that they think are important, strategically located and have the opportunity to become something greater.
- Some of those areas are the strip, around Hester with the new performing arts center, 6<sup>th</sup> and Washington intersection, the small green space along 6<sup>th</sup> Ave, the southeast corner of Hester and 6<sup>th</sup>, the area around the Duck and Maple intersection, and Block 34.
- Block 34 is an important block in the downtown core that could really provide some great opportunities. They kept hearing about a cultural corridor idea and Block 34 is nestled right within that.

Mr. Berkbuegler said that when they talk about opportunity areas in addition to these things that have been called out, another part of what EPS is doing for them is they are creating what is called a “soft partial study” and essentially going through and evaluating parcels based on the value of land with and without structures and in some cases the value of the land may be worth more than it is with a structure that’s not been kept up or may be a vacant parcel so they are creating a map and that helps them work with staff to identify some additional areas of opportunity that may not be as apparent visually but when they start running some of the numbers those can surface as some areas of improvement that they may want to target as well.

Mr. Allen returns and comments:

- Showed a map of the cultural corridor idea locating these institutions, from the Stillwater public library, the Oklahoma State Museum of Art, different galleries, and the community center asking if there was a way to physically and visually connect those different institutions and amenities.
- Looking at Duncan and 8<sup>th</sup> Ave., which are the two major arterials that connect all those, and it could extend all the way up into Oklahoma State’s campus itself in their arts corner of their campus in the southeast corner.
- While in Stillwater they used an app to ask a series of questions one of which was how would you describe the 6<sup>th</sup> Ave. corridor to an out-of-town friend and they had the ability to list 3-5 words there.
- Some of the more popularly used words were busy, congested, dangerous, ugly, crowded, and not pedestrian friendly which are some words with more challenges associated with them.
- There were some positives such as potential, opportunity, connects, vibrant, diverse, and eclectic.
- There are some people that see this corridor as a positive thing but frames this corridor as something that needs more attention and something that leaves a little bit to be desired within the community.
- They asked regardless of the potential cost, what would they select as the top five things that you would do to improve the 6<sup>th</sup> Ave. corridor.
- The first and foremost was improved safety for pedestrians and bicycle crossings, safety was a huge concern for those that attended the meeting.
- Streetscaping, street trees, and landscaping were also mentioned for more aesthetic improvements along with wider sidewalks speaking to pedestrian safety making sure there is that ample space for cars and walkers and pedestrians crossing the streets moving from the university area to the downtown district.
- They asked them what are three things you like about the neighborhoods within the study area and there were things listed such as the trees, the character of the neighborhoods, the walkability of the neighborhoods, the small town feel, the historic qualities, the potential, and the community feel.

- They asked what they think could be done to improve and/or protect the neighborhoods within the project area in the future.
- Additional sidewalks, bike lanes, streetscaping, revitalizing homes/code enforcement, and roadway conditions and traffic were the top answers.
- They were asked to list 3-5 words that describe their impression with downtown Stillwater today. Potential, walkable, historic good bones and structure, and vibrant were some of the positive words.
- There were also some answers like empty that contradict vibrant, but there was also good food and charming. A common response that they received is that there are too many dispensaries.
- They asked what things they have experienced in other places that they think would make downtown Stillwater an even better place to be.
- Overwhelmingly, gathering places and events was talked about.
- They had some discussions after the large group meeting and something that he heard in his group was that there is a desire to have gathering spaces of all sizes, large or intimate.
- The fact that there is now the outdoor patio in front of the wine bar, outdoor dining was a popular response and the amenities that go along with that.
- In general more dining options, streetscape improvements, street trees providing shade, and bicycle and pedestrian improvements.

Mr. Berkbuegler said that at the meeting for those that weren't there, they broke out into three different groups for some smaller group conversations. The following were discussed:

- One group focused on pedestrian bicycle facilities, another group that focused on neighborhoods and housing, and another one that focused on corridor development/commercial development types of conversations.
- Not all of that information is summarized yet but touching on what people identified as the most important crossings, the north-south crossings along the corridor for best opportunities for bike pedestrian crossings.
- What they want to get to is where doesn't it make sense to improve or add additional facilities such as bike lanes, more or wider sidewalks, or enhanced crossing protections.
- The locations were around the downtown area, around Washington and the strip, and those connections to campus.
- Over by the school and the Medical Center were also talked about and that is something they are going to look at.
- There was a discussion about between Willis and Ridge and maybe the opportunity for an underpass at Duck Creek.
- They are not yet sure if it is feasible or how viable it is but it was a conversation that came up and that it could provide that connection from Ingram Park to Myers Park down to the south as well as neighborhood connections for kids and families to go to and from school and potentially walk a little bit safer route.
- The signalized intersection of Western was also talked about and the improvements that have already been made with wider sidewalks and multi-use pathway up and around that north edge of campus.
- There was also the discussion of an underpass at Boomer Creek to connect with the trail system and take advantage of that wherever they can find a place for a grade separated crossing just based on the volume of traffic and speeds.
- To pull this all together and how it works in their mind is the map that they showed that was based on their initial reaction to the corridor, then they had the conversation with the community about the crossing locations and it all started to come together.

