

The Retreat at Bon Secour West – PUD Amendment

Staff Report: Lee Jones
Application #: ZA19-000071

COW Meeting Date: June 15, 2020
Applicant: GCOF Bon Secour LLC

Property Location: Waterway West Blvd

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: APPROVE WITH CONDITIONS

SUMMARY OF REQUEST

The applicant seeks to amend the Bon Secour Village PUD Master Plan to increase the approved number of lots in the western portion of Bon Secour Village from 21 to 28 lots.

SURROUNDING CONTEXT

The 7.31 acre property is located on Waterway West Boulevard directly west of existing residential development along Bienville Avenue. The primary land uses in the vicinity of this development are the existing single family houses associated with Bon Secour Village.

- East - the original 83-lot single family subdivision, Bon Secour Village Phase 1, and southeast is a small portion of R-2 zoning that is outside of the Bon Secour Village PUD
- North - a large undeveloped BN zoned property
- South - the Intracoastal Waterway
- West - undeveloped R-4 zoned land

BACKGROUND

2005 – The property was rezoned from ICW Intracoastal Waterway zoning district to RPC Residential Planned Community. RPC approval was granted to construct an 83-lot, single family subdivision. The RPC master plan utilized Traditional Neighborhood Development principles, such as narrow lots, front porches, raised finish floors, alley access, reduced setbacks, formal open spaces, and a system of well-connected streets and blocks. A SmartCode development handbook was adopted with the RPC containing standards for the development of the property.

2012 – The subject 7.31 acre parcel was rezoned to R-4 as part of a larger rezoning that affected 320 acres of the Bon Secour Village property.

2017 – The City applied a PUD Overlay to the property, and combined it with the Bon Secour Village PUD. Preliminary subdivision plat was also granted by the Planning Commission for a 21 lot single family house subdivision named The Retreat at Bon Secour Village. The Retreat was designed to be more of a suburban type subdivision as opposed to the original design of Bon Secour Village with larger front loaded lots and a looped cul-de-sac roadway.

January 28, 2020: Planning Commission Meeting - The Planning Commission recommended that Council approve the applicant's request to amend this section of the Bon Secour Village PUD from a 21-lot subdivision along a cul-de-sac street to a 28-lot subdivision. The Commission added two conditions to the recommendation: 1.) provide a separate construction entrance from Waterway West; and 2.) the cul-de-sac shall not connect to the existing alley behind existing lots along Bienville.

There were a number of residents from Bon Secour Village at the Planning Commission meeting who had questions and/or voiced concerns about the PUD amendment. The Planning Commission encouraged the developer to meet with the residents and try to address some of the concerns.

March 12, 2020: Developer and Bon Secour Village Homeowners Meeting. Representatives of the developer held a meeting with the homeowners of Bon Secour Village. Planning and Zoning staff attended the meeting. Major topics of discussion included providing a separate construction entrance from Waterway West to the new 28-lot subdivision and replacing the cul-de-sac with a northern roadway connection to Bienville Avenue.

May 27, 2020: Planning Commission Meeting – The Planning Commission approved The Retreat at Bon Secour West Preliminary Subdivision Plat with a condition the cul-de-sac be shifted a minimum 6 feet northward and the area between the cul-de-sac and the existing Lot 1 of Bon Secour Village be landscaped. Staff recommends this condition be added to the PUD Amendment application.

FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

High Density Residential - The Future Land Use Plan designates this property as High Density Residential (11-25 dwelling units per acre). High-density residential uses are mostly multi-family condominiums located within the beach area and in more limited instances adjacent to the larger commercial, institutional and employment activity centers and corridors.

PROPOSED PUD AMENDMENT

The applicant proposes to modify the Bon Secour Village PUD to increase the number of lots within this phase of the development. The Zoning Ordinance designates any increase in density within an approved PUD as a “Major Amendment.” Major Amendments may only be made through the rezoning process, therefore the proposed amendment will require public hearings before the both the Planning Commission and City Council.

Details of the request are as follows.

- Number of Lots: 28
- Lot Sizes: 5,222sf to 9,966sf
- Setbacks: 12’ to 18’ front yard, 12’ total for the side yards, and 15’ rear yard setbacks
- Dedicated Open Space: .81 acres (11%)
- Extension of Bienville Avenue to terminate in a cul-de-sac
- Front-loaded lots (driveway in the front of the house) as opposed to rear-loaded (access from the rear of the house)
- Requested waiver to allow a 5’ sidewalk instead of the required 6’ sidewalk, in order to match the existing sidewalk width within Bon Secour Village
- Intracoastal Waterway Pedestrian Path extension to the western property line with this phase

ANALYSIS

Plan Review

Development Form. As stated above, the applicant seeks to amend the approved Bon Secour Village PUD to increase the number of lots in the western phase from 21 to 28 lots. The original Bon Secour Village Phase 1 Subdivision was designed to be a traditional neighborhood development with a wide range of lot sizes and building types. Traditional neighborhood developments are intended to decrease in intensity from the center to the edge. The center of the current development contains a more urban form of development with small lots and minimal setbacks to allow the houses to front on the streets and cover a majority of the lot. The proposed lots are on average larger than existing lots, and the housing types are more typical of a suburban subdivision. The transition to a more suburban housing type along the edge of the development is consistent with the original TND concept.

