

City Response
10/10/14

June 10, 2014

**Resident Demand for Positive Action In The Neighborhood of
Springlake**

To: Woodland City Council Members and City Staff

Re: Informational Memo on Springlake Resident Input for Current and Future Development in the Springlake Community of Woodland, California 95776

Date To Be Discussed: 7/15/14 City Council Meeting (during public comment time)

Authored By: Marissa Sirota (current Springlake Resident); with input from surrounding Springlake residents

I. Introduction

This memo is intended to inform the current city council members and city staff of Woodland, California of the concerns and expectations of current Springlake residents regarding current and future development of the Springlake community. It will contain the following sections: issues of concern (listed in order of urgency), a frequently asked questions section, followed by a section that lists expectations that residents have of city council members and proposed action plans to meet these expectations.

II. Issues of Concern (listed in order of urgency)

A. Preservation and Development of Parkland

i. Preserving Current Commercial Land That Will Become Parkland Soon

As residents we have been put on notice that what is currently zoned as commercial land within our neighborhood (3, 2-acre parcels) will become zoned as 'parkland' in the next couple of years if this commercial land is not developed for commercial use purposes. We have also become aware that a developer has informally approached the city council members with an informal proposal to pay \$50,000 to go towards the preliminary planning of a second park in our neighborhood in exchange for city council allowing one of the 2-acre commercially zoned lots to become re-zoned for residential development by that particular developer. While we understand that no

formal decisions on this informal proposal have occurred we have some rather strong thoughts on this issue.

The residents of Springlake wish to preserve this commercial land in its current status because we know that very soon that commercial zoning status will expire and this land (3 parcels of 2-acres of land each) will then become preserved as parkland. It is our expectation that this be allowed to happen so that we can preserve and further develop the beauty and productiveness of our neighborhood land via our zoned parkland and other amenities.

ii. Building A Second Park In Springlake Within the Next 18 months

We would propose that if one of these 2-acre commercial parcels is to be offered to any developer for residential development that in exchange we ask that developer to **build a second park in Springlake on one of the current 4-acre parkland parcels, ready for use in the next 18 months**. We implore city council members to involve our community in these negotiation discussions and further **request that a majority vote of Springlake residents be established before any deal for re-zoning is approved**.

We as a neighborhood only have one park (Jack Slaven). While this is a nice park, it is highly congested by Springlake residents as well as residents of all of Woodland and visiting cities. While the residents of Springlake are happy to share their amenities and space with the rest of Woodland, we urge city council to understand that this park has limited space and that visitors often disrespect it by littering and even vandalizing it. We as Springlake residents pay a lot of extra tax money to maintain this park and clean up the messes of others. This is very disheartening and even angering at times. We also often cannot use the park due to high congestion. Simply put, **we need a second park** and we need all visitors of the park to be held accountable for their actions within our park.

In conclusion, we wish to maintain all currently zoned parkland and commercial land so that we can ensure that we have enough park space for the long-term development of our neighborhood. If this is not financially feasible, we would urge city council to work on behalf of residents and use their bargaining power to ensure that developers do their part to build a productive and sustainable neighborhood by building us a second park that would be ready for use in the next 18 months and by developing the neighborhood responsibly.

B. Building At Least One Neighborhood Elementary School, Ready For Use In The Next 2-3 Fiscal Years

We have been working on this issue for years now and the last I heard of the issue we were short around \$10 million dollars. However, a recent walking census was

done of the neighborhood and residents would like to know, **what next steps are planned towards building a Springlake neighborhood elementary school?**

As many of you know, many of us Springlake residents have small children. When we bought into this neighborhood we did so based on the published plan that called for four neighborhood elementary schools. I have been informed that 2 of the 4 school zoned parcels have been sold off for residential development. I do not understand how this occurred without resident approval or involvement, but would like to ensure that it does not happen again. We want a school and deserve one as a community. Tafoya elementary (which most of us are assigned to) is highly crowded and is severely underperforming. We expect more action on this issue and want to know what steps are being taken toward building our neighborhood a school.

