

PROJECT NARRATIVE FRESHWATER APARTMENTS

The Freshwater Apartments will be a valued residential option for the City and Navarre. Alex Ugorets, the owner of the property, is proposing a 45-55 unit apartment building to coincide with the building improvements he is undertaking at the existing Freshwater Building. Both projects will enhance the work/live environment that is desired in this area.

Prior to our application we have met with city staff, Hennepin County, and the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District. The city letter we received on November 10th noted the following items to address:

Land Use. *The site is zoned B-4, but the Comprehensive Plan anticipates development of the site to include a mix of uses, including condominiums and apartments. We are in conformance to this vision.*

Density. *The proposal may exceed the 4-15 unit per acre assigned to this site. We are expecting to adjust the lot lines to accommodate setbacks for the office building and apartment. With the lot line adjustment the density calculation could be met.*

Traffic Study. *The city may require a traffic study. If required, we will provide a study. See also our meeting details with Hennepin County on access.*

Access. *The new entrance should be aligned with the new development across the street. We had a joint meeting with City staff and the County to review the access points. At that meeting, the proposed access location was supported by the County as they identified benefits of the project as it relates to future road improvements. We removed a proposed second access as part of this discussion.*

Parking. *Covered parking for one car should be provided. We are providing underground parking to accommodate this request and will have sufficient on-site parking to meet code. The site plan identifies 51 stalls below ground and 49 surface parking stalls. We also have the ability to create a joint parking arrangement with the office building if necessary.*

Building Height. *Historically, the City Council was cautious of buildings over 2-stories when adjacent residents and the lake. We are proposing a 3-story building fronting County Rd 19 with penthouse units on top along the northeast corner of the building. The building height will be 31 feet facing CR 19 and then steps up to 42 feet with the penthouse units at the back of the building. Because of the topography and underground parking, the building will have a maximum height of 54 feet facing the wetland (east). The architectural renderings we are showing are conceptual to demonstrate the architectural style we wish to provide but may be altered as we move forward with the project.*

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The building location also supports the building height. We positioned the building to take advantage of the topography of the site and to minimize any visual impact along County Rd 19. The site slopes away from the road and toward the wetland to the south and east. By using this topography we are able to angle the building away from the street with only having a corner of the building at the front setback. The rest of the building will fall away from the street thus keeping an open view along the road corridor. The topography also allows us to step the building down to 3 stories in front and a partial fourth floor to the back. The penthouse apartments will be set back away from the front building line and placed in the northeast side of the building. In this location the penthouses are away from public view and transitions in height from the existing Freshwater Office building to the north and the residential homes to the south.

The site is separated from the residents to the south by 590 and 380 feet respectively with a band of existing mature trees. Lake views of the building will be minimal since the building is on a non-usable part of the lake with few homes. The proposed 54-foot building height matches the height of the Freshwater building when viewing from the east. The 42-foot height also matches the height of the Freshwater building southwest corner along County Road 19.

Wetland. *The wetland is a "Preserve" wetland and will require a 75-foot buffer from the MCWD with an additional 10-foot city required setback from the buffer.* The wetland has been delineated and we have identified the 75-foot buffer line on our plan. In speaking with the Watershed they noted that the buffer size can be averaged to accommodate the building and that replacement buffers may be allowed on the office site to the north in order to provide buffering along the wetland edge where none exist today. We are improving the quality of the lake by incorporating buffers and ponds for stormwater treatment plus improving existing conditions to the Freshwater Office site. We will continue to work with the Watershed and the city to provide an acceptable buffer. (See attached meeting summary)

From the above meetings and the comments that we received we prepared a site plan and building elevations that we believe supports the direction given to us and continues to be a viable project. The plan respects the views of the neighboring homes and the views along County Rd 19. It is designed to transition from the 52,000 sq. ft. Freshwater Office building to the north and the homes to the south.

We have not conducted soil borings specifically to this site but Mr. Ugorets has conducted soil borings for his parking lot improvements on the Freshwater Office building. The borings closest to the proposed apartment building did not encounter ground water in the 14-foot deep boring. The wetland delineation reports also did not encounter ground water. Based on this information we are not expecting to encounter groundwater during construction or have it impact the project. We will conduct further borings as we move forward with the project.

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We are very excited to bring an attractive residential option to the residents of Orono and Navarre. We believe this project will match well with a life style that is desired in this area and around the lake. This project, along with the improvements to the Freshwater Office building, will provide new business and living opportunities to this area that meets local demands and regional goals.

We look forward to be part of this community and welcome your comments of our conceptual plan.

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