The proposed addition to Bon Secour Village is designed with some suburban characteristics, e.g. larger lots, a cul-de-sac street, while keeping some of the original design components such as small building setbacks, large building coverage allowances, and brick paver sidewalks. All of the proposed lots within The Retreat at Bon Secour are separated from the existing lots in Bon Secour Village Phase 1 either by landscape buffers or existing alleys and streets. These design elements provide a transition between the urban form of Bon Secour Village Phase 1 Subdivision and the proposed suburban lots. The applicant indicates the proposed housing types will be similar in style and size as the existing housing within Bon Secour Village.

Waterfront Lots. Lots 1-4 of the proposed subdivision front on both Bienville Avenue and the common area along the Intracoastal Waterway. In order to avoid having a situation where these houses front on the ICW and have the rear of each house on Bienville Avenue, staff has included a condition that these lots shall be architecturally designed to have two “fronts.” The expectation is that the homes will be oriented to both the ICW and the street through the integration of architectural treatments, porches, balconies, doors, and windows along both frontages. Any fencing proposed along the ICW shall be a maximum of 4’ in height and shall otherwise meet all standards of the development. This condition will avoid having the rears of houses facing the fronts of houses across the street, as well as placing the “face” of the houses along the waterway.

Density. The proposed density of the subdivision is 3.8 units per acre. The proposed land use is single family residential. Both the density and land use are far less dense and intense than is envisioned by the High-Density Residential land use category for this area, as designated by the Future Land Use Plan.

Traffic Circulation. Prior to the January 28th Planning Commission meeting, Planning and Zoning staff recommended several alternatives to the applicant for providing additional street connections and eliminating the proposed cul-de-sac. Alternatives included: 1.) a street connection through the existing platted common area, in line with Orleans St; 2.) a new street connection into the proposed subdivision from Waterway West; and 3.) a “close” (loop street) that included open space in its center. The applicant chose to move forward with the currently proposed cul-de-sac.

At the January 28th Planning Commission meeting, Bon Secour Village residents expressed concerns about the proposed cul-de-sac. Many residents voiced support for eliminating the cul-de-sac, requesting an additional street connection to Bienville, similar to the Orleans St. connection to the east. This connection would cross an existing common area, eliminate the proposed cul-de-sac, and provide an additional access to the proposed 28 lots. This request was made by the neighbors in order to reduce traffic generated from the proposed subdivision along Bienville.

During the Planning Commission meeting, the applicant indicated the connection was not possible because of legal issues with the existing common area. These legal issues would prohibit the roadway connection across the common area. Donald Stewart, the City Attorney, reviewed the legal issues regarding the street connection at staff’s request. Mr. Stewart was unable to find any legal issues prohibiting the street connection.

Staff has continued to work with the applicant to find a solution that achieves the developer’s goals while addressing the neighbors’ concerns about increased traffic on an existing street, but that solution has remained elusive. The proposed subdivision and cul-de-sac, as designed, are consistent with the requirements of the Subdivision Regulations, with the exception of sidewalk widths and material.

Construction Entrance. Staff has worked with the developer to determine a location for a construction entrance from Waterway West Boulevard into the proposed subdivision. The construction entrance will eliminate construction traffic from utilizing the existing roads within Bon Secour Village. Staff recommends that the construction entrance from Waterway West Boulevard remain in place until 75% of the houses in this phase have obtained a Certificate of Occupancy.

A comparison of Bon Secour Village Phase 1, the 2017 PUD modification, and the proposed amended plan is provided below.

COMPARISON OF REQUEST VERSUS PREVIOUS APPROVALS			
	Bon Secour Village Ph. 1	2017 Approval	Proposed Plan
Lot Sizes	2,720sf – 9,660sf	4,542sf -22,156sf	5,222sf-9,966sf
Setbacks	Front- 12'-18', Sides-12' total, Rear – 3'	Front – 12'-18', Sides – 12' total, Rear -15'	Front – 12'-18', Sides – 12' total, Rear - 15'
Lot Widths	27'-103'	40' -85'	52'-98'
Number of Lots	83	21	28
Density	5.3 units per acre	2.8 units per acre	3.8 units per acre
Building Height	60' principle bldg, 40' accessory bldg	30' for both principal and accessory bldgs	30' for both principal and accessory bldgs
Housing Access	Rear alley loaded	Front loaded	Front loaded
Building Coverage	75%	75%	75%
Open Space	.38 acres (2.45%)	.99 acres (13.5%)	.80 acres (11%)

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the City Council approve the PUD Amendment with the following conditions.

1. A waiver is granted to allow the brick paver sidewalks to be 5' in width instead of the standard 6'.
2. The City will not take over maintenance of the brick paver sidewalks.
3. The applicant shall record and reference on the final plat covenants and restrictions with standards for Lots 1-4, requiring architectural treatments so the houses on these lots “front” on the street and Intracoastal Waterway.
4. A separate construction entrance shall be provided from the development to Waterway West Boulevard to prevent construction traffic from traversing Bienville Avenue. The construction entrance from Waterway West Boulevard shall remain in place until 75% of the houses in this phase have obtained a Certificate of Occupancy.
5. The existing alley way west of lots 1-9 shall not connect to the proposed cul-de-sac.
6. The cul-de-sac be shifted a minimum 6 feet northward and the area between the cul-de-sac and the existing Lot 1 of Bon Secour Village shall be landscaped.