C. Current High Taxation Levels on Springlake Residents

Many of us are concerned that our L&L taxes are extremely high. We pay these higher L&L taxes to maintain Jack Slaven and Road 102 even though all of Woodland uses both. **Why are our L&L taxes disproportionately higher in comparison to other Woodland residents when all of Woodland uses Jack Slaven Park and Road 102?**

In general, we as residents of Springlake pay high local taxes. We want to know where our tax money is going when we only have one park, cannot even build one school, have no commercial development in our neighborhood, and cannot even get our neighborhood greenbelt system built completely.

D. Current Plans for Commercial Development

We as property owners were sold on the published plan, which called for four neighborhood centers. Each of these centers was to include a park, elementary school, and commercial vendor locations. The purpose (I believe) of having these centralized neighborhood centers was to create a close sense of community, walkability, and vibrant community with sustainable property values.

We have clearly deviated from that published plan and residents are very upset about this. Developers keep building houses, but are unwilling to build supporting amenities. I have already discussed the more urgent park and school issues. Another issue is that no commercial sites have been developed. City planners have informed me that the commercial fees are too high, yet we have not seen any action taken on this issue. I can vouch that a neighborhood coffee shop, daycare, and small office building would likely do very well here. I myself would love to have my office here in my neighborhood, but do not have that option because the city and developers are not taking steps to allow this to happen. My son has to go to daycare in Dixon because no decent daycare is nearby which is an absolute waste in my opinion.

III. Frequently Asked Questions (answers sought)

Please be prepared to provide answers to at least the following questions during the public comment session of the 7/15/14 city council meeting:

1. What are your thoughts on getting the developers to contribute to building Springlake a second park which will be ready for use in the next 18-months?

Response

Background and Future Construction of a Second Park

The Spring Lake Plan includes three neighborhood parks, eight acres each, and one Central Park, of four acres. Construction of the first park, Jack Slaven, was completed in 2010 for a total cost of \$3.9 Million. The remaining designated park sites within Spring Lake are currently privately owned land.

At the time the Spring Lake Plan was originally developed there were multiple property owners. Rather than one development interest taking on the responsibility of funding and installing infrastructure and amenities, such as dedicating land for parks and schools, a developer based fee collection system was created to equitably share the financing cost burden that would be borne by all those developing in the Plan area. The result is a fee system that the City manages for the various Spring Lake developers. This system is called the Spring Lake Infrastructure Fee, or SLIF. The SLIF fees are collected at the time of building permit issuance and include a park fee component. As residential development occurs, park fees are paid and the fund becomes more able to pay for the ongoing Plan improvements.

SLIF fee amounts are based on type of development, whether residential or commercial and are required in addition to general City Development Impact Fees. A single family unit is assessed as 1 Dwelling Unit (DU) equivalent, while a multi-family unit is assessed at 0.66 DU equivalents. The Spring Lake Infrastructure Fee Costs as of January 1, 2014 are \$40,440 per single family home and \$26,689 per multi-family unit. In the Financing plan, commercial development was assessed at a higher rate in order to off-set the residential fee costs and currently is approximately \$27 per square foot.

Developers, or those building in Spring Lake, pay SLIF fees at time of building permit issuance and includes a specific park fee component of \$6,769 per single-family unit and \$4,468 per multi-family unit (adjusted annually by CCI) to cover the acquisition and improvement costs for the parks in Spring Lake. Commercial development does not pay park fees.

In addition to collection of fees to fund the purchase, design and improvement of future parks, the Spring Lake Plan includes timing triggers for the construction of the three neighborhood parks. A July 22, 2002, Settlement Agreement with the

Sierra Club requires that timing be set for construction of neighborhood parks in SL at 1) 60% build out of each neighborhood, or 2) a park is to be constructed at the following Single Family Dwelling Unit Equivalent (DUE) building permit milestones: 650th, 1950th, and 3250th. (One SF = 1 DUE; One MF = .66 DUE). At this time the number of building permit DUEs issued in the Plan area is approximate 1,320. The Plan area is divided into 5 neighborhoods. Rough estimates show that Neighborhood C, south of Heritage Parkway, will be 52% built out with the construction of Lennar Homes.

