RECOMMENDATION:

Council provide direction to staff and Planning Commission on how to proceed with amendments to the Eagle Creek Golf Course project.

DISCUSSION:

Background: The property in question was originally zoned as Commercial Tourist. In 1991 the property was rezoned to Special Recreation and High Density Single Family with the PD-8 overlay district. The rezoning and PD-8 allowed for the construction of the golf course, driving range and 13 single family units.

Eagle Creek Planned Development Overlay Zoning Code Text

9-3.652 Establishment of Planned Development Overlay Zone No. 8: (PD8).

Planned Development Overlay Zone No. 8 is established as shown on the Official Zoning Maps (Section 9-1.102). The following development standards are established:
(a) A Master Plan of Development shall be approved prior to any development of the site. The Master Plan shall be processed in the same manner as a conditional use permit except that the Master Plan may be submitted and processed in the same manner set forth for the processing of a tentative map.
(b) In approving a Master Plan of Development for the site, the uses allowed shall be limited to:
(1) Single-family dwellings;
(2) Residential accessory uses (See Section 9- 6.106);
(3) Crop production and grazing;
(4) Farm animal raising (See Section 9-6.111);
(5) Home occupation (See Section 9-6.105);
(6) Temporary dwelling (See Section 9-6.176);
(7) Agricultural accessory uses (See Section 9- 6.109);
(8) Outdoor recreation services, limited to a golf course and/or tennis and swim club (See Section 9-6.123);
(9) Pipelines.
(c) No uses shall be established, or expanded, unless approved pursuant to a Master Plan following a public hearing.
(d) The grove of oak trees located on the slope between the top of the knoll and the intersection of Santa Barbara and Atascadero Roads shall be preserved. In approving a Master Plan, or Tentative Map, efforts shall be made to place this extreme western portion of the property into open space easement, or otherwise ensure its preservation.
(e) Any substantial expansion of recreational uses beyond a nine-hole golf course shall require preparation of a traffic study. The result of that traffic study and recommendation shall appear on the consent calendar of the City Council.
In 1998 PD-8 was amended to allow the golf course and driving range to take access off of Atascadero Road rather than Santa Barbara Road as originally required.

In 2000 the owner applied for a zone change and PD master plan amendment to remove the outdoor driving range and add four additional single family units. The request was approved on April 10, 2001.

2001 Master Plan of Development
In 2005 the golf course was closed to the public and watering and maintenance of the course ceased. The owner applied for a General Plan Amendment, Zone Change and PD Master Plan Amendment in December 2005. The original amendment proposal called for the creation of two additional single family residential lots, a cell tower and a youth football field. This proposal was agendized for a study session with the City Council, Planning Commission and Parks and Recreation Commission on March 28, 2006. During the study session the neighbors expressed significant concern regarding the intensity of the football field use. The Council referred the item back to the staff and applicant to come up with new alternatives that were less intensive than the football field.

Analysis: In response to the Council’s direction from last year, the applicant has submitted a revised concept for the golf course site. The new proposal involves converting the existing club house into a single family unit on a 10 acre lot and leaving the golf course and its facilities as is.

Proposed 2007 Master Plan of Development
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Although this latest proposal is clearly a lower intensity use of the land, the following issues need to be clarified for the proposal to move through the approval process.

1. What is the “public benefit” of PD-8 without the golf course?
   - Applicant’s response:
     “The public benefit of this proposed situation will enable the City of Atascadero to place desired maintenance conditions on the property, through this conversion, so that the remaining property will be enhanced and sustained as the City’s gateway.”
   - Staff is unsure what public benefit the project would have once the golf course is eliminated.

2. What if any use restrictions will be placed on the 10 acre single family lot?
   - Staff would recommend that an open space and drainage easement be required over the flood planes that cross the 10 acre lot.

3. Should the underlying LS zoning district that permits recreational uses and RV parks be removed from the property to prevent future Master Plan Amendments?
   - The applicant is proposing to leave the existing CREC (Commercial Recreation) general plan designation and LS (Special Recreation) zoning on the 10 acre parcel.
   - Staff would recommend that the 10 acre site have a General Plan Amendment and rezoning to change the use to residential to prevent future requests for recreational and commercial uses on the site.

     As an alternative, PD-8 should be revised to eliminate

     Crop production and grazing;
     Farm animal raising
     Agricultural accessory uses
     Outdoor recreation services, limited to a golf course and/or tennis and swim club

4. What happens to the existing golf course improvements like the sand traps, lake, bridges, irrigation system, well, driving range, cart paths, and trees that are spread across 12 separate residential lots?
   - Applicant’s response:
     “Previous easement area for golf course over individual lots have been deeded back to the owners. Each owner responsible to maintain and restore their entire lot now.
     1) Sand traps on individual lots will be at owner discretion; sand traps on lot
proposed for converted residence will remain. A selling feature of this lot will be the potential of having a private golf course area should a future buyer choose to utilize them.

2) Lake – to remain, as above
3) Bridges – to remain
4) Irrigation – to remain
5) Well – to remain
6) Driving range - to be removed
7) Cart paths – there are none
8) Trees – to remain, dead trees will be removed on lot proposed for converted residence"

- Staff is concerned about the current appearance of the abandoned golf course. It appears that the applicant’s proposal is to leave the site as is permanently. Many of the non-native trees were dependent on the irrigation of the turf and will probably slowly decline and die without supplemental irrigation.

5. Is the new fencing acceptable?

- Applicant’s response:
  “[The fencing is] permanent. There will be landscape treatment (vines, rose bushes or similar) planted along the fencing.”

- Staff would recommend that landscaping and irrigation of the fencing be a project requirement.

6. What will happen with the golf course shop and storage buildings?

- Applicant’s response:
  “These buildings will remain. They will become residential outbuildings (shop, shed, etc.).”

- Staff is concerned about the large shop building on Atascadero Avenue. This building is over 2000 square feet and looks like a house on the exterior. At a minimum, clear deed restrictions for this building will be needed to prevent it from being used for residential or commercial purposes.

ATTACHMENT:

Attachment 1: Applicant’s Proposal
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