



PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION MEETING

Monday, February 23, 2026 at 8:30 AM

Council Chambers - 331 First Street East

AGENDA

MEETING OPENING

1. Roll Call

NEW BUSINESS

2. Approval of previous minutes 1-6-2026
3. Appointment of Commission Chair
4. Appointment of Board Secretary
5. Preliminary Plat of Survey – Jackson Green 7th Addition

ADJOURNMENT

This agenda is subject to change.

PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

January 6, 2026

The Independence Planning & Zoning Commission met in the Council Chambers on Tuesday, January 6, 2026. Matt Chesmore, Building Official, called the meeting to order at 8:31 AM with Stephanie Berns, Tami Fenner, Brian Keierleber and Tyler Rasmussen in attendance. Matthew Schmitz was also in attendance.

Meeting minutes from November 4, 2025 were reviewed. Motion made by Sephanie Berns, seconded by Tami Fenner to approve the minutes as presented. Motion carried.

The elections of Commission Chairperson and Commission Secretary were discussed. A motion was made to table the election of Commission Chairperson until the next meeting by Brian Keierleber, seconded by Tyler Rasmussen. Motion carried. A motion was made to table the election of Commission Secretary until the next meeting by Tami Fenner, seconded by Tyler Rasmussen. Motion carried.

The Pines Third Addition Final Plat of Survey and dedication of public improvements to the City of Independence request from Steve Gee Construction, Inc. was discussed. A motion was made by Brian Keierleber, seconded by Tyler Rasmussen to recommend to the City Council approval of the Pines Third Addition Final Plat of Survey and accept public improvements as submitted, contingent on the items outlined in the Agreement for Delayed Installation of Public Improvements being completed. Motion carried.

A request from Tammy Silberstein to combine Lots 8 and 9 of Pines First Addition to Independence was reviewed. A motion was made by Tami Fenner, seconded by Brian Keierleber to recommend approval of the lot combination as submitted to the City Council. Motion carried.

A motion to adjourn was made by Brian Keierleber, seconded by Tyler Rasmussen. Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

Stephanie A. Berns

Secretary pro tem



**Planning and Zoning
Commission
MEMORANDUM**

TO: Planning and Zoning Commission
FROM: Matt Chesmore – Building Official
DATE OF MEETING: February 23rd, 2026
SUBJECT: Election of Commission Chair

BACKGROUND:

The election of the Commission Chair needs to occur each year. This is generally completed at the first meeting of the new year.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the commission determine who the P&Z Commission Chair will be for the 2026 calendar year.



**Planning and Zoning
Commission
MEMORANDUM**

TO: Planning and Zoning Commission
FROM: Matt Chesmore – Building Official
DATE OF MEETING: February 23rd, 2026
SUBJECT: Election of Commission Secretary

BACKGROUND:

The election of the Commission Secretary needs to occur each year. This is generally completed at the first meeting of the new year.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the commission determine who the Secretary will be for the 2026 calendar year.



PLANNING & ZONING MEMORANDUM

TO: Planning & Zoning Commission

FROM: Matt Chesmore – Building Official

DATE OF MEETING: 2/23/2026

ITEM TITLE: Preliminary Plat of Survey – Jackson Green 7th Addition

BACKGROUND:

Ohl Construction is planning to develop a tract of land they own along Enterprise Dr and 6th Ave SW. The development will contain twenty (20) lots with a new cul-de-sac roadway named Brookslie Court. It is also worth noting that there are four lots (15-18) that will exit directly to Enterprise Dr and two (19,20) that will exit directly to 6th Avenue SW. It is also proposed that Lot C be dedicated to the City for stormwater management. For clarity, public easements are not shown on the plat; however, if the City accepts Lot C, an access easement will need to be placed on the plat.

Because the City has two current and valid ordinances that regulate the construction of public improvements, including roadways, we have included in this packet a legal opinion the City requested regarding which ordinance would be the regulatory standard. In summary of that opinion, Ordinance 175.37(1)(C)(5) was found to be more restrictive and therefore the standard to require the design to conform to.

The commission has several options to consider:

1. A recommendation to the City Council to approve the preliminary plat as submitted (although this would be in violation of our current code).
2. A recommendation to the City Council to disapprove of the preliminary plat based upon non-compliance.
3. A recommendation to the City Council to approve the preliminary plat contingent on the plat complying with City code, at the time of approval.
4. Require changes to be made and resubmit for additional review.

