

SUMMARY

The City Council is considering the Hearing Examiner's Recommendation to approve an application submitted by Bellevue School District for the Puesta del Sol Elementary School. The Bellevue School District seeks Conditional Use approval to demolish Bellewood Elementary School to construct a new one to three-story 102,143 square foot elementary school on 9.93 acres. The site is located at 301 151st Place N.E. The application Permit File No. is 18-130014-LB.

1. BACKGROUND ON APPLICATION

On November 16, 2018, the Bellevue School District applied for a Conditional Use Permit and a Critical Areas Land Use Permit for the demolition of Bellewood Elementary to construct a new one to three-story 102,403 square foot elementary school, Puesta del Sol, located at 301 151st Place NE. Notice of Application was published on November 29, 2018. Mailing, posting and publication of the application were appropriately accomplished.

Public meetings were held on January 8, 2019 and November 13, 2019. During the land use process, the City received numerous written comments on this project. DSD summarized and responded to categories of comments in the department staff report. Some of the general categories of comments include project need, development of an off-site road, road expansion of 151st PL NE, haul routes, project delays and environmental review.

The Bellevue School District issued a State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) Determination of Non-Significance (DNS) on October 9, 2018.

The Department issued their recommendation of approval on the Conditional Use Permit and administrative approval of the Critical Areas Land Use Permit (CALUP) on March 5, 2020. Public noticing was also accomplished on March 5, 2020. The CALUP decision was not appealed, so it stands unchallenged. Due to COVID-19, the public hearing originally scheduled for March 26, 2020 was postponed to September 10, 2020. Public noticing was re-issued on August 20, 2020.

2. PROCEEDING BEFORE EXAMINER

Upon due notice, the Hearing Examiner held a public hearing and received testimony under oath via Zoom Webinar on September 10, 2020. At the hearing, Toni Pratt, Senior Land Use Planner, City of Bellevue, presented a staff report and testified on behalf of the City. Rich Hill of McCullough Hill Leary, PS and Jack McLeod of Bellevue School District appeared on behalf of the applicant and testified in support of the proposal. Public testimony was offered by Adam Droker, Adriana Botti, Stephanie Parkins, Leonard McGhee, Eckart Schmidt and Bal Simon.

3. SITE CHARACTERISTICS

The Puesta del Sol elementary school holds the Spanish immersion program for Bellevue School district. The subject site is located at 301 151st Place N.E. The existing Bellewood Elementary School will be demolished, and a new one to three-story 102,143 square foot Puesta del Sol Elementary School will be constructed on 9.93 acres. A synthetic play field with a covered play area will be provided along with revised landscaping and 110 parking stalls. The new facility is designed for up to 650 students.

The parcel is located between 148th Avenue N.E. and 156th Avenue N.E. at 301 151st Place N.E. It has site access from 151st Place N.E. to the south and N.E. 4th Place at its northeast corner. It contains three critical areas: two wetlands and one steep slope which require a Critical Areas Land Use Permit (CALUP) to disturb associated buffers. It is located within an established residential community at its east and south property boundaries while undeveloped properties exist to the north and west which are encumbered with critical areas (wetlands, stream, and steep slopes).

4. COMMENTS

As referenced in Section 2 above, public testimony was provided at the public hearing and fifteen (15) written comments were received before and at the conclusion of the public hearing.

5. HEARING EXAMINER RECOMMENDATION

Based upon detailed Findings and Conclusions, the Hearing Examiner recommends approval of the conditional use permit for the Puesta del Sol Elementary School, subject to the imposed conditions of approval recommended by the Department.

The Hearing Examiner issued her Recommendation on September 24, 2020, recommending approval of the conditional use application. No appeals were filed.