With regard to the second Spring Lake Park, the City will start preliminary engineering and get an appraisal for the 2nd park site this fall with the ultimate goal of defining project costs for the purchase and improvement of the second park. After the City has determined estimated costs, we will better be able to determine the affordability of park size (8 acres or 10 acres) and the timing of construction, based on the Park Fund cash flow. The master Spring Lake agreements require that each developer pay an incremental fee at building permit towards park construction costs (see previous discussion). The City has already provided approval through Development Agreements for the construction of homes consistent with these agreements. The City cannot change these agreements unless the development interests request modifications.

Two Acre Neighborhood Commercial Sites

The Spring Lake Plan includes three, two-acre neighborhood commercial (NC) sites within the Plan area located adjacent to each of the planned eight-acre neighborhood park sites. Similar to the park sites, these commercial lands are currently privately owned.

Section 2.0 of the Spring Lake Specific Plan contains provisions pertaining to the two-acre neighborhood commercial sites. Specifically, Section 2.43.1(e) states:

Land designated neighborhood commercial in this Specific Plan shall remain as such unless it remains undeveloped by Plan build out (2015), at which time, if demonstrated to be infeasible as zoned it may be rezoned for park use only.

The overall intent of section 2.43.1(e) is understood, however, the City has a concern with regard to the practical implementation of (2.43.1 (e)) as follows:

- Each of the two acre commercial sites as well as the four acre central commercial site is privately owned. The statement does not specify who would acquire and improve the possible two-acre park sites. It is unknown whether the SLIF fee system will have adequate funds remaining at build-out to purchase and improve the 2-acre sites.
- The two-acre park sites were not included in the Landscape and Lighting District (LLD). It is not clear how the cost for maintenance of the additional park land would be accommodated without either increasing LLD costs or reducing maintenance in other areas.

- At the time this Plan was written (2000), the economy was heating up and building was expected to occur at a very rapid pace. It was thought that the Spring Lake Plan would be fully built out by 2015 and that efforts would have begun on the future Master Plan Remainder area located to the southeast of the Plan area. However, build-out will clearly not occur by the year 2015.

To address these fairly significant questions to Section 2.43.1 (e), the City proposes to modify the Plan language to more clearly identify expectations as to when and how the two-acre NC sites may be repurposed. Any rezone or plan change request requires both Planning Commission and City Council review at public hearings after public notification. All previously approved modifications to the plan were publicly noticed, including notices provided to identified neighborhood representatives and interested parties. The City will continue this practice.

The City has received rezone applications from owners of two of the NC sites requesting that their property be re-designated to single family residential. One site is located north of Farmer's Central Road/west of Harry Lorenzo Avenue and the second site is located south of Heritage Parkway.

Negotiations with the development interests who wish to rezone the two acre Neighborhood Commercial land adjacent to the eight acre park sites have been initiated. The City met with the owners of the property located to the south, adjacent to the future planned school site, and discussed the option of converting the two acres to park prior to the build out of Spring Lake so that it could be planned and potentially constructed with the adjacent eight acre park.

a. Does the city have any reserved funds (prior developer fees, resident taxes, etc.) that can aid in the second park site development and implementation?

Response

The current balance of the SL Park SLIF fee fund is approximately \$1,500,000. Based on current projected new home development in the Plan area, it is anticipated that the fund will have a sufficient balance to acquire, design, and complete construction of the next eight-acre (8 ac), Neighborhood Park by 2018.

2. What plans do the city and school district have to move Springlake towards building a neighborhood elementary school in the next 2 – 3 years?

Cities, Counties and School Districts are separate legal entities. SB 50 (1998) established allowable developer fees and prohibits school districts, cities and counties from imposing any additional school impact mitigation fees or other requirements. The Woodland Joint Unified School District establishes its own

school impact fees which are paid directly by the developer to the District. These fees are governed by Government Code Section 65995(b)(3) which limits the amount a district can charge new development for construction of school facilities. The current balance of developer fees for a Spring Lake School is **\$10,834,412** (9/26/14).

