

Growth

Council stands by Siena plan

By KEVIN DUGGAN
The Coloradoan

5-8-96

A west Fort Collins family's plan to build a housing development on land that it has owned for 75 years will move ahead.

The Fort Collins City Council decided Tuesday to uphold the city Planning and Zoning Board's approval of the Siena development proposed for a 28-acre site south of West Elizabeth Street at Rocky Road.

The planning board approved the development plan March 6, but an appeal of that decision from neighbors of the site brought the plan before the council.

Council members said they appreciated the Minatta family's efforts to develop the land in a way that matches the city's goals for new housing developments.

"This is the kind of in-fill development we're looking for," said council member Chris Kneeland.

The council upheld the planning board's decision on a 6-1 vote. Council member Will Smith dissented, saying he thought the city and the developer "could have done better" with the plan.

John Minatta, who is leading the efforts to develop the land, said Siena's 116 single-family homes would incorporate elements of the "neo-traditional" urban design city planners favor.

Minatta said most of the new houses would have deep front porches, detached sidewalks and access to garages through alleys. Planners say those and other design elements, which were common to urban development before World War II, help add a sense of community to a neighborhood.

Judy Harrington, a neighbor of the site who brought the appeal to the council, said the development would add too much traffic to adjacent neighborhood streets.

She also said neighbors were concerned that houses on the development's south side, which would border a path leading to Overland Trail Park, would be only 20 feet from the property line and overshadow the path.

Minatta agreed to the council's stipulations that houses on the site's south side be set back at least 30 feet. He also agreed to plant at least two trees on each lot bordering the path.

Following the council's decision, Minatta said he hoped to break ground on the project by July. Construction on the first houses would begin in the fall, he said.

Minatta said he viewed the victory with "mixed emotions."

"I'm glad we're finally going to moving on this," he said. "But it's frustrating that just a few people could cause a two-month delay."