Included in the packet is also an acquisition plat. Although the acquisition plat is not part of the Jackson Green 7th Addition plat review, its approval is contingent on the Jackson Green 7th preliminary plat.

Also attached is a letter from the Mayor.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the Independence Planning and Zoning Commission discuss the Preliminary Plat of Survey as submitted, weigh all attachments and information, and make a recommendation to the Independence City Council.

JACKSON GREEN 7th ADDITION PRELIMINARY PLAT

INDEPENDENCE, IOWA

OWNER/DEVELOPER:

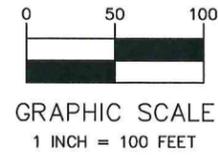
Ron and Janice Ohl
2867 Michel Ave
Rowley, Iowa 52329
Contact: Ron Ohl
(563) 920-0530

PREPARED BY:

Crawford Engineering & Surveying Inc.
118 3rd Avenue NE
Independence, Iowa 50644
Contact: Brian M. Crawford
Ph: (319) 334-7077

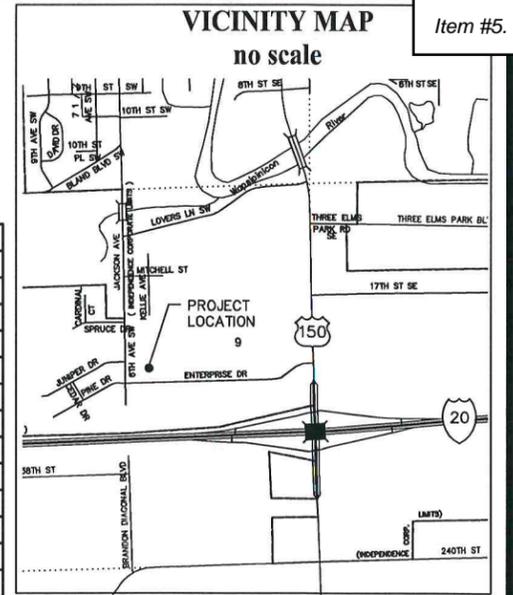
LEGAL DESCRIPTION:

PART OF THE SW ¼ OF THE NE ¼ OF SECTION 9, TOWNSHIP 88 NORTH, RANGE 9 WEST OF THE 5TH P.M., BUCHANAN COUNTY IOWA DESCRIBED AS: BEGINNING AT THE CENTER OF SAID SECTION 9; THENCE N01°12'56"W, 802.38 FEET ALONG THE WEST LINE OF THE NE ¼ OF SAID SECTION 9 TO THE SW CORNER OF LOT B OF JACKSON GREEN FIFTH ADDITION TO THE CITY OF INDEPENDENCE; THENCE ALONG THE SOUTHERLY LINE OF JACKSON GREEN 5TH ADDITION; N88°47'08"E, 144.69 FEET; THENCE S01°12'52"E, 90.10 FEET; THENCE S42°52'21"E, 370.33 FEET; THENCE S86°13'04"E, 260.35 FEET; THENCE S42°52'21"E, 54.49 FEET; THENCE N88°47'08"E, 158.47 FEET; THENCE N88°37'10"E, 129.44 FEET TO THE NE CORNER OF LOT 9 OF ENTERPRISE FIRST ADDITION TO THE CITY OF INDEPENDENCE; THENCE S01°51'58"E, 363.30 FEET ALONG THE EAST LINE OF SAID LOT 9 TO THE NORTH LINE OF ENTERPRISE DRIVE; THENCE ALONG SAID NORTH LINE S88°19'29"W, 132.03 FEET; THENCE S88°13'39"W, 846.46 FEET TO THE POINT OF BEGINNING. DESCRIBED LAND CONTAINS 11.13 ACRES AND IS SUBJECT TO EASEMENTS AND RESTRICTIONS OF RECORD.



Subdivision Data:

Total Area 11.13 Acres
Area dedicated to public ROW 1.63 Acres.
Maximum Lot Area 0.98 Ac.
Minimum Lot Area 0.31 Ac.
Average Lot Area 0.48 Ac.



