

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY
UNIVERSAL DESIGN IMPLEMENTATION WORK GROUP

DRAFT MINUTES

MAY 8, 2024

Attendees:

Council Chair and Work Group Chair - Jolene Ivey
Council Member and Work Group Vice Chair - Ingrid Watson
Griffin Benton - Maryland Building Industry Association (MBIA)
Jim Chandler - Office of the County Executive
Charlesetta Griffin - American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), Chapter 939
Brooke Larman - Maryland - National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC)
Tierra Medley - Maryland Inclusive Housing
Lori Parris - Prince George's County Department of Permitting, Inspections and Enforcement (DPIE)
Sarah Reddinger - Habitat for Humanity

Members Absent:

Dwight Joseph - Prince George's County Department of Public Works and Transportation (DPWT)
Marcus Monroe - American Institute of Architects – Potomac Valley

Others Present:

Dean Packard - Civil Engineer and Developer, Managing Member of Universal Communities
Casey Anderson - Consultant, Rogers Consulting
Steve Wasser - Investor and Developer
Caron Prideaux - Broker, Sales and Marketing Manager – Parc Redland
Michael Hines - President/Owner of LIG Group

Staff:

John Sheridan - Policy Director, Council District 5
Kathleen H. Canning - Legislative Attorney
Rana Hightower - PHED Committee Director
Shirley Anglin - Administrative Aide
Edwin H. Brown, Jr. - Administrative Assistant
Sharon Savoy Williams - Administrative Assistant

Welcome and Opening Remarks

The fifth regular meeting of the Universal Design Implementation Work Group (Work Group) was called to order at 9:10 a.m. on Wednesday, May 8, 2024, by the Chair of the Work Group.

The Chair welcomed the Development Team of the Parc Redland Community that features accessible housing that is "Designed for Life." The Development Team is Dean Packard, Casey Anderson, Steve Wasser, Caron Prideaux, and Michael Hines. They introduced themselves to the Work Group.

Presentation

Dean Packard gave a presentation entitled "Welcome to the World of Home Accessibility – Housing that is Designed for Life Through Form and Function." The presentation focused on the development of the Parc Redland Community. (See Presentation attached).

Mr. Packard gave background information on his interest in accessible design. He stated that his father has a disability and his house would not accommodate his father. His father needed to live in assisted living and he "gave up." That was the impetus of his figuring out how to make accessible design work.

The development of Parc Redland began in 2007 with the purchase of the Rockville property. At that time, County Executive Leggett created the "Design for Life" law that helped to facilitate accessible design in Montgomery County. Next, legislatively, the zoning ordinance was amended around the site. The Planning Commission supported the development and provided that it was a conditional use with a special exception.

The budget for the development was increased due to architectural requirements suited to accessible design elements and contractors needing to be instructed as to construct the zero-step entry. Further, the Development Team did not want houses to look like they had hospital rooms. The development was to be built with elevators, lower light switches, and other accessible design features so that they were multigenerational and fully adaptable to all at any time and were suitable for aging in place. There were 1.75 acres with 19 townhomes built.

The site work was at a 5% slope that was written into the zoning law. The interior work, under the Design for Life law, included levels of differing features. There is "Level I – Visitability" with a no-step entrance, gathering room, powder room or bathroom and 32" doorways, and "Level II – Livability" with all of the design elements of Level I, plus an accessible kitchen, accessible bedroom, and accessible full bathroom on the entry level floor.

Information regarding the cost per unit in the Parc Redland Community development is as follows: \$100,000 cost per unit, \$40,000 property cost, \$150,000 legal fees, hidden costs of \$350,000 to \$525,000 per unit.

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Steve Wasser said that construction costs were roughly \$800,000 and the last unit sold for 1 million dollars. There were supply chain issues that increased cost, and these are high end units with no comparables.

Michael Hines indicated that they were able to find new ideas to take to future accessible design projects.

Discussion

The Chair remarked about the cost of elevators in the Design for Life model versus houses without an elevator.

Casey Anderson spoke about the land use regulation and the zoning text amendment which allowed this development to happen. The dedicated right-of-way helped.

Dean Packard spoke about accessible design development in Prince George's County in that, like developers everywhere, there is a reluctance to change especially with a model that already works. However, making smaller homes, without an elevator and not one-hundred percent accessible may lower costs and make the homes more favorable to the developer and the buyer.

Steve Wasser commented on the financing of an accessible design development with Prince George's County participation by land donation, Prince George's County subsidies, and increased speed of permitting.

Dean Packard spoke about the need to do one or two test cases to start this type of development in Prince George's County. He also brought up the side issue of grading and water drainage and spoke of the need for a storm drain system, as well as a yard drain system to capture underground water.

Chair Ivey asked whether Parc Redland has a powder room or a full bathroom on the entry-level floor. Mr. Packard indicated that the houses have a full bathroom on the entry-level floor.

Casey Anderson indicated that the rules pertaining to the Department of Permitting, Inspections and Enforcement (DPIE) may need to provide more flexibility. Lori Parris said that she would have the DPIE stormwater team address their concerns. Also, the need for predictability of a waiver is important. Dean Packard said that incentives were needed for the building industry to positively respond to building accessible design. Michael Hines said that this is the future. Mr. Packard stressed that accessible design doesn't work everywhere due to topography, site conditions, and economic conditions but it is valuable.

Charlesetta Griffin asked about a curb-less shower or "roll-in shower" because she has known of water drainage outside of the shower. Dean Packard indicated that there is no-step with drainage with a sloping tray in the shower base to catch the water.

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Jim Chandler asked about the width of the house at 24 feet. Dean Packard indicated that going with an 18 feet width would increase the number of units and would be ideal for the builder's profit margin.

The Chair indicated that townhouses are exempt from the step-free entry.

Dean Packard indicated that there is a ten-foot wall bioretention facility on the property.

Vice-Chair Watson inquired about the accessible design elements in the houses; specifically, regarding kitchens and cabinets. Dean Packard indicated that passing widths are 36 inches and that there are dropped cabinets and sinks and an optional roll under island with or without cabinets.

The Chair indicated that there are first floor slabs which correlate into a three-inch drop.

It was commented that for accessible housing there are no age restrictions, that they are suitable for young families, and are multi-generational units.

Tierra Medley asked about the affordability of these accessible design houses and Dean Packard responded that Parc Redland was a luxury development, but the cost could be lowered with changing different options such as eliminating an elevator, making only the entry-level floor fully accessible. Tierra Medley indicated that Maryland Inclusive Housing provides housing support services with up to 15% set aside for those served by Maryland Inclusive Housing.

Sarah Reddinger provided the housing stock that they have used is accessible design and indicated that Habitat for Humanity complies with the MPDU (Moderately Priced Dwelling Unit) law.

Caron Prideaux indicated that accessible design is good for everyone whether they have a disability, have been in an accident, and have experienced any changing events to any family.

The Chair indicated that the goal is to make these more common with 5-15% units available. Also, it should be considered whether to extend the houses to those at a lower income, like using the MPDU model.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

By a hand vote of the Members, the March 13, 2024, Minutes were approved.

Next Meeting

June 12, 2024

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 10:44 a.m. on Wednesday, May 8, 2024.