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FM P&Z Passes Lakeside-DFW Resort- Condo Plan

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The Flower Mound Planning & Zoning Commission on Monday approved by a 4 to 2 vote master plan and zoning amendments for Lakeside Resort and Residences to be built in the Lakeside-DFW area between Farm-to-Market Road 2499 and Grapevine Lake.

The master plan amendment will now allow residential units in the form of a luxury condominium tower. The zoning amendment permits a residential component on approximately two acres of the nine acre site within the hotel development area in the Lakeside Business District located at 2900 Lakeside Parkway.

The town's master plan currently does not allow mixed-use development. However, a mixed-use ordinance proposal, recently drafted by the Lakeside Initiative Committee, is scheduled to be presented at a Flower Mound Town Council special work session in the summer, said Doug Powell, the town's executive director of development services.

The design plan for the 18-story, four-star hotel features 25,000 square feet of conference meeting space, two restaurants, a spa, fitness center and outdoor feature pool with views of Lake Grapevine. Condominiums, with up to 65 units, are immediately adjacent to the 280-room hotel.

Hines Development presented the new hotel design to town leaders last summer. The original design located the condos on top of the hotel, but the condos are now adjacent to the hotel, the design no longer qualifies as "accessory use." The amendments were needed for the residential component's approval.

Planning & Zoning Vice Chairman Michael Wallace and Commissioner Dennis McKaige did not support the requests on Monday.

"During the master plan update process, our citizens gave us input indicating they didn't want to see more than six- stories in height," McKaige said after the meeting. "This is an 18-story building and violates that ... therefore, I don't support it. I want to represent what those citizens told us during the master plan update."

During the master plan amendment deliberation, Wallace asked the town's legal counsel to clarify if the approved motion would allow residential to be built any where in the Lakeside Business District, as long as it has a hotel component; the town's legal counsel, Alan Lathrom, confirmed that would now be possible.

The Flower Mound Town Council is to consider the Planning & Zoning commission's recommendations its May 5 meeting

Pending the town's approval, hotel construction could begin around June or July, Hines Vice President Travis Overall said. Hines Development will perform an assessment of the condominium market before it decides to begin the approximately six months design process, he said.

In related news, McKaige discussed The River Walk at Central Park, addressing claims that: "This project is being fast tracked and being approved without citizen input, while board and commission recommendations are being ignored," he said. "The project is being fast tracked."

McKaige went on to explain the practical reason for the urgency, saying: "In January of this year, the developer advised that the hospital wanted to break ground in May/June 2008 time frame. A normal review and approval process would take longer than that."

McKaige added that various workshops have taken place and the public hearings are approaching.

"There is no option to waive them or not have them," he said. "We will be having lots of opportunities for public input. They just haven't happened yet."

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