



## Memorandum

**TO:** Polk County Zoning Commission  
**FROM:** Brian McDonough / Planning Staff  
**DATE:** March 18, 2021  
**RE:** Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment Request

A text amendment to the Polk County Zoning Ordinance has been submitted by Hubbell Realty Company, 6900 Westown Parkway, West Des Moines, IA 50266. The proposed amendment would reduce the minimum lot requirements for the single-family Conservation House Planned Development Option. Specifically, the proposal would amend Article 6 – Bulk and Use Standards, Division 3 – Bulk Standards for Planned Developments, Section 5 – Conservation House, Table 6.6, sections A & D, to change the Minimum Lot Area from 6,000 square feet to 5,000 square feet, and to change the Minimum Lot Width from 60 feet to 50 feet. The proposed changes to the Ordinance language are included as *Attachment A* to this memo, including staff’s recommended condition of approval for an additional design standard.

The Polk County Zoning Ordinance permits a number of alternative housing types under the planned development option, including detached single-family houses, brownstone townhouses, bi-attached houses, attached and detached townhouses, condominiums and apartments. Planned developments are permitted within the Rural Residential, Low Density Residential, Medium Density Residential, High Density Residential, and Mixed Use zoning districts. They require as little as 3 acres and as much as 20 acres of total land area for development, zoning district dependent. They also require the provision of minimum open space areas of 25%, 35%, or 40%, zoning district dependent. Planned development are only permitted if public water and public sanitary sewer utilities are available.

The applicant is requesting this amendment in order to implement a proposed planned development concept for property located just west of the intersection of NE 14<sup>th</sup> Street (Hwy 69) and NE 66<sup>th</sup> Avenue, being directly adjacent to the east of the existing residential development known as The Greens at Woodland Hills Plat 1. On this same March 22, 2021 Zoning Commission agenda (Rezoning Petition – Item 2021-09983), the applicant is requesting a rezoning of portions of that property to accommodate this future planned development. A large

portion of that planned development will include detached single-family lots utilizing the Conservation House Planned Development option. The applicant is proposing a slightly smaller entry-level single-family design utilizing the requested 50-foot wide lots at approximately 5,000 square feet in size. The applicant's official amendment proposal can be found as *Attachment B*. The applicant has also provided the proposed single-family housing layouts proportional to the requested smaller lot sizes – this can be found as *Attachment C*.

### **Staff Recommendation**

Staff recommends approval of the proposed text amendment to the Polk County Zoning Ordinance. The proposal is consistent with the Polk County Comprehensive Plan (Polk 2030) Specifically, it supports the Housing Goal and Policy 1: "Support creation of a broader range of housing and development types that serve the needs of diverse income and age groups and special populations." Staff realizes that the text amendment will not only benefit the applicant's planned development proposal, but will also allow future planned developments with smaller lot sizes and widths. Therefore, in order to support affordable, high-quality future housing stock, and in order to further life safety measures through built-in storm shelter design, staff recommends approval with the following condition:

1. All single-family residences utilizing the Conservation House Planned Development option must include a full basement.

**Section 5. Conservation House**

Conservation House. This dwelling type is a single family residence which is fully detached from neighboring structures. The Conservation House is distinguished by small front, rear, and side yard setbacks. These smaller setbacks allow for a maximum amount of open space to be created within the development area by consolidating open space from individual lots into larger common areas. Ownership is of a parcel and a house. The following table specifies the minimum standards for a Conservation House. A Conservation house is only permitted in planned development.

Table 6.6

A = Minimum Lot Area	<del>6000</del> <u>5,000</u>	<u>sq. ft.</u>
B = Maximum Building Coverage	.60	
C = Maximum Building Height	35	ft.
D = Minimum Lot Width	<del>60</del> <u>50</u>	ft.
Minimum Yards:		
E = Front to dwelling	20	ft.
F = Front to garage	20	ft.
G = Side	5	ft.
H = Rear	10	ft.
I = Off-street Parking Spaces	2.0	spaces per du
<u>J = Additional Design Standard(s)</u>		<u>All single-family residences must include a full basement</u>



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West Des Moines, Iowa 50266  
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515-243-3228  
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February 3, 2021

Bret Vandelune  
Polk County Planning & Development  
Polk County Public Works  
5885 NE 14<sup>th</sup> Street  
Des Moines, Iowa 50313

RE: Zoning Ordinance – Text Amendment

Mr. Vandelune;

We respectfully request a Text Amendment to allow 50 feet wide single-family Lots. Article 6, Division 3, Section 5. Conservation House currently allows 60 feet wide single-family residential lots.

