Forest Ridge Estates - Preliminary Plat

## Applicants:

Blessman International, Inc. (Property Owner)
PAR Partners, LLC - represented by Tom Davies (Developer)
Snyder \& Associates, Inc. (Project Engineer/Surveyor)

## Request:

Preliminary plat approval of a major subdivision plat creating 17 new single-family residential lots

## Legal Description:

Approximately 32.69 acres located within the SW $1 / 4$ of Section 17, Township 80 North, Range 24 West of the $5^{\text {th }}$ P.M., Polk County, lowa (Crocker Township).

## General Location:

4200 NW $98^{\text {th }}$ Avenue, Polk City; southwest corner of NW Polk City Drive (Hwy 415) and NW $98^{\text {th }}$ Avenue, being approximately one and one-quarter ( $11 / 4$ ) miles south/southeast of Polk City and directly west of the City of Ankeny.

## Existing Zoning:

"RR" Rural Residential District

## Surrounding Zoning:

North "RR" Rural Residential District
South "RR" Rural Residential District / "OS" Open Space District
East "RR" Rural Residential District / City of Ankeny
West "RR" Rural Residential District

## GENERAL COMMENTS:

This preliminary plat proposes 17 new single-family residential lots on approximately 32.69 acres zoned "RR" Rural Residential District. The subject property includes the existing parcel and residence at 4200 NW $98^{\text {th }}$ Avenue, Polk City, as well as the adjacent parcel to the west which contains mature trees and open space. These existing properties are owned by Blessman International, Inc. The developer is also in the process of purchasing a 100 -foot wide strip of ground adjacent to the east out of the existing farmland owned by Connie Koch. Together, these ~32.69 acres comprise of the subject property and total development area. The proposed 17 lots will be served by a combination of existing public road frontage along NW $98{ }^{\text {th }}$ Avenue to the north, a new short cul-de-sac roadway extending south from NW $98^{\text {th }}$ Avenue into the subject property, as well as short extensions of two (2) existing dead-end public streets, being NW $95^{\text {th }}$ Place and NW $41^{\text {st }}$ Court, located adjacent to the south within the development of Cherry Glen Ridge Plat 1.

The subject property is located at the southwest corner of NW Polk City Drive (Hwy 415) and NW $98^{\text {th }}$ Avenue, being directly west of the City of Ankeny corporate limits where they terminate along NW Polk City Drive (Hwy 415), and approximately one and one-quarter ( $11 / 4$ ) miles south/southeast of the Polk City corporate limits. A vicinity map of the subject property and surrounding area can be found at the end of this report as Attachment $A$. The subject property contains an existing single-family dwelling constructed in 1968 as well as an accessory pole building constructed in 1994, according to County records. The house and building are setback several hundred feet from the property's frontage to the north along NW $98^{\text {th }}$ Avenue. Surrounding properties are primarily zoned "RR" Rural Residential District and contain existing single-family residences.

The existing subdivision of Cherry Glen Ridge Plat 1 is located directly to the south and contains approximately 20 single-family homes, platted in 2005. Adjacent to the west is the development of Ballard Estates, platted in 1982 and containing approximately 30 single-family homes. Directly north of Ballard Estates, and lying northwest of the subject property, is a newer single-family development known as Lake Ridge Heights Plat 1 platted in 2017. This development contains a 28 single-family lots, some of which are still under construction. There are also a few existing single-family dwellings situated on larger wooded lots north and west of the subject property along NW $98^{\text {th }}$ Avenue and NW $44^{\text {th }}$ Street. To the east of NW Polk City Drive (Hwy 415) within the City of Ankeny there is continued single-family development at higher densities. To the southwest of the subject property along Saylorville Lake include areas of public open space including campgrounds, boat launch and general recreation areas. Directly adjacent to the east of the subject property is a remnant piece of farm ground that remains in agricultural production and separates the subject property from NW Polk City Drive (Hwy 415). As stated previously, the developer is in the process of purchasing the westerly 100 feet of this adjacent farm ground in order to implement the proposed development concept.