The District estimates that a full elementary campus will cost approximately \$20 Million to construct. Reasonable projections for build out of Spring Lake assume an average of 125 units per year. If the project is funded solely with impact fees, full project funding will not be generated for another 10 years. Phasing the construction of the school site could establish a school sooner, but would likely result in higher costs for the ultimate project.

While the city is very interested in assisting and facilitating the construction of a new school, ultimately the timing and advancement of a school is a School District decision.

A proposed action could be to establish a focused group consisting of residents, developers, city and school district representatives to evaluate issues and develop a plan to advance the planning and construction of the elementary school on earliest feasible timeframe. The Committee could also provide input on the planning/design for the adjoining park site with a goal of planning both sites concurrently to maximize shared use opportunities and ensure greatest opportunity for costs savings.

3. What plans are there in response to the walking census performed by the school district?

Response

A Board report from March 22, 2014 is attached. The District suggests that a focused group be convened consisting residents, city, and district representatives to develop a plan to advance the construction of the school.

4. Why are our L&L taxes disproportionately higher in comparison to other Woodland residents when all of Woodland uses Jack Slaven Park and Road 102?

Response

The short answer to this question is timing, location and level of amenities. Spring Lake is the newest development within the City, and as such, cost for infrastructure and other amenities is higher than it was more than 15 years ago when the Southeast Area master plan was built. Spring Lake required a significant amount of new and costly infrastructure (sewer, water, roads, etc.) to be built necessary to serve this previously undeveloped part of the community. In addition Spring Lake

was designed with high level of amenities not found in other than in other parts of the City.

The Landscape and Lighting district pays for the maintenance and upkeep of most of the amenities within the Spring Lake Specific Plan Area including landscaping, street lights, trees, traffic signals, signs, sound-walls, greenbelts, as well as parks.

The City's General Plan has a policy (Policy 4.B.1) that requires all new development to pay for its fair share of the cost of providing new public services and /or the costs of upgrading of all existing facilities it uses. Enacted in 1982, post Proposition 13, Mello Roos Community Facilities Districts (CFDs) and Maintenance Districts are used to finance public improvements and services when no other sources of funds are available.

Park lands and trails/greenbelts are generally publically owned and therefore available to use by all residents. The City is not able to assess additional fees over existing developed properties without a vote of the registered voters within the affected area. The City did attempt to seek approval of a citywide landscape and lighting maintenance district which did not pass. That said, any new development must show the ability to pay for itself without burdening the general city. It is likely however, as additional parks are developed in Spring Lake that the impact to Jack Slaven will be eased. The development and improvement of parks in other areas of the City will also have this affect.

5. In general, we as residents of Springlake pay high local taxes. We want to know where our tax money is going when we only have one park, cannot even build one school, have no commercial development in our neighborhood, and cannot even get our neighborhood greenbelt system completed?

Response

Spring Lake Taxes, Assessments, and Fees

The properties in Spring Lake are subject to the following supplemental assessments related to the infrastructure amenities required to serve the neighborhood:

Spring Lake CDF (CFD2004-1)– This annual assessment is used to pay debt services on bonds that were issued to build infrastructure in Spring Lake (see additional discussion below).

Spring Lake Landscape and Lighting District – This assessment pays for the annual cost of maintaining the amenities with in the Spring Lake District, including park and greenbelt landscaping and irrigation, tree maintenance, operation and maintenance of street lights and traffic signals, and maintenance of sound walls.

Spring Lake Maintenance CFD – This assessment contributes toward annual maintenance of the Community Sports Park facility.

Spring Lake Fire Suppression District – This assessment, which was required to be included in Spring Lake by the County during the annexation process, is used to contribute toward funding for the Springlake Fire Protection District, which provides fire services to areas outside the City limits.