The need for the 50' minimum lot width is to try to align the size of lot with the style of housing the market is demanding. Hubbell Realty Company is seeing a trend of millennials buying entry level housing in the 1,200-1,400 SF range with a 2-car garage rather than the 3-car garage. Removing the 3rd garage stall reduces the need for wider lots. As the housing market shifts to meet buyer demand, the lot size should also shift to ensure the infrastructure is being maximized to its full potential. If the lot size does not align with the housing type, home construction and lot sales will stall.

This request would specifically revise Table 6.6:

- A = Minimum Lot Area = 5000 s.f. (currently 6000 s.f.)
- D = Minimum Lot Width = 50 ft. (currently 60 ft.)

Please let me know if you have any questions or require any further information. Thank you.

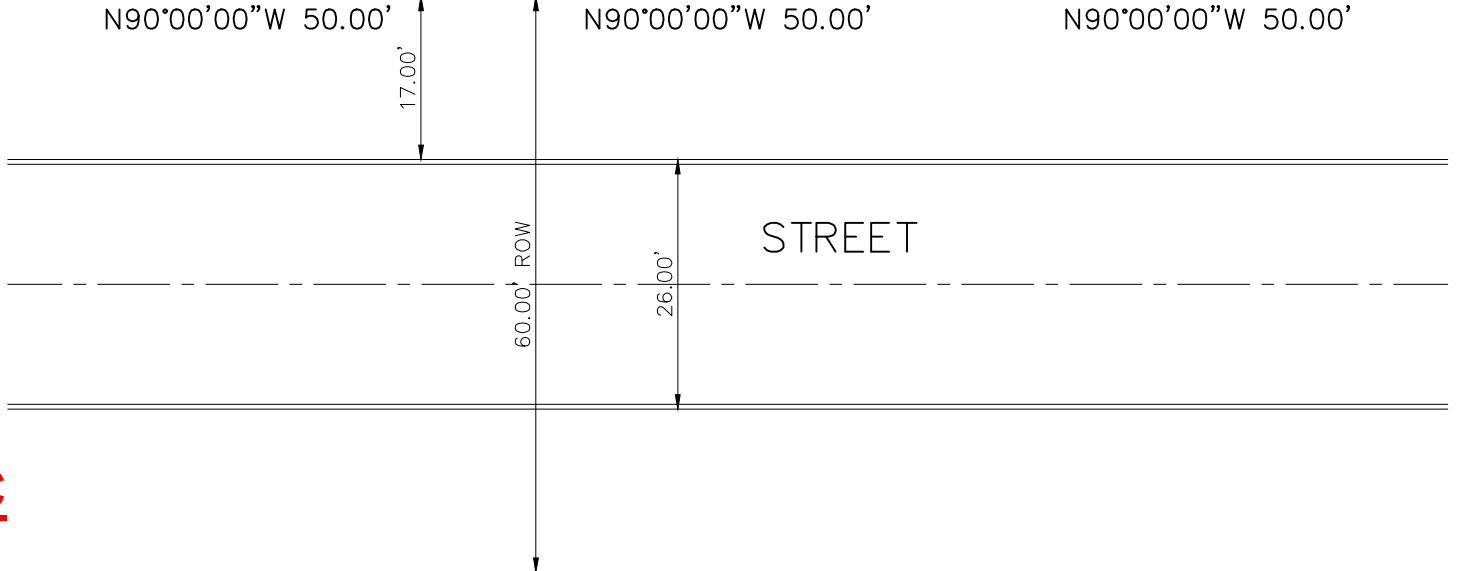
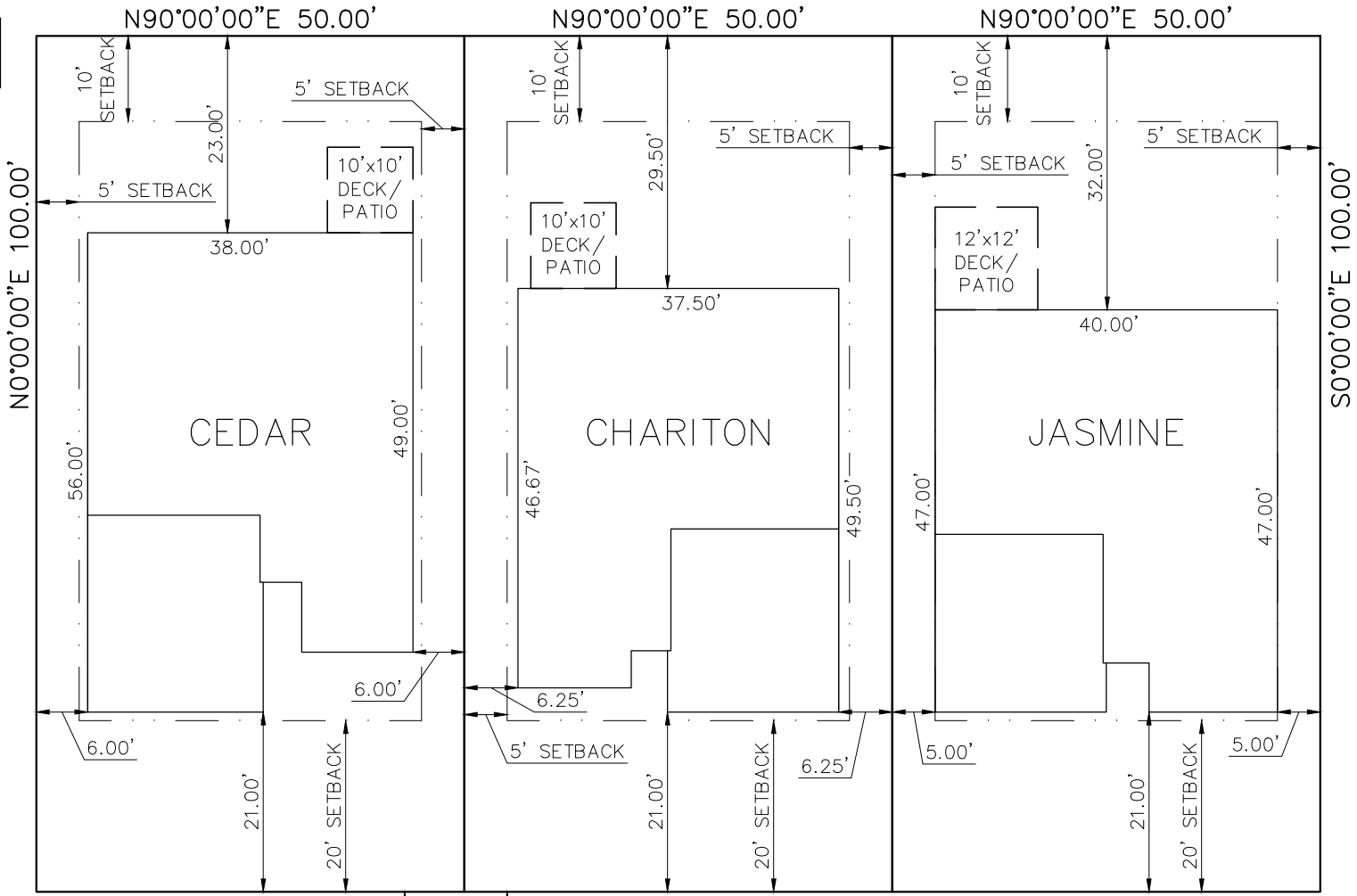
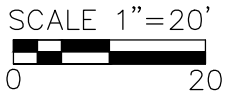
Sincerely,

HUBBELL REALTY COMPANY

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Stephen C. Moseley". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Stephen C. Moseley  
Director of Residential Land Development

**WOODLAND HILLS EAST  
50' WIDE LOT EXHIBIT**



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DATE: 02-23-2021



CIVIL DESIGN ADVANTAGE

2101.007

**Attachment C**