## STAFF REVIEW:

## Lot Configuration/Plat Layout

Attachment B at the end of this report contains the most recent version of the preliminary plat. A total of 17 lots are proposed as well as a single outlot. The developer is utilizing the cluster development option under the property's existing "RR" Rural Residential District zoning to allow for smaller lots. The cluster option reduces the minimum lot size from 40,000 to 20,000 square feet. It also reduces front and rear setbacks from 50 feet to 30 feet and side yard setbacks from 15 feet to 10 feet. In exchange for smaller lots, the developer is required to preserve a minimum of $25 \%$ of the entire development area as permanent open space. Outlot ' $X$ ' contains the eight (8) acres of open space preservation required to utilize the cluster development option. While the cluster option allows for lots as small as $\sim 0.50$ acres, the majority of proposed lots far exceed that size. Seven (7) of the proposed lots are at or around 0.50 acres in size, while the remaining ten (10) lots range in size from 0.80 acres to 4.82 acres in size with most being within the 1 to 2 acre range. The lot widths vary from approximately 100 feet for the smaller $\sim 0.50$-acre lots to over 200 feet for the larger lots. There are also a total of four (4) flag lots with approximately 40 feet of frontage each.

Lots 1 thru 9 will be accessed via a new proposed public cul-de-sac street (NW $40^{\text {th }}$ Court) extending south from NW $98^{\text {th }}$ Avenue into the subject property, and being approximately 350 feet in length. Lots 10 and 11 will front NW $98^{\text {th }}$ Avenue to the north with a proposed shared driveway entrance. Lots 12 thru 15 will have frontage and access onto a proposed northerly extension of NW $41^{\text {st }}$ Court, which is located within the Cherry Glen Ridge development to the south and terminates in a dead-end at the boundary with the subject property. Lots 16 and 17 are proposed to have frontage and access onto a proposed easterly extension of NW $95^{\text {th }}$ Place, also located to the south with Cherry Glen Ridge. NW $41^{\text {st }}$ Court and NW $95^{\text {th }}$ Place will be extended far enough to provide access to the proposed lots in these areas, but will remain as dead-end streets. The developer will be required to provide adequate emergency vehicle access/turnaround capabilities along NW $41^{\text {st }}$ Court and NW 95 ${ }^{\text {th }}$ Place. The plat currently proposes hammerhead turnarounds to meet this requirement. The existing residence will be located on proposed Lot 10. The existing accessory pole building will be located on proposed Lot 4 , and become an accessory structure to a future dwelling on that lot.

## Neighborhood Access \& Adjoining Properties

The proposed development includes a new short cul-de-sac street, as well as the partial extension of two (2) existing public roadways within the adjacent Chery Glen Ridge development to the south. The subject property and surrounding land includes steep terrain, woodlands as well as existing residential development and open space/public land. The proposed access points and street extensions provide the best possible connectivity given these constraints. NW $95^{\text {th }}$ Place may be further extended to the east at such time as the adjacent farm ground develops. NW $41^{\text {st }}$ Court may be further extended in the future to a remaining, currently landlocked piece of ground located at the southwestern corner of the subject property. This adjacent landlocked property can be seen on sheet 2 of the preliminary plat, found as Attachment $B$ to this report. It is owned by a Michael Canney and is approximately six (6) acres in size.

Mr. Canney was approached by the plat developer regarding the potential inclusion of his property into this development. However, ultimately he decided not to participate in this project. While this property is currently landlocked, the proposed extension of NW $41^{\text {st }}$ Court opens the possibility for future access to be provided. In order to meet the intent of the neighborhood access plan provisions of the Subdivision Ordinance, staff requested the developer provide 50\% of the public street improvement/extension for NW 41 ${ }^{\text {st }}$ Court in relation to the boundary of this landlocked property, including dedication of future right-of-way. This ensures an equitable costsharing outcome if development of this landlocked parcel is desired in the future. Under a future development scenario this adjacent property owner would be responsible for roughly $50 \%$ of the cost of the full street extension from its current terminus within the Cherry Glen Ridge development to the south. That future development cost would be proportional to the current cost to extend the street to the property boundary if this property had been included for development at this time. Staff has discussed the proposed development concept and neighborhood access requirements with the adjoining land owner, Mr. Canney.