NUMBER	ARC LEN.	RADIUS	CHORD LEN.	CHORD DIRECTION
C1	99.75	120.00	96.90	S 25°39'00" E
C2	88.61	120.00	86.61	S 70°37'02" E
C3	12.10	15.00	11.77	S 65°07'38" W
C4	41.87	50.00	40.66	N 66°00'58" E
C5	57.67	50.00	54.53	S 56°57'05" E
C6	57.08	50.00	54.03	S 08°47'37" W
C7	64.77	50.00	60.34	N 78°36'26" E
C8	16.26	50.00	16.19	S 54°57'57" E
C9	12.09	15.00	11.77	N 68°44'38" W
C10	61.53	180.00	61.23	N 82°02'40" W
C11	71.59	180.00	71.12	S 60°51'25" E
C12	81.24	180.00	80.56	S 28°40'32" E
C13	43.69	180.00	43.59	S 08°47'29" E

- PROPOSED ZONING: R-2
- CURRENT ZONING: A-1

BULK REGULATIONS:

Front Yard Depth = 25 ft
Side Yard Width = 7 ft
Rear Yard Depth = 25 ft

NUMBER	DIRECTION	DISTANCE
L1	S 49°27'44" E	27.04'
L2	N 88°13'39" E	24.65'
L3	N 49°27'44" W	29.29'
L4	N 49°37'47" W	18.21'
L5	N 42°52'21" W	50.11'
L6	N 42°52'21" W	47.49'
L7	N 88°13'39" E	16.03'

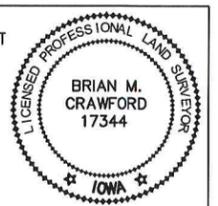
Subdivision Notes:

1. Lot A and Lot B is to be dedicated to the City of Independence as public street. Lot C is to be dedicated to the City of Independence for Stormwater Management.
2. Brookslie Drive is to be 6.5" Thick, 31' Wide PCC Pavement with Integral Curb and Gutter. Public Street Right of Way Width, 60'
3. Sanitary Sewer is to be 8" PVC SDR 26
4. Water Main is to be 8" PVC C-900
5. Sidewalks shall be 5' width located within the Brookslie Drive Right of way 1' from the property line provided by the owner.
6. This development is outside of the flood hazard area based on FEMA Map #19019C0284E bearing and effective Date of December 30, 2020

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS LAND SURVEYING DOCUMENT WAS PREPARED AND RELATED SURVEY WORK WAS PERFORMED BY ME OR UNDER MY DIRECT PERSONAL SUPERVISION AND THAT I AM A DULY LICENSED PROFESSIONAL LAND SURVEYOR UNDER THE LAWS OF THE STATE OF IOWA.

LICENSE RENEWAL DATE: 12-31-2026 LICENSE NO. 17344

Brian M. Crawford 1/28/26
BRIAN M. CRAWFORD, P.L.S. DATE



Legend			
SS	SANITARY SEWER	+	STREET SIGN
W	WATER MAIN	⊙	LIGHT POLE
ST	STORM SEWER	⊙	SANITARY SEWER MANHOLE (SW-301)
G	GAS MAIN OR SERVICE	⊙	SANITARY SEWER CLEANOUT (SW-203)
---	PROPERTY LINE / LOT LINE	⊙	STORM SEWER INTAKE (SW-501)
---	EASEMENT	⊙	FIRE HYDRANT
---	BUILDING SETBACK	⊙	IRON PIN SET
■	IRON PIN & YPC 11572 FOUND	⊙	IRON PIN FOUND
		⊙	PRIVATE UTILITY EASEMENT (i.e.: Gas, Elec. Telecom, Fiber, etc.)

JACKSON GREEN 7TH ADDITION PRELIMINARY PLAT

DRAWN	BMC
CHECKED	LGC
PROJ NO	25803
CADD FILE	

CRAWFORD ENGINEERING & SURVEYING, INC.
118 3rd Ave NE Independence, Iowa 50644

CENTER ¼ CORNER SECTION 9-88-9 FOUND X IN PCC P.O.B.

ENTERPRISE DRIVE

NW CORNER LOT B ENTERPRISE FIRST ADDITION TO INDEPENDENCE

NE CORNER LOT A ENTERPRISE FIRST ADDITION TO INDEPENDENCE



316 2nd St SE, STE 124
P.O. Box 2457
Cedar Rapids, IA 52406-2457
www.lynchdallas.com
dherman@lynchdallas.com
319.200.3717

Holly A. Corkery | Douglas D. [Item #5]
Madison P. Huntzinger | Samantha [redacted]
Steven C. Leiding | Daniel M. Morgan
Patrick J. O'Connell | Amy L. Reasner
Bryce E. Schulte | Wilford H. Stone
Of Counsel: Mohammad H. Sheronick

February 3, 2026

Matt Schmitz
331 1st Street E.
Independence, IA 50644

By email only: mschmitz@independenceia.gov

Re: Legal Opinion regarding Conflicting City Ordinances

Dear Matt:

At your request, and the request of the Mayor, I have prepared the following legal opinion on the issue noted below.