Spring Lake CFD (CFD 2004-1). This annual assessment is used to pay annual debt payments on Mello Roos bonds that were issued to build infrastructure in Spring Lake. These bonds provided money to construct roads, wells, storm drains and sewer infrastructure for the first release of Spring Lake. The bonds did not cover the total cost of the infrastructure, nor do they pay for park construction. The infrastructure costs for the first release of development in Spring Lake was approximately \$67 million of which \$40 million was paid with up-front cash by the development community with the remaining \$27 million funded with bond financing.

In addition to Mello Roos as a method for financing major infrastructure improvements, additional fees (SLIF) are collected at the time of building permit issuance that are used to fund other necessary capital improvements within the plan area. The developer based fee collection system was created to equitably share the financing cost burden that would be borne by all those who develop in the Plan Area. SLIF fees are based on type of development, residential or commercial as example. A single family unit is assessed as 1 Dwelling Unit (DU) equivalent, while a multi-family unit is assessed at 0.66 DU equivalents. Commercial development is assessed at a higher rate in order to off-set the residential fee costs and is approximately \$27 per square foot of building area.

The result is a fee system that the City manages for the development community called the Spring Lake Infrastructure Fee, or SLIF. These are costs that are borne and shared for more localized development needs including collector roads, sound-walls, drainage as well as parks that are all a part of the Spring Lake Capital Improvement Program.

Spring Lake School Construction

(See response under Section III.2)

Spring Lake Commercial Development

The commercial sites have not developed due to a combination of factors, including market conditions/economy, lack of financing, cost of new construction, the high development fee (SLIF) burden, and limited market area (population/location) in Spring Lake. As Spring Lake residential development builds out, more population base will increase the potential viability of commercial uses. However, it is unlikely that all of the commercial sites will be viable even at build out of the Plan, due to the variety of factors constraining them. Commercial fees for the 2 acre site would be approximately two times the fees required if the site was developed as residential

(approximately \$800,000 vs. \$400,000). These fees, in addition to other costs to improve and develop a site can be very high. The development community would then weigh these costs against the likelihood that a small internal commercial site would be successful in capturing an adequate market share to result in a net positive return. The 2 acre commercial sites have not developed due to a combination of the high fee burden, cost of new construction, lack of financing, and limited market area to serve in Spring Lake.

Spring Lake Greenbelts / Parks

Completion of the Spring Lake greenbelts and parks network will occur as residential develop areas of the plan build out. Greenbelts are constructed by the developers of residential subareas as they install the roadway and other infrastructure as part of their subdivision improvements. See discussion under Section III.1 related to timing of park construction.

IV. Resident Expectations and Proposed Action Plan To Meet Stated Expectations

1. We expect a second park to be built on a current 4-acre parkland parcel and ready for use within Springlake in the next 18 months.

We believe with proper collaboration between residents, the city, and developers that we can find the funding and motivation to get a second park built in Springlake which can be ready for use in 18-months from now. We believe it would be proper to put together a committee composed of city council member(s), developer representatives, city planner(s), and Springlake residents with a goal of funding, planning, and implementing the development of a second park in Springlake that would be ready for use in the next 18 months.

Response

As part of the Fiscal Year 14/15 budget, the city Council allocated \$100,000 of park SLIF funding to begin preliminary design and predevelopment efforts for the 2nd neighborhood park in Spring Lake. The city is initiating the appraisal of the land designated for an 8 acre park (N-3) north of the elementary school site on Mickle Drive. The appraisal will be presented to the City Council upon completion this fall and direction to proceed with acquisition of the 8 acres will be made at that time. Staff has also had initial conversations with the owner of the 2 acre commercial site adjacent to the park about the possibility of selling the site to the city with the 8 acres to allow the park site to be increased. Options for incorporating the commercial site with the park will be presented to the City Council at the time the appraisal results and direction to proceed with acquisition are made. A neighborhood meeting will be held to solicit resident input prior to any Planning Commission or City Council discussion on the park options.

2. We expect a plan to build a Springlake neighborhood elementary school, ready for use in the next 2-3 years, to be published in the next 12-months.