## Natural Resources

The subject property contains several areas with steep changes in elevation, primarily located along a number of drainageways and ravines throughout the property. The northeastern portion
of the property, where the new cul-de-sac street is proposed, is relatively flat. Additionally, there are areas with more gradual topography located along and outside of the steeper ravines that run throughout the property. There is a high elevation of approximately 950 feet and 970 feet in the northeast corner of the site and along the eastern property boundary, and a low elevation of approximately 890 feet in the southwest corner at the bottom of a large draingeway. Staff has requested the developer/engineer provide a safe slope setback line on the plat for areas with greater than 5:1 slopes. Additionally, plat notes clarify to the developer and future owners that no tree removals, slope modification, fill or construction may occur within these areas without additional geotechnical engineering.

The property contains an existing pond located in the northern area of the property adjacent to the existing house and driveway. The proposed plat improvements include grading work to increase the area and depth of the pond to serve as the required storm water detention for a portion of the development. Additional storm water detention improvements for the remaining portion of the development are proposed further to the south within an existing drainageway. Both detention areas will be located within private easements and required to be continually maintained by the future owner's association. The site contains a significant amount of existing woodlands, including approximately 12.79 acres of mature woodlands and 8.48 acres of young woodlands. A minimum of $75 \%$ of all mature woodlands, and $50 \%$ of all young woodlands, must be protected. Staff is still working through this issue with the developer and engineer. The latest submittal includes a proposed woodland protection easement to help ensure that the required areas are protected not only during development but long-term after the lots are constructed. The proposed clustering of lots around the cul-de-sac as well as the larger lots and flag lots help minimize the impact upon woodlands and steep slopes throughout the property. In predevelopment meetings with staff, the final proposal for the cul-de-sac street was reduced in length to preserve additional trees.

## Roads/Utilities

NW $98^{\text {th }}$ Avenue provides the primary frontage and access to the subject property along the north. NW $98^{\text {th }}$ Avenue is a paved, two-lane local roadway maintained by Polk County. The roadway terminates in a dead-end approximately 600 feet west of the subject property, and provides connection east to NW Polk City Drive (Hwy 415). NW $95^{\text {th }}$ Place and NW $41^{\text {st }}$ Court are adjacent to the south within the existing development Cherry Glen Ridge, and are proposed to be extended as part of this development. Both streets are paved, two-lane curb and gutter local roads maintained by Polk County. Both streets currently terminate in a dead-end at the Cherry Glen Ridge plat boundary. This development would extend them to serve additional lots, including emergency access turnaround improvements in the form of hammerheads. Public water is available through Des Moines Water Works. An eight-inch ( $8^{\prime \prime}$ ) water main will be extended along NW 98 ${ }^{\text {th }}$ Avenue to serve Lots 1 thru 11, including a cross connection between the existing water main along NW $44^{\text {th }}$ Street to the northwest and the existing water main along NW Polk City Drive to the east. Lots 12 thru 17 to the south will be served by separate 8 " water main extensions brought from within the existing Cherry Glen Ridge development to the south. Sanitary sewer is not available and all lots will be served by individual wastewater treatment systems to be designed and installed at time of future home construction.

## Requested Waivers

The following waivers are requested from the Subdivision Ordinance based on the proposed layout. The formal waiver request can be found at the end of this report as Attachment $C$.

- A waiver for Lot 5 to the requirement that flag lots not exceed three (3) acres in size in areas without public sanitary sewer. Staff would concur with the rationale provided in the attachment. Both the number of flag lots and required waivers to the flag lot standards have been minimized to the extent possible. The requested waiver for Lot 5 is necessary to help balance the needs of access, adequate buildable area and preservation of natural resources, namely mature woodlands and steep slopes. Attachment $C$ references both Lot 5 and Lot 6, however the latest submittal has been revised so that the waiver for Lot 6 is no longer necessary.
- A waiver to the requirement that ponds shall be held by a single owner or held in common in a Home Owner's Association. The existing pond located in the northern portion of the property will not be contained on a single lot or outlot. The pond will be expanded as part of the plat improvements to serve as required storm water detention, and will also provide an amenity to a portion of the lots within the development on which it will reside (Lots 7 thru 10). Given the natural constraints of the property, namely steep slopes and woodlands, and that the pond is an existing feature, it is not feasible to create a layout which confines the pond to a single lot. The pond will be placed within a private easement and the future owner's association shall be responsible for maintenance.