Issue: Whether, when there are two conflicting City Ordinances, the more 'restrictive' or the less 'restrictive' ordinance applies, specifically dealing with the required length of a cul-de-sac.

The City has adopted SUDAS which appears to limit the maximum length of a cul-de-sac to 750'. (Based upon IFC)

The City also adopted, prior to the adoption of SUDAS, City Code §175.37 which limits the maximum length of a cul-de-sac to 500'.

I believe in both cases, the cul-de-sac street would be measured from the center of the street from which the cul-de-sac is constructed to the center of the cul-de-sac.

The Iowa Supreme Court has held that when two city ordinances conflict, courts analyze which provision is more specific or restrictive, often relying on the principle that the more specific ordinance governs over the general one, or that the stricter requirement must be followed to ensure compliance with the overall regulatory scheme. This analysis typically involves determining if the ordinances are "irreconcilable" and interpreting them to give effect to the legislative intent.

Some Cities that have adopted SUDAS, have adopted amendments or exceptions to SUDAS. Urbandale, Iowa, for example, adopted SUDAS subject to the following exception/amendment:

1. Urbandale: Add new paragraph, "Without Jurisdictional Engineer approval, the length [of a cul-de-sac] shall not exceed 600 feet measured from the center line of the intersecting street to the center of the turn-around. The cul-de-sac may not serve more than forty (40) dwelling units."¹

¹ City of Urbandale Design Addendum To Iowa Statewide Urban Design and Specifications Design Manual for Public Improvements – 2025 Edition January 2025

Therefore, so long as the two current City Ordinances remain in effect, the ordinance limiting the length of a cul-de-sac to 500' would be the applicable and enforceable ordinance.

Sincerely yours,

Douglas D. Herman

Douglas D. Herman

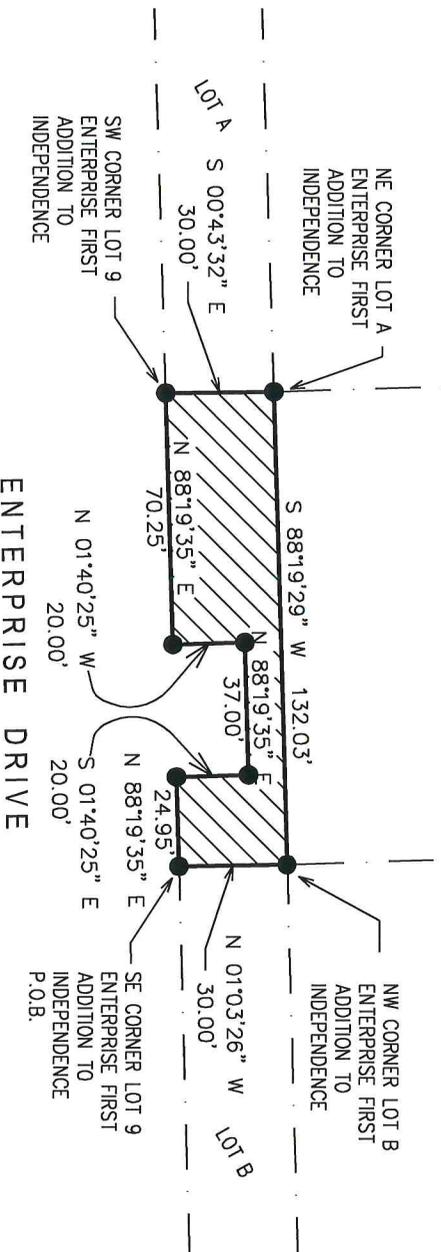
LYNCH DALLAS LEGAL

INDEX LEGEND
COUNTY: BUCHANAN / SECTION 9 / TWP 88 N / RANGE 9 W
ALIQUOT PART : NW 1/4 - SE 1/4
CITY:
SUBDIVISION:
BLOCK:
LOT:
PROPRIETOR: RON AND JANICE OHL
REQUESTED BY: CITY OF INDEPENDENCE