Developers need to be brought to the table on this issue in a serious way. Just like the park, if they build a school not only is it good public relations, but it is also good for their development business because the more attractive an area is with good schools and supporting amenities the more they can build and sell.

Response

The City has and will continue to work with the School District and development interests to facilitate to the extent possible development of a school in Spring Lake.

Proposed Actions include:

1. Work with the District to assess existing and projected student generation rates for Spring Lake.
2. Establish an action team consisting of residents, developers, city and school district representatives to evaluate issues and develop a plan to advance the planning and construction of the elementary school on the earliest feasible time frame. This committee could also provide input on the planning and design for the adjoining park site with the goal of planning both sites concurrently.

3. We expect the city to preserve all commercial zoning so that those parcels can become parkland if not used for commercial purposes soon.

I discussed this earlier, and there may be some flexibility on this position, but the city must involve resident input before any decisions are made and they must include resident representation in the negotiations.

We also urge the city to re-evaluate current fees for commercial businesses who would be interested in opening up shop in our neighborhood. Building at least some commercial space may be a huge tax and commerce benefit to our neighborhood and Woodland in general.

Response

With regard to the proposed rezoning of the two acre neighborhood commercial sites the City will propose the following:

1. Evaluate the existing language of Section 2.43.1(e) in order to develop more specific criteria and findings related to re-zoning of the neighborhood commercial sites.

2. Work with the development community to continue to preserve some potentially viable commercially zoned land that would serve the neighborhood while also evaluating the possible options for the three neighborhood commercial sites. Possible approaches could include:
 - a. Retaining the commercial designation on the 2 acre site adjacent to Jack Slaven.
 - b. Process the application for the northwest neighborhood (Cal West) to rezone commercial to residential (R-8) as it will involve relocation of the park to a more favored location/configuration and that it will provide improved access to future greenbelt improvements. This park site also abuts the remainder area to the south and the potential exists to expand the park by even more than 2-acres when the Remainder Area is developed.
 - c. Consider prior to processing the application pending for the 2-acre commercial site on Mickle adjacent to the future school site, the potential to integrate it into the adjacent park site. Work with the developers and residents to develop a mutually agreeable approach that will advance construction of the park in the earliest timeframe within the financing capabilities of the park SLIF revenue.
 - d. Re-evaluate the commercial SLIF fees and the impact to the SLIF program and development viability if commercial fees are reduced.

4. We expect the city to either lower our L&L taxes or build us more amenities with the taxes currently being paid.

We believe the city should either spread the cost of maintaining Road 102 and Jack Slaven among all Woodland city residents whom use these amenities or re-allocate a percentage of our current L&L taxes to build our neighborhood a second park. We believe this in combination with negotiations with developers could lead to a viable solution to our need for a second neighborhood park.

Response

1. See Discussion of L&L assessment fees under Section II.C.
2. L&L assessment funding is restricted to maintenance of improvements in Spring Lake. The SLIF fee program will generate sufficient funding to acquire and construct remaining park facilities in Spring Lake. Timing of construction is dependent on rate of build out of residential development in the Plan area.
3. That the City present these materials at a future meeting and discuss strategies to minimize future rate increases (retrofit to replace high water

use landscaping, ensure future improvements are lower maintenance water, energy, etc...)

V. Conclusion

As you are aware, more residential building is occurring as I write this and we still have no school and only have one park. This city and the developers seem to have taken the approach of building houses now and amenities later. But I urge you to realize that this is short-term thinking. People will buy and stay where the amenities like great parks, great schools, and productive commerce exists. **I urge you to think long-term and manage development with a long-term, sustainable neighborhood in mind.** I urge you to use your influence to build us a school and other amenities now.

This neighborhood has vast potential for both the residents of Springlake and the city of Woodland. We implore city council to manage development in a responsible manner and to push developers to invest in and build a beautiful and walk able neighborhood similar to the plan that the city published. We as property owners bought into this neighborhood based on those published plans and expect city council members to hold developers accountable to those published plans and agreements because we as residents will certainly hold city council members equally accountable.

Thank you.