

Legislation Details (With Text)

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Title:	Discuss and consider a request for a conditional sign permit for subdivision entry signage for Wasser Ranch Subdivision, located on Goodwin Lane at the entrances of Pader and Wipper.		
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Attachments:	1. Aerial Map, 2. Application, 3. Proposed Signage, 4. Site Plan, 5. Comparison Chart		

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
12/11/2017	1	City Council		

Presenter

Stacy Snell, Planning & Community Development Assistant Director
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SUBJECT:

Discuss and consider a request for a conditional sign permit for subdivision entry signage for Wasser Ranch Subdivision, located on Goodwin Lane at the entrances of Pader and Wipper.

BACKGROUND / RATIONALE:

Case No.: CS-17-036

Council District: 4

Applicant: Drew Snider, Chesmar Homes
3043 Goodwin Lane
New Braunfels, TX 78130
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Staff Contact: Holly Mullins, Planner
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Wasser Ranch is a new residential subdivision located on Goodwin Lane between Orion Drive and Conrads Lane. The developer is in the process of installing subdivision entry features.

New Braunfels' Sign Ordinance allows a subdivision entry sign to be either a monument sign or a wall sign located on a screening or decorative wall. Both sign types can be no larger than 40 square feet per sign face with a maximum height of six feet for the monument signs. Where a sign consists of individual letters, words or symbols the sign area is the area of the smallest geometrical shape that completely encompasses all such letters, words or symbols. Signs must be constructed of masonry, stone, brick, wood, or other material compatible with surrounding development.

Other than a subdivision entry sign, the Sign Ordinance does not permit freestanding signs in residential zoning districts. When Planned Development (PD) districts are proposed, the developer can include sign standards outside of the Sign Ordinance as part of the PD development standards for consideration; the Wasser Ranch PD did not add any special provisions for signage beyond the local ordinances.

Proposal:

The applicant is proposing an integrated entry design at the two entrances into Wasser Ranch that would include three entry wall signs on decorative stone walls 4.25 feet in height and eight freestanding columns. All would be located within open space lots that are owned and maintained by the neighborhood's homeowners' association.

The "Wasser Ranch" sign faces proposed to be located on the stone walls are approximately 31 square feet in area. These entry signs as proposed would conform to current ordinance requirements.

The eight proposed decorative columns are separate from the three entry wall signs. They would be constructed primarily of stone and are proposed to be 10 and 14 feet in height. Steel letters "WR" would be placed on the columns to identify the subdivision.

The applicant initially attempted to avoid requesting a conditional sign permit by removing the lettering from the columns and permitting them as decorative structures rather than signage. However, as structures they were subject to a 20-foot building setback per the Wasser Ranch PD development standards. The applicant requested a variance to encroach into the building setback, citing a lack of available space for subdivision identifiers, and that the columns were not habitable structures. The variance was denied by the Zoning Board of Adjustment on October 26, 2017.

Therefore, the applicant has returned to the original design to include the letters on the columns in the overall subdivision entry design through a conditional sign permit. As part of the entry signage, the columns are subject to a setback of 5 feet rather than 20 feet.

An alternative option would be to request approval of amended development standards for the Wasser Ranch PD to make special provisions for signage. Amendment to the PD would be considered by the Planning Commission and City Council through the rezoning process.

Rationale:

The applicant describes their proposal as an intent to provide an "integrated entry design to identify and brand" the Wasser Ranch Subdivision. Thus, the conditional sign permit request has been submitted as a package including signage and columns.

Lot Size: 3.65 acres (Lots 900 and 901)

Surrounding Zoning and Land Use:

North - PD/ Undeveloped; proposed for single family development
South - APD/ Undeveloped and agricultural
East - Across Goodwin Lane, PD and R-1A-6.6/ School and single-family homes
West - Wasser Ranch PD/ Undeveloped; proposed for single family development

ADDRESSES A NEED/ISSUE IN A CITY PLAN OR COUNCIL PRIORITY:

Yes	City Plan/ Council Priority: 2006 Comprehensive Plan <i>Pros and Cons Based on Policies Plan</i>	Pros: <i>Objective 12A: Maintain fair and reasonable regulations for signs so that signs harmonize with the special qualities and appearance of New Braunfels.</i> The applicant believes the proposed signage is in harmony with and characterizes the special qualities of the Wasser Ranch Planned Development.
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FISCAL IMPACT:

N/A

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

N/A

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

The Sign Ordinance provides specific standards for subdivision entry signs and staff does not typically recommend deviations from those standards unless a physical hardship of the land or other justification is demonstrated. However, the Conditional Sign Permit process is intended to allow an applicant the flexibility to create alternative signage designs to complement a development's unique characteristics, and for City Council to consider such designs in the context of a specific location.

While staff recognizes that the proposed subdivision entry design would provide a distinctive entrance that could not otherwise be created within the current ordinance standards, the proposed design appears to be out of scale with most other conditional sign permits considered by the City. Staff believes such designs may be better addressed as a component of the developer's PD standards since the subject property is not characterized by hardship features. Therefore, staff does not recommend approval of the requested conditional sign permit.

Attachments:

1. Aerial Map
2. Application
3. Proposed Signs
4. Site Plan
5. Comparison Table