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FEATURED

Franklin aldermen vote to send Brownland Farm project back to planning for review

By John McBryde
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Kevin Estes, Brownland Farm developer, speaks to aldermen during Tuesday night's Board of Mayor and Aldermen meeting.

Photo by John McBryde

It's back to the drawing board for the Brownland Farm development proposal.



Or at the very least, it's been knocked off course a bit.

A list of five changes to the plan that was submitted by the developer to city of Franklin staff Tuesday afternoon has caused another delay in a project that has slowly moved forward for the past 18 months.

In the latest chapter — Tuesday night's Franklin Board of Mayor and Aldermen meeting — members voted 8-0 to have the plan taken back to the city's planning department to review the recommended changes and bring back to the board its findings. The full process could go as late as March or as early as January before aldermen put a revised plan to a vote.



"This plan was literally changed this afternoon," Franklin City Administrator Eric Stuckey said at the meeting. "It has gone through months of public process and input, review from staff and multiple public hearings. To change it and modify it with no review by staff, even though it may have merit, we are better served to send it back through a process that engages professional review and more public feedback on a project proposal that has now changed, in our view, quite significantly."

The board was originally set to vote on a rezoning ordinance and a resolution to approve a development plan for the property, a 200-acre horse farm owned by Robin and Michelle Anderton and located at Hillsboro Road near the new Mack Hatcher Parkway northwest extension. Also on the agenda was a resolution approving a revised development plan for neighboring Christ Community Church if the previous two items passed.

Greg Gamble of Gamble Design Collaborative, who is working with the developer, Kevin Estes of Land Solutions Company, presented the revisions that would meet the city's five conditions of approval. They included a recommended emergency access easement, a limit of four units to each condominium building, and a reduction from 471 proposed homes to 395 for a total density of 1.7 homes per acre.

Even though Tuesday's agenda was altered due to the five changes presented late in the day, the meeting still had a number of speakers for its public comments segment. 15 of the 18 who took to the podium voiced opposition to the development plan, citing ongoing concerns about flooding and traffic congestion.


"I've heard both sides," Estes said. ... "For me, I want to work in Franklin for many more years. I don't want to be at war with aldermen or the staff."

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"I never, ever dismiss people's concerns or fears. But over the last 18 months I've had 12 community meetings, and two on-site events that involved hundreds of people. I gave over a hundred tours of the farm."

The project now awaits new faces on the board, as voting takes place this month for open seats in Wards 2, 3 and 4 and at-large.

"I think staff has the obligation to look at it and give this board a recommendation," said Alderman-at-Large John Schroer, who will step down after having filled the seat left vacant last year by the death of Pearl Branson. "Look at the five items recommended and use that as a parameter. Let's analyze based on the five changes."

“It’s important to get this right... Another three or four months is not the end of the world for a project that’s going to take five or six years-plus to develop.” 

[Click here to see the full agenda](#) from Tuesday’s meeting, and [go here to view it](#).

John McBryde

