

1980 Pony Baseball Captain Asks Oak Park Heights to Approve First Step for Walk-a-Bout Condos

'Absolute Masterpiece' Comprehensive Plan Will Solve Oak Park Heights Revenue Obstacles!

OAK PARK HEIGHTS, MN, USA, August 8, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Walk-a-Bout @ Oak Park Heights, Minnesota, USA — a 36-unit condominium residence — is taking the first steps to be built on a pair of lots Jaime Junker has worked hard to purchase over the last 24 years.

The community will like the project at 58th St. N and Oakgreen Avenue because it is complementary to the existing neighborhood residential home values and will add residential diversity to the City of Oak Park Heights.

"We created Walk-a-Bout to be complementary to the City's 25-year strategy of building extensive walking and biking trails throughout the city," Junker said.

The site has one of the highest "walkability scores" to travel for daily living tasks by foot or biking to neighborhood businesses, which perfectly fits in with the strategy on traffic in the City Council's Comprehensive Plan. The three-acre Walk-a-Bout site has walking and biking trails on all three sides.

Junker is asking the Oak Park Heights Plan Commission to review and recommend a change to density for the site to the City Council at their Aug. 11 meeting. This is the first step.

"We are asking them to change the Comprehensive Plan to be closer to where it was in 2018 to allow a higher density," Junker said.



It's normal for properties near the transition of lower density to higher density to have significant debate until the point the sites are ultimately determined for their end use. Adjacent to the Walk-a-Bout property to the south is one of the largest buffer zones in the county. The buffer zone lies between the site and its neighbors.

The buffer zone's use as a zoning tool is spelled out in the City's Comprehensive Plan and is already in place.

The City of Oak Park Heights purchased the buffer property in 2006 to help transition the zoning districts so that everything north of the buffer zone could be at a higher density. The buffer zone is 150 feet wide with thick, mature trees 40 to 60 feet tall, taller than the Walk-a-Bout buildings will be.

“

I grew up in Oak Park Heights. My wife and I started our family two blocks from the property. For nearly 25 years, we have lived on our farm in Wisconsin. It's time to Go Back Home.”

Jaime Junker

The buffer zone meets the City's standard for screening between zoning uses — low density vs. high density — as spelled out in the City's Comprehensive Plan.

"Plus, everything across the street to the north is already high density, with 72 units recently completed. We're already consistent with what is around us from a density perspective," Junker said.

Walk-a-Bout would break ground in the spring of 2023 and be completed in one year. Junker's consultants expect the project to sell out within 120 days of completion.

Walk-a-Bout residences will attract people who want access to the Oak Park Heights trail system, such as health-conscious families with a strong desire to take that daily walk with a friend, peddle their bike across the City, or meet a family member at one of the fantastic parks for a visit.

“We donated an easement to the City of Oak Park Heights in 2019 for the trail along our property connecting to the City's trail system. In the coming years, the City's investment in the trail system



Please note: Accents such as trees are included for illustrative purposes only. Jaime Junker will work