PREPARED BY: BRIAN M. CRAWFORD, P.L.S.-CRAWFORD ENGINEERING 118 3RD AVE NE INDEPENDENCE, IOWA 50644 (319) 334-7077

ACQUISITION PLAT
PART OF LOT 9, ENTERPRISE FIRST ADDITION TO THE CITY OF INDEPENDENCE
BUCHANAN COUNTY IOWA

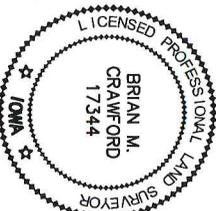
DESCRIPTION
 BEGINNING AT THE SE CORNER OF LOT 9, ENTERPRISE FIRST ADDITION TO THE CITY OF INDEPENDENCE IS SECTION 9, TOWNSHIP 88 NORTH, RANGE 9 WEST OF THE 5TH P.M., BUCHANAN COUNTY IOWA; THENCE N01°03'26"W, 30.00 FEET ALONG THE EAST LINE OF SAID LOT 9 TO THE NW CORNER OF LOT B, ENTERPRISE FIRST ADDITION; THENCE S88°19'29"W, 132.03 FEET TO THE NE CORNER OF LOT A, ENTERPRISE FIRST ADDITION; THENCE S00°43'32"E, 30.00 FEET TO THE SW CORNER OF LOT 9; THENCE N88°19'35"E, 70.25 FEET; THENCE N01°40'25"W, 20.00 FEET; THENCE N88°19'35"E, 37.00 FEET; THENCE S01°40'25"E, 20.00 FEET; THENCE N88°19'35"E, 24.95 FEET TO THE POINT OF BEGINNING. DESCRIBED LAND CONTAINS 0.07 ACRES AND IS SUBJECT TO EASEMENTS AND RESTRICTIONS OF RECORD.



CORNERS FOUND:	CORNERS SET:
▲ - SECTION CORNER AS NOTED	△ - SECTION CORNER AS NOTED
● - 1/2" REBAR W/CAP 14809	○ - 1/2" IP YEL. CAP #17344
	□ - CUT X IN ROADWAY
DATE SURVEYED: 10-10-2023	PROJECT: JACKSON GREEN 7TH ADDITION

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS LAND SURVEYING DOCUMENT WAS PREPARED AND RELATED SURVEY WORK WAS PERFORMED BY ME OR UNDER MY DIRECT PERSONAL SUPERVISION AND THAT I AM A DULY LICENSED PROFESSIONAL LAND SURVEYOR UNDER THE LAWS OF THE STATE OF IOWA.
 LICENSE RENEWAL DATE: 12-31-2026 LICENSE NO. 17344

Brian M. Crawford 1/27/26
 BRIAN M. CRAWFORD, P.L.S. DATE



CRAWFORD ENGINEERING & SURVEYING, INC.

118 THIRD AVENUE N.E.
 P.O. BOX 793, INDEPENDENCE, IOWA 50644
 Phone (319) 334-7077

PROJECT NO. 25803 FLD.BK.NO. PAGE

Brad Bleichner, *Mayor*
(319) 334-2780

Matthew R. Schmitz, *City Manager*
(319) 334-2780

Susi Lampe, *Asst. City Manager, City Clerk/Treasurer*
(319) 334-2780

Douglas Herman, *City Attorney*



www.independenciaia.gov

Council Members

Brian Prusator, *At-Large*
Ralph Moore, *At-Large*
Melissa Appleby, *1st Ward*
Bret Weber, *2nd Ward*
Michael O'Loughlin, *3rd Ward*
Debra Hanna, *4th Ward*
Matthew Mayner, *5th Ward*

Item #5.

To: Planning & Zoning Commission
From: Mayor Brad Bleichner
Date: February 5, 2026

Subject: Mayoral Concerns regarding Jackson Green 7th Addition Preliminary Plat

Executive Summary

I am writing to outline significant concerns regarding the proposed layout for the Jackson Green 7th Addition. While, as a city, we support the continued growth of housing in Independence, we must ensure that new infrastructure serves the long-term financial and safety interests of the community. After reviewing the Preliminary Plat for this project, I recommend that the Planning & Zoning Commission request a revision of the layout before approval.

My primary concerns center on connectivity, long-term maintenance liabilities, and safety conflicts along Enterprise Drive.