- There might be something associated where they are enhancing the gateway and signage over at Perkins, the importance of the Main St crossing, those downtown links, expanding the facilities that are on Duck today, and those connections to campus.
- There is a bit of a gap where it is more suburban and is there some mid-range area that they might want to introduce like a signal that is not there today.
- That's how it all comes together, the layers tell them something and they are beginning to see some of that now, then they will start to layer on the words that Marshall shared and that's how the ideas start to surface for them.
- Next online engagement is going live or went live 04.06.2021 and the intent is to have that online through at least next week Friday.
- There were about 90 people show up at the public meeting which was great since they are just starting to emerge from Covid.
- Based on their experience over the past years they've shifted almost totally virtual in the amount of turnout in response they've had compare that to 90 people in person they wouldn't be shocked to see another 200-300 interactions based off of people who haven't come out yet, and they are anxious to see the feedback that it gets once it all gets advertised.
- There will be another advisory meeting later this month to share an update as well and then they will start working on the initial corridor plan and then be back in July and then ultimately to the community in August and then come back to this group as well to get initial feedback.

Commissioner Bobo states that he knows Duck was discussed as a north/south corridor for biking because he was at the meeting and it was dismissed because of visibility with the Payne County building. Mr. Berkbuegler responded that he wouldn't say that it was dismissed but that at this point, it was just noted that there may be some visibility issues, but at this point they still need to be sifted through, embedded, and that they're all ideas at this point.

Commissioner Bobo asked if they know how many responses they have gotten thus far because he is on the webpage now as well. Mr. Berkbuegler responded that he didn't know if they had gotten any and that he didn't know if it was even fully prepared yet as Rian was putting some finishing touches on it before the meeting.

Rian states that there are still a few tweaks but that they have had one person this early evening give some feedback; are designing it so that the visual preference boards that were at the meeting are going to be posted as a survey question so people can vote and pick which images stick out to them; the other questions are in a survey format as well on Speak-Up Stillwater so you can go through that and people can vote as well; and they will be working with their civic engagement group to help push that information out through social media outlets as well over the next 24 hours.

Commissioner Bobo stated that he was on a pretty decent connection but that it took 7 minutes to load the page. Rian responds that there are large jpegs so it might be a little slower than normal but that they will work on that part.

Commissioner Bobo asked if there was anyway to get the data that they presented in the meeting. Mr. Berkbuegler said yes, they can get him the whole presentation if that is what he is wanting and that they will send Rian a PDF after the meeting.

Mr. Berkbuegler asked if the presentation from the public meeting got posted to Speak-Up Stillwater. Rian said no, that they are still working on getting that converted; one person shared that the images were a little small

originally so they're trying to make those larger on the survey questions so that people can see what information is on those boards. Mr. Berkbuegler said that it is a balance, big enough to read, small enough to not crash your computer. Commissioner Bobo stated that he is on a decent computer with a decent amount of video processing ability but that even on his old permit he might struggle with this page and can they make it thumbnails that people can click on. Rian responded that they can try and work on that as well.

Mr. Berkbuegler asked if there were any other questions or comments.

Commissioner Shanahan comments that when he moved to Stillwater 23 years ago and lived in the neighborhood on Ridge a block and a half south of 6<sup>th</sup>, lived there for 10 years so he is relatively intimate even though that's kind of an oxymoron considering 6<sup>th</sup> with the situation around it; the first illustration or photo he had leading into their presentation tonight looked like a very benign view of a possible corridor development and the elephant in the room is that the city not only has no design authority over the actual street design but that has little input into that; that is going to potentially create a real scar through the north and south 6<sup>th</sup> so connectivity is going to be a major issue; there is a corridor redevelopment design project that's ongoing and has their group had any connection with the other group because he thinks there's a big intersect between the 6<sup>th</sup> Ave. corridor project and the corridor redevelopment district.

Mr. Berkbuegler asked if Commissioner Shanahan was talking about the TIF district. Commissioner Shanahan responded that yes he was. Mr. Berkbuegler states that yes, they are aware of that and it's part of everything that is going into the hopper of their consideration but that yes they're aware of that as well.

Rian states that staff would also note that they've had some conversations with the Smart Growth America and the Form Based Code institute so they have some rough idea of what Confluence is doing and they're going to work to help tie those things together just like they're going to work towards helping tie the engineering design into this study as well and make sure things work as seamlessly as they can get them.

Mr. Berkbuegler commented that to speak to the elephant in the room, that there is the reason they have the firm HDR on their team, they do a lot of DOT work and they have done a lot of similar projects to this coordinating with KDOT and MODOT and that it is a conversation that you have to start and work your way through it; it helps whenever the city and the community has some sense of consistency in what they want; the fact that ODOT is out in front to a certain extent creating their concept and this redesign can be a good thing because they know change is coming; have had situations before where communities were out in front and had big ideas, then the DOT didn't have any funding or any plans to do anything in the near term and then when they did 5-10 years later energy was lost behind the vision; there can be some real benefits to ODOT already thinking about and moving forward with a project like this and this plan can feed into that; there is an opportunity that if we are all communicating and playing this right that we can hopefully leverage that project to actually implement something visible as an outcome of the project and the planning study.

Mr. Berkbuegler said that he would get Rian a PDF of the presentation and if anything comes up after they are off the call and there's something they didn't think of, Planning Commissioners can send it to Rian and he can send it to Confluence because they are still hearing and learning so all thought will be helpful.

b. Next Planning Commission meeting March 23, 2021.

4. ADJOURN.

This special meeting of the Stillwater Planning Commission was called for adjournment by Vice-Chair Phillips, seconded by Commissioner Allred at approximately 6:29 p.m. on April 6, 2021 with all members present in agreement, the next regularly scheduled meeting will be held April 20, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. in the City Commission Hearing Room, Municipal Building, 723 S. Lewis Street.

Prepared by – Chelsey Jones, Administrative Assistant

Approved by - [Approved by the Planning Commission at the 04.20.2021 virtual meeting.](#)  
Stillwater Planning Commission