

Town of Verona: Background on review of Condominium Projects

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In this document, we will provide an overview of the extensive review process that goes into the review and approval of a condominium plat and request for rezoning. On average this process takes about 6 months from the first time the developer meets with the Town Staff and Plan Commission Chair until there is final review and approval by the Town Board.

Meetings and Review Process

Preliminary meetings with Town personnel:

There is an initial meeting with between the developer and the Town Planner, Amanda Arnold, and the Plan Commission Chair, Douglas Maxwell. At this meeting, there is a general discussion of such issues as density, unit size restrictions, private road, intersection with the public road. The schedule of meetings that are necessary and the items needed for each meeting are reviewed in detail.

There is a second meeting and sometimes more meetings with Arnold and Maxwell, when the developers will have a draft of the plat and the developer receives feedback from the Town Staff.

Neighborhood meeting: The developer is required to hold a meeting of neighbors who might be concerned. The developer is given a list of addresses within 500 or more feet of the project. The list is prepared by Town Staff and Plan Commission Chair. This meeting takes place at the Town Hall and a Town Staff member of Plan Commission Chair is present to answer technical questions about zoning, concept of a condominium, the Town's Land Use map, etc.

Plan Commission meetings: There are then two meetings with the Plan Commission. At these meeting the developer presents the plat map, topographical maps, soil maps, wetlands, waterways, traffic counts, cultural sites, etc. The first meeting is a public meeting for comments and recommendations for improvement of the plat, and the second meeting is the action meeting by the Plan Commission.

Between the two plan commission meetings, it is generally the case that Town Staff will have an additional meeting with the developers. Topics would include detailed discussions of suggested modifications for the plat, the review of the Development Agreement and the Condominium Declaration. These latter two documents are reviewed in great detail by Town staff and the Town's attorney as well as by the developer and his attorney. These two documents are then reviewed by the Plan Commission and the Town Board.

Road Plan reviewed: MSA Engineering reviews the road plans and the intersection plan and gives a recommendation. If there are issues, then these are discussed with the developer by Town Staff. These plans are also reviewed by the Publics Work Committee and the intersection plan is approved by the Town Board. The road plan is review by Town Staff and approved by them.

Site Visit: Plan Commission members and Town supervisors visit the site and discuss the proposed plat map during this tour of the site. In some cases this tour has been led by the Engineer so that more detailed discussions could occur about the road and stormwater management. These site visits are a required part of the review process.

Special meetings: In the case of Deer Haven, a meeting was held with Kevin Thusius, Director of Land Conservation for the Ice Age Trail, the developers and Town Staff.

Board meetings: There are then two meetings of the Town Board. The developer presents the information at the first meeting, where there are public comments. Also, there is a recommendation presented by the Plan Commission Chair. The Board members ask questions and make suggestions. Town Staff then have another meeting with the Developer to review any changes to the plat map, Development Agreement or Condominium Declaration.

At the second Board meeting, the developer presents the modified plat map and discusses any concerns raised by Board members during the first meeting. The Board then takes action. In this case there always has been the requirement of a deed restriction as to so many units, single-family residences, no unit smaller than 1.5 acres and there could be additional conditions.

Special considerations:

Roads: The road is constructed to Town Standards and monitored by MSA Engineering during construction. The Town has the ability to assess unit owners to maintain the road if this becomes necessary. The road is approved by the Verona Fire Department before the plat map is approved. The Condominium Association is required to make arrangements for garage removal and snow plowing of the road.

Plat Map: The plat map has setbacks as approved by the Town and equal to or greater than those required by Dane County. The plat map considers wet lands and other topographical features. There is a building envelop which preserves trees where appropriate. One goal of the Town is that there should be, if possible, out lots and a diversity of unit sizes. Particular attention is given to the staggering of homes and the need for landscaping, and if necessary, the need for berms near the road. Plat maps have a utility easement, and were appropriate, a road easement for a future road.

Stormwater Management and Erosion Control: The Town requires that these permits be in place before the intersection permit is issued. These plans are provided to the Town but the Town does not do a formal review of these plans. Oversight of the construction of either erosion control or stormwater management features is provided by Dane County. Town personnel visit the site and do contact Dane County staff if there appears to be an issue.

Access to private property in the Land Condominium Development: Town and County Staff are given permission to access any areas in the Condominium that would require inspection.

Control of Development: The Town monitors development and manages the process by controlling the issuing of building permits and occupancy permits.

Development Agreement: This is the document that lays out all the interactions between the developer and the Town. It will include statements about road construction, need for permits for stormwater management and erosion control, escrow funds, letter of credit for construction of road and intersection.

Condominium Declaration: This is a document that is provided to each future unit owner so that they understand the rules for this Association. The document contains design guidelines for homes, restrictions on removal of trees, restrictions on parking of vehicles, the need for landscaping. It sets up the architectural review committee and its authority. It requires that the Association have insurance for common areas. The document gives the Town the authority to assess individual unit owners for maintenance of roads and stormwater management facilities. The document indicates which sections cannot be modified without the approval of the Town Board. Besides this Condominium Declaration, there is also a set of bylaws. The Town does not get involved in the review of the bylaws.

Time involved and meetings held by Town Personnel: On average, Town personnel have 14 meetings with the Developer and there are other meetings that do not involve the developer. It is hard to estimate the Town personnel time that is put into each of these proposals by Amanda Arnold and Doug Maxwell, but it is well over 80 hours for each of them. This includes meeting times and working on review of documents.