1. Connectivity and Emergency Access

The current proposal features a single access point from Enterprise Drive terminating in a cul-de-sac (Brookslie Court) that is approximately 700 feet long. While this length is technically under the 750-foot maximum allowed by the International Fire Code, the design presents unnecessary risks and inefficiencies, and is currently a violation of City Code 175.37, which requires cul-de-sac's to be no longer than 500-feet. Some other items of concern:

- **Emergency Access:** A single access point creates a vulnerability. If the entrance at Enterprise Drive is blocked, emergency vehicles cannot enter.
- **Maintenance & Service Delivery:** Dead-end streets are inefficient for city services. They require time-consuming maneuvers for snowplows, garbage trucks, and school buses. Snow removal is particularly difficult in cul-de-sacs, especially if the turning radius is tight.
- **Water System Reliability:** Cul-de-sacs complicate water looping, which is preferred for maintaining fire flow and water quality.

Recommendation: I strongly urge the Commission to require the developer to explore connecting Brookslie Drive directly to 6th Avenue SW. This connection would improve traffic flow, enhance safety, and eliminate the inefficiencies of a dead-end design.

2. Conflict with Planned Trail Infrastructure & Arterial Access

The City has recently received a grant to install a trail along the north side of Enterprise Drive, which is programmed for our FY2027 budget. The current plat proposes three to four individual driveways (Lots 15, 16, 17, and potentially 18) exiting directly onto Enterprise Drive.

- **Pedestrian Safety:** Allowing multiple residential driveways to cross a public trail creates inherent conflict points between vehicles and pedestrians or bicyclists.
- **Driveway Spacing Standards:** Our City Engineer notes that under SUDAS guidelines for a Minor Arterial in a residential district, the driveway spacing from the intersection should be 145 feet. The current layout places the first driveway at approximately 127 feet, which does not meet the standard.

Recommendation: To improve safety and meet spacing standards, I recommend requiring a shared private access drive that runs parallel to the street or combining driveways. This would consolidate the access points into a single entrance, significantly reducing the conflict with the future trail and traffic on Enterprise Drive.

Brad Bleichner, *Mayor*
(319) 334-2780

Matthew R. Schmitz, *City Manager*
(319) 334-2780

Susi Lampe, *Asst. City Manager, City Clerk/Treasurer*
(319) 334-2780

Douglas Herman, *City Attorney*



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Michael O'Loughlin, *3rd Ward*
Debra Hanna, *4th Ward*
Matthew Mayner, *5th Ward*

Item #5.

3. Infrastructure Efficiency and Fiscal Sustainability

We must view this development through the lens of long-term fiscal sustainability. The current plan asks the City to accept approximately 1,200 linear feet of new street and utility liability to serve only 20 lots. With an average lot size of 0.48 acres, the density is low relative to the infrastructure required.

- **Irregular Lot Geometry:** The curvature of the proposed road creates several irregular, pie-shaped lots (specifically Lots 3, 4, and 5) and excessively deep lots (Lots 1 and 2). These are often inefficient for homeowners to maintain and difficult to assess equitably.
- **Improved Yield:** I understand that by straightening the alignment of Brookslie Drive to connect to 6th Avenue SW, the developer could possibly regularize the lot shapes. This could potentially increase the lot yield from 20 to 24 or 26 units, increasing the developer's profit while simultaneously improving the City's tax base per mile of road maintained.

4. Lack of Maintenance Access to Public Infrastructure (Lot C)

The Preliminary Plat designates Lot C to be dedicated to the City of Independence for Stormwater Management. However, this lot appears to be "landlocked" behind private residential lots (Lots 7-10) with no dedicated access easement from the public right-of-way.

As currently designed, City crews would be unable to access this stormwater facility for mowing, dredging, or inspection without trespassing on private property.

Recommendation: Require the developer to dedicate a minimum 20-foot access easement extending from Brookslie Drive to Lot C. This easement must be capable of supporting maintenance equipment. Alternatively, Lot C should be relocated to have direct frontage on the public street.

Conclusion

I believe that a "through-street" design connecting to 6th Avenue SW solves the majority of these issues. It creates a safer, more connected neighborhood, resolves the trail conflicts on Enterprise Drive, and offers a better financial return for both the developer and the City.

I ask the Planning & Zoning Commission to consider these factors and encourage the developer to revise the preliminary plat to address these issues.

Respectfully,

Brad Bleichner – Mayor