



City approves new Singing Hills plan

By Eric Weilbacher

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By a three-to-two vote, the [Bulverde City Council](#) Tuesday approved a modified development agreement on the master-planned Singing Hills Development.

The split vote came after lengthy discussion on the details of the modified plan and how it would affect the city.

Last month, council tabled the motion to approve a plan after which the developer worked with the mayor and city staff to come up with a more palatable agreement for them.

The developers of the multi-million dollar development — NAI REOC of San Antonio — have for several years been hashing out the details of a plan to attract regional and national retail businesses to Bulverde.

The 250-acre site, located at the northwest corner of U.S. Hwy. 281 and Texas Hwy. 46, would begin with a 250,000-square-foot anchor store (likely a national retailer).

Plans also include a hotel, 60 acres of commercial development including larger stores as well as professional office parks, 13 acres of multi-family housing and 120 acres of single family sites.

Several thousand jobs other than construction are also anticipated.

The city of Bulverde has no public sewage system, so for a development of this scale, a sewer system would have to be established which could eventually be tapped into by adjacent neighborhoods and businesses.

The development includes improvements and easement work on both highways, storm water management and drainage work, as well as sewage infrastructure and a water treatment plant.



The development group is asking for an agreement to share sales taxes with the city of Bulverde, Comal County, the [Emergency Service Districts](#) covering the area and the Bulverde Spring Branch Library over the next 25 years.

Recent changes in the plan include moving the main retail shops and anchor store to the part of the property that falls within the city limits which would generate more sales tax revenues for the city.

The changes to the agreement will cost the city \$5.34 million over 25 years from tax revenues generated from the development.

The developer anticipates \$12 million in tax revenues will be generated during the 25-year period and 75 percent of sales tax revenue generated would go to the developer for 10 years, then 50 percent during the next 10 years and 25 percent for the remaining five years.

“The burden is on them to make those businesses successful,” said Mayor [Bill Krawietz](#).

Council members [Shane Reynolds](#) and Cindy Cross cast the dissenting votes against the development agreement. Reynolds said in a lengthy statement that he fundamentally did not believe the deal was good for the city. He also questioned the need for a development like Singing Hills in Bulverde in the first place.

“It is my opinion that as residents of Bulverde we don't mind driving 10 or 20 miles outside the city for dining or shopping,” Reynolds said. “The agreement in my mind sets a bad precedent. Singing Hills will not be the last developer to ask for city assistance.”

Reynolds made a motion that the city pass the agreement with \$2.75 million in total sales tax dollars going to the developer instead of \$5.34 million. However, the motion failed to pass.

Other councilmen had a different take on the development.

“What does this agreement cost my neighbor? Zero. It costs him nothing,” said Mayor Pro-tem Rob Hurst.



Reynolds fired back by saying that bringing a thousand construction workers into the city would require the city provide more police enforcement and cause more traffic congestion.

“If anyone believes that growth isn't coming, it's coming. That's why the city sat down and hammered out the plan,” said Kirk Harrison. “Growth is coming. Our only choice is to control it.”

“I think the project is going to be built whether or not the agreement is passed,” said Krawietz.

The mayor added he believed that, if the city is not involved in the agreement, then the developer more than likely would not agree to comply with city ordinances such as those for dark sky, landscaping and architecture requirements.

The final vote was split with Councilmen Hurst, Harrison and Chapman voting for the agreement, and Reynolds and Cross voting against it.

After Tuesday's vote, the developer plans to work separate agreements with Comal County and the ESDs. Construction could possibly begin in the coming months.

Also on the agenda:

- Council unanimously approved a settlement agreement with South West Water Co. and the city on a tiered water rate system.
- A proposal by Kenny Whistler and RVI (an architecture firm involved in engineering the Bulverde Park plans) to modify the plans for the park in order to find about \$500,000 in cost savings was also approved unanimously. Whistler said updated plans should be available within two or three weeks.
- A resolution to adopt an update to the Alamo Area Council of Governments Regional Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan also passed with no dissenting votes.
- Council unanimously denied a sign variance for two banners for Franklin Outdoors, and also unanimously denied a sign variance for Hill Country Christian Church.



- A sign variance was passed unanimously for an oversized logo for the AT&T store at 20540 Hwy. 46.
- Council voted 3-2 to allow **Blanco National Bank** a sign variance in order to use the an existing gas station sign at the old H-E-B site.

Eric Weilbacher is a freelance writer based in Comal County.