## RECOMMENDATION:

Staff has reviewed this plat for compliance with the Polk County Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances as a major plat submittal, including a detailed review of lot density, dimensions, access, frontage, natural resource protection, storm water detention, and waivers. At this stage, the Commission's action would affirm, deny, or amend the overall plat layout and the requested waivers. Moving forward, staff will continue to work with the owner and project engineer in resolving remaining comments. Once all comments have been addressed, the preliminary plat may be forwarded to the Board of Supervisors for their approval. Any significant changes to the preliminary plat would require re-approval by the Zoning Commission. Once the preliminary plat has been approved, the final plat may be submitted for staff review. The final plat will not come before the Zoning Commission. The plat falls within the two-mile extraterritorial review jurisdiction of both Johnston and Ankeny. Johnston has communicated that they will not exercise their review authority given that the property lies east of the Des Moines River/Saylorville Lake. The City of Ankeny has been contacted, but no comments received to-date. Ankeny will have to approve the final plat or waive their authority prior to final approval and recording by Polk County.

Staff recommends approval of the Preliminary Plat of Forest Ridge Estates, including the requested waivers from the Subdivision Ordinance. Prior to official approval of the preliminary plat by the Board of Supervisors all remaining staff comments must be addressed. Furthermore, prior to any construction activity, staff will need to review and approve construction plans for all plat improvements, including street and storm sewer design.







January 13, 2021
Mr. Bret Vandelune
Planning and Development Manager
Polk County Public Works
5885 NE 14th Street
Des Moines, IA 50313
RE: WAIVER REQUESTS
FOREST RIDGE ESTATES -PRELIMINARY PLAT 2021
BLESSMAN INTERNATIONAL, INC PROPERTY
PART OF THE SW $1 / 4$ OF SEC. 17 , T80N, R24W
S\&A Project No. 120.0949.01
Dear Bret:
On behalf of Tom Davies with PAR Partners, LLC, as applicant and developer, please find this letter as the formal waiver request for the following two items for Forest Ridge Estates: (1) to allow flag lots to exceed 3 acres in size, and (2) to allow a private detention basin(s) to be located on multiple lots.

Polk County Subdivision Ordinance, Article 5, Section 19 (J.3) states that "flag lots shall not exceed three (3) acres in size in areas without public sanitary sewer. Given the majority of the property only has access available from NW $98^{\text {th }}$ Avenue because of topographic constraints, geographic barriers, and dense woodland characteristics while maintaining the length of the cul-de-sac at or below the County's requirements, two lots (lots 5 and 6) are created that are larger than 3 acres. Considering the amount of mature woodlands on this site, having these lots larger than 3 acres should create lots desirable to future home owners while trying to minimize tree removal on the overall development.

Polk County Subdivision Ordinance, Article 5, Section 19 (G), states that "ponds shall be held by a single owner or held in common, in a Home Owners Association". There is an existing pond on this site that is being expanded to provide the necessary storm water detention for the northern portion of the development. Given the shape and topography of the parcel along the applicant's desire to save the existing home that will be located on Lot 10 , it is not feasible to have the pond located on just one lot. David Nelson with Whitfield Eddy, PLC is drafting strict shoreline maintenance guidelines and procedures for these individual lot owners. The Home Owners Association will be responsible for maintaining the pond and its outlet within the easements that will be located on portions of Lots 7, 8, 9 and 10 and will be an amenity that will make these lots attractive to future homeowners.

If you have any questions or require additional information, please contact this office at your convenience. Thank you.

Sincerely,
SNYDER \& ASSOCIATES, INC.


Enclosure
cc: Tom Davies, PAR Partners, LLC (w/enclosures emailed)
File

