

https://www.williamsonhomepage.com/brentwood/franklin-aldermen-appear-to-favor-passage-of-brownland-farm-plan-but-city-staff-still-disapproving/article_6c1b6e22-a0b3-11ec-837a-0f89519ce84f.html

Franklin aldermen appear to favor passage of Brownland Farm plan, but city staff still disapproving

By John McBryde
Mar 10, 2022

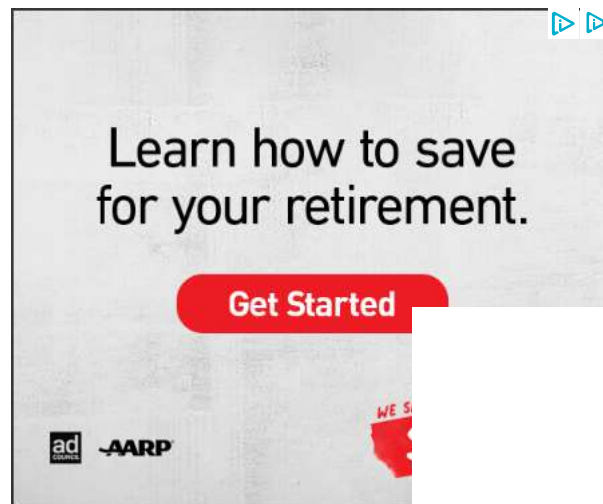


File photo

More than four months after city of Franklin aldermen voted to have applicants for the proposed Brownland Farm development revisit part of the plan and go back to the city's Planning Commission, members were again assessing the project as they've been doing for more than 18 months.

During the work session for the Franklin Board of Mayor and Aldermen earlier this week, members discussed at length the pros and cons of the development. The owners of Brownland Farm, Robin and Michelle Anderton, have been working with Greg Gamble of Gamble Design Collaborative and Land Solutions Company on a plan to sell the land and have it developed into a residential community with 356 units as well as walking trails, a clubhouse and other amenities.

The applicants are seeking approval to rezone the 234 acres from Agriculture District and Civic Institutional District to Planned District, as well as getting a green light from aldermen on a development plan. The property, which has operated as a horse farm over the past several decades, is near the intersection of Hillsboro Road and Mack Hatcher Memorial Parkway.



City staff has consistently recommended disapproval of the project, namely because the plan goes against guidance from Envision Franklin with proposed development in the floodplain and floodway from the adjacent Harpeth River.

"This really comes down to the request to rezone and the fact they want to put development in the floodplain," Amy Diaz-Barriga, Franklin planning supervisor, said at Tuesday's work session. "And we have a document, a long-term policy that talks about how we should do that. ..."

“This project is the first one, I believe, that really tests Envision Franklin and its policies on floodplain. This is really the first residential subdivision where we had to think through this concept.”

Aldermen voted unanimously at an October board meeting to have the plan taken back to the city’s planning department for review, and at the Feb. 25 meeting of the Planning Commission, members voted to disapprove both the rezoning request and development plan.

Despite concerns that have been raised by city staff, nearby residents and the Harpeth Conservancy, Gamble remains steadfast in saying “this is the right plan and the best plan for Brownland.” He insists that engineers working on the project have the awareness and knowledge necessary to gauge the flow of the Harpeth River and its impact on flooding.

“Our professional engineers have the utmost respect for health, safety and welfare,” Gamble told aldermen. “Their reputations and licensure depend on it. This is not a gut feeling that determines the end result. This is professional engineering that FEMA depends on and the city of Franklin depends on.



“This plan has a wide mix of housing, great community open space areas and improvements to the environment. It is a plan that does not increase flooding upstream or downstream and will increase storage capacity for the floodplain. It is a plan that is better for tomorrow than it is for today.”

Gamble’s assessment met with some nods of approval from aldermen, with most expressing a need to get this item off the docket.

"I feel like it's become a very contentious development," Alderman at Large Brandy Blanton said. "I think there's a lot of emotion, a lot of fear. I think there's a lot of, dare I say, ignorance. ...

"It's just the longer we wait, the more people are going to give their opinions, and at some point I feel like we're charged to make a decision. And my decision would be to support it."

Most agreed, but Ward 2 Alderman Matt Brown certainly did not.



"There is risk on this property," he said. "And on top of that, you've got thousands of residents who not only oppose it but are literally fearful that this is going to create issues for them, and I share their concern. ...

"This is sitting right in the middle of Ward 2, and I'm telling you Ward 2 does not want this development as it is. I'm not going to support this."

The item will be put to a vote on second reading at BOMA's April 26 meeting. There will also be time for public comment, so a sizable crowd in City Hall is expected.

Visit the city of [Franklin Facebook page](#) to view Tuesday's work session.

John McBryde
