

Aaron Panko

From: Dave McKenna <davemckenna4@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, September 30, 2021 3:53 PM
To: Aaron Panko
Subject: Comments on Proposed Development of Meyers Farm
Attachments: Meyers Farm Letter.pdf

Aaron -

I would prefer to see this land remain as open space. I hope that can continue to be the case, i.e. that The Meyer Farm remains as dedicated open space, and possibly with public access bicycle or walking paths through the delightful property as an extension of existing and adjacent Hilfiker Park.

See attached comments.

September 30, 2021

City of Salem
Planning Division
555 Liberty Street SE
Salem, OR 97301

Application for 2 Phase, 138-Lot Single Family Residential Subdivision at 4540 Pringle Rd SE
Subdivision Case No. SUB21-09

Attention: Aaron Panko, City of Salem Planning Division

Land Use

This is a special 30-acre property that has been a working farm in the Morningside Neighborhood and is known as The Meyer Farm which operated under a farm trust. A majority of the Meyer Family apparently wants the farm to remain as dedicated open space, but currently the matter is in the hands of the court appointed trustee. I would prefer to see this land remain as open space. I hope that can continue to be the case, i.e. that The Meyer Farm remain as dedicated open space, and possibly with public access bicycle or walking paths through the delightful property as an extension of existing and adjacent Hilfiker Park.

A better and more responsible approach to any development there would be to: 1. Map the trees (accurately) and then 2. Locate any future dwellings (footprints) and roads and utility lines and easements, so as to miss major and significant large trees.

Traffic

Traffic Impact Study Concerns

My primary traffic concerns are the safety of the Hillrose St SE (Hillrose) & Battle Creek Rd SE (Battle Creek) intersection and the congestion at the Hilfiker Ln SE (Hilfiker) & Commercial St SE (Commercial) intersection; and the Hilfiker and Sunnyside intersection. As the new Hilfiker/Hillrose section will be the only direct east/west connection between the Kuebler Blvd connection to the south and the Madrona Ave SE connection to the north, it won't only handle traffic from the new housing development, but also existing traffic that finds this to be a more convenient east/west route. The Traffic Impact Study doesn't appear to take this into account. It also doesn't appear to factor in any traffic from other planned developments in the area. There are hundreds of new residential units in the surrounding area already approved and the relocated Costco will increase Battle Creek traffic when it opens.

Hillrose & Battle Creek Intersection Concerns

The limited visibility at the Hillrose & Battle Creek intersection is already an issue, especially if turning left onto Battle Creek from Hillrose. The hill and curve on Battle Creek just south of Hillrose limit visibility and makes a left turn from Hillrose onto Battle Creek risky for both the turning car and the approaching car. As this section of Battle Creek is two lanes only, without a center turn lane, cars must turn directly into the path of oncoming traffic and the speed limit here is 40 mph. Also, cars turning left onto Hillrose from Battle Creek are at risk of being hit from the rear by northbound traffic. I strongly recommend that the improvement of this intersection be required as part of the road project. At a minimum, Battle Creek should be widened to include a center turn lane and to improve visibility around the curve.

Hilfiker & Commercial Intersection Concerns

The intersection of Hilfiker & Commercial is already congested and the congestion will increase considerably when the new section of Hilfiker/Hillrose connects Commercial with Battle Creek. There is neither a left turn or right turn lane on either side of Commercial at this intersection and traffic already backs up on the east side of Commercial past the entrance to Walgreen's and Trader Joes. Traffic also already backs up on Sunnyside Rd SE while trying to get onto the short section of Hilfiker west of Commercial. Cars often have to sit through two light changes to get through this intersection in either direction. I strongly recommend that widening Hilfiker and improving the intersection at Commercial both be required as part of this project's approval.

Hilfiker & Sunnyside Intersection Concerns

The intersection of Hilfiker & Sunnyside is already congested and the congestion will increase considerably when the new section of Hilfiker/Hillrose connects with Battle Creek. Traffic already backs up on Sunnyside Rd SE while trying to get onto the short section of Hilfiker west of Commercial. Cars often have to sit through light changes to get through this intersection in either direction. I strongly recommend that widening Hilfiker; and, improving the intersection at Commercial and Sunnyside be required as part of this project's approval.

Tree Preservation

There is a large diameter Oregon White Oak (tree #3194), a protected tree under the code, that is in the pathway of the proposed collector and proposed to be removed. The curve radius of the collector near 12th St should begin earlier so as to avoid removal of this protected Significant Tree. This would be consistent with code when a reasonable design alternative exists. The collector should be shifted enough so that the required silt fencing which marks the protective zone around the Significant Tree is maintained throughout duration of construction of the collector, include grading, excavation, and installation for the adjacent sidewalk and entire right of way. The smallness of most of the proposed lots will prevent growth and longevity of residential trees that would otherwise add to future tree canopy and reduce energy needs for summer cooling.

After studying the plan and the report, I think the best way to protect the "Significant" trees in the grove and farmstead area is to delay construction on the nine lots containing the trees to be left until such time the subject trees become hazardous, are severely damaged (ice, wind) or die. All lots referred to are bordering the 3.64 acre "Area to Remain." If the trees are accurately mapped, the affected lots are numbers 40, 41, 56, 57, 61, 62, 63, 64 and 65. These could be used for neighborhood access to the Farmstead if it used as an outdoor education center and open space.

Another "Significant" Oak tree, (tree #4156) located in the Open Space next to 12th Street should be protected by a retaining wall which would allow more fill in the current grade dip at the Lansford Dr. intersection, and other measures to reduce the steepness of the road grade and improve sight distance on the to-be-widened street. It may also be a good idea to delay construction on the lots fronting on 12th Street, and consider re-design lots 65, 66 and 67 so they have a shared driveway.

In addition to the traffic and tree concerns, its great density is inconsistent with this part of the neighborhood. With such small lots, all the homes will need to be two story, there will be too many driveways and too little home frontage. The great views north from the farm will be obliterated. The "snake" design of a new Hilfiker invites faster speeds through the dense residential areas: more of a grid layout of the streets with Stops at every intersection would discourage motorists using the neighborhood as a short-cut between Pringle/Battle Creek and

Commercial.

In addition to the minimal size of the lots, the miniscule size of Phase 1 makes one believe they will not carry thru on the time schedule with the rest of the development, and even more traffic will be added to the currently overused routes to Commercial and to Pringle (Suntree, Mandy, Albert, 12th, Lansford, Kampstra and Hilfiker) before any improvements are made to handle the additional traffic.


Tree Removal

The Proposal is for removal (felling) of up to 70% of the existing trees. The Tree Plan is dated 2021 but it seems as if it is an outdated one. The ordinance requires a new Tree Survey conducted in the last 6 months. However, the Arborist report (see the next row of sizes) says that the trees are actually a much larger diameter, and up to twice the claimed size. This is a very serious error.

A better, and more responsible approach, especially for a pristine property, would be to honor what the City is trying to achieve, i.e. preservation of significant trees. The Planning Commission has been discussing a figure of (1) 40% to 50% tree preservation, (2) preservation of large trees of other species and including them as "significant" plus (3) requiring the tree cover and root lines to be protected (by fencing) during construction, from damage and compaction by heavy equipment.

It should be the responsibility of the applicant to respect these 2021 City goals and standards even while the ordinance is still being finalized. Of course, the applicant could maintain that they will use the previous standards until new ones are final, but they have a moral responsibility to respect the City tree preservation goals and policies and go the extra mile to do a good job in designing a responsible layout that saves the trees.

Yours Truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dave McKenna", written over a horizontal line.

Dave McKenna