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Builder interested in continuing Mason Run

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The Monroe News USA TODAY NETWORK

The city of Monroe is exploring options to develop vacant sections of the Mason Run neighborhood just west of the River Raisin National Battlefield Park.

Matt Vanisacker, the city's deputy director of economic and community development and neighborhood services coordinator, gave a presentation during Tuesday's city council work session. The long-dormant project to continue expansion of the neighborhood found renewed life this year with the involvement of a new developer willing to work closely with the city on a new agreement.

Infinity Homes & Co., of Novi, approached the city in March and expressed interest in taking on the neighborhood which had been partially developed in the early 2000s before being abandoned due to economic factors.

The city has had sporadic interest from other developers over the years but was unable to find a suitable partner. Infinity Homes expressed its willingness to work with the city on an agreement that would leave in place the current design standards for vacant lots south of Elliot Street that compliment the existing neighborhood and create new agreements for a handful of properties to the north.

"Needless to say, when they were interested in maintaining the existing charm and character that is the Mason Run neighborhood as we know it today, we were very excited to work with them and they were very eager to work with us on developing an amended agreement," said Vanisacker.

Infinity Homes plans to develop single family homes on 23 of the existing infill lots just south of Elliot Street and east of Mason Run Boulevard. The company also plans to divide up six larger parcels to the north of Elliot Street into 34 additional lots for single-family homes. "I think it's safe to say, and I don't have the facts and figures in front of me, but this would one of the larger housing developments that have happened in the last 15 years for the city," Vanisacker said. "This is a massive undertaking, a massive project."

The city contracted with Crosswind Developments and Creative Land Design Inc. on the original planned unit development (PUD) agreement in Feb-

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ruary 2000. The neighborhood runs from Elm Street north to the Frenchtown Township line, though only a small portion was completed.

"At the time of the initial development, they were planning to develop the entirety of that site," Vanisacker said. "However, economic conditions in 2007, 2008 forced them into bankruptcy unfortunately and they were forced to vacate the remaining development."

Vanisacker said the city is working with the Detroit-based design firm MKSK to draft a new PUD agreement and pattern book for the neighborhood. MKSK has reached out to the original

developers and architects to help maintain a consistent vision, Vanisacker said.

“So we have the original crafters of the planning book working with our existing planning consultant to make sure that no stone was unturned in this process,” said Vanisacker, who stressed that the new agreement would focus on four key areas: architectural standards, site standards, housing types and landscaping.

A presentation, including a draft of the new pattern book, will be given to at Citizens Planning Commission’s regularly scheduled meeting on Monday with an opportunity for public comments. A public hearing also will be held during the Oct. 2 city council meeting.

“ This is the first step of many that we will go down in completing this development,” said Mark Cochran, the city’s director of economic and community development. “ The developer has met us halfway at every single consideration that we’ve brought forward here.”

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