

CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
Austin, Texas

Special Meeting -- January 31, 1972

A special meeting of the Commission was called to order at 3:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers, Municipal Building.

PRESENT

William Milstead, Chairman
David Barrow, Jr.
Charles Betts
Walter Chamberlain
Royce Faulkner
C. W. Hetherly
Jean Mather
Buford Stewart
Alan Taniguchi

ALSO PRESENT

Richard Lillie, Director of Planning
Charles Graves, City Engineer
Andrea Winchester, Secretary

Mr. Milstead stated that this meeting was called to review three subdivision cases, whose developers have requested variances from the Subdivision Ordinance.

Mr. Richard Lillie, Director of Planning, stated that at the Planning Commission's request written criteria has been developed and was distributed to Commission members at the January meeting to enable the Commission to act on variances from Section 23-37 of the Subdivision Ordinance with some objectivity. This Section has to do with excavating, filling and grading "all alleys and new streets; including sidewalk areas, within the subdivision so that pavements and sidewalks may be constructed along lines and grades approved by the director of public works. In general, the grades of sidewalk areas shall be so established that no extreme or abrupt changes in grade are encountered within blocks, but variations may be allowed by the commission where because of soil conditions, topography or valuable trees, the establishment of such grades would result in undue hardship."

The developers were asked to submit to the Public Works Department technical information to justify their request for a variance in order that this information could be reviewed by the Public Works Department and a recommendation could be made in relation to the criteria which was submitted to the Commission. Mr. Lillie explained the Department's position on requests for variances of a technical nature. The Department will pass on to the Planning Commission the recommendation of the engineers without change. Mr. Lillie pointed out that although the City seems to be moving toward a more general policy in regard to requiring sidewalks on both sides of the pavement in all subdivisions,

until this policy is adopted by the City through the City Council the Commission should implement the Ordinance that the City now has, that being for safe school routes.

Mr. Graves, City Engineer, stated that the Public Works Department is proposing a standard of a rise of one foot from the curb back to four feet in depth. This is the most important four feet as it provides a minimum area for pedestrians and for car doors being opened on the curb side. The Public Works Department will approve grades up to this point and anything over this would have to be granted by the Planning Commission in the form of a variance. The plan is not to have a step or terraced effect but simply not to have any material or earth above this level or the second level; the second level being a maximum of three feet in height along the curb and four to eight feet back from the pavement. Some areas in the three subdivisions being considered today are six feet high, two feet back from the curb, and by the criteria that has been discussed this height would have to be cut to one foot. Mr. Graves stressed that the first four feet are far more important than the second four feet. The second four feet would provide visibility in both directions from a driveway. As the Ordinance is set up now the developer would be required to clear to a height of two and one-half inches, ten feet back from the paving. The utility companies look to the Public Works Department to provide needed grading within the right-of-way. Mr. Graves pointed out that the problem on the low side of the pavement is the water drainage. The Public Works Department is requesting two and one-half inches above the curb line on the low side for a distance of four feet and then a maximum of a 12 degree angle for the downgrade. This angle would protect the cars using the driveway.

Mr. Tom Bradfield stated that he would not like to see the Ordinance enforced as it is being interpreted because this would make every lot in every subdivision alike.

Mr. Dick Baker, representing Baker, Jones and Crow, stated that they have done all that they had been advised to do. The streets and utilities are in and about 90 percent of the land has been sold. If the Ordinance is enforced now, heavy equipment would have to be used or dynamiting would have to be done, which would create problems, as the land no longer belongs to the developer.

The Commission members then adjourned to the sites of the three subdivisions in question.

The Commission members returned to the Council Chambers at 6:00 p.m. to resume discussion of the subdivisions. The Commission then

VOTED: To GRANT a variance on the street grading for C8-70-85 THE GREAT HILLS, SECTION I.

AYE: Messrs. Milstead, Barrow, Betts, Chamberlain, Faulkner, Hetherly, Stewart, Taniguchi and Mrs. Mather.

VOTED: To DISAPPROVE the subdivision of C8-71-94 HIGHLAND HILLS, SECTION EIGHT, pending fiscal arrangements, granting variances on the sidewalks, storm sewer drainage and the street grading.

AYE: Messrs. Milstead, Betts, Chamberlain, Faulkner, Hetherly,
Stewart, Taniguchi and Mrs. Mather

ABSTAIN: Mr. Barrow

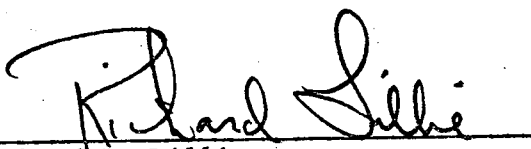
VOTED: To DISAPPROVE the subdivision of C8-69-74 NORTHWEST HILLS,
SECTION FOUR-A pending fiscal arrangements, granting variances
on the sidewalks, storm sewer drainage and the street grading.

AYE: Messrs. Milstead, Betts, Chamberlain, Faulkner, Hetherly,
Stewart, Taniguchi and Mrs. Mather.

ABSTAIN: Mr. Barrow

Mr. Milstead stated that his vote on these subdivisions does not necessarily reflect his feeling on the setting of standards for street grading. These subdivisions are well into the process of development.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:00 p.m.


Richard R. Lillie
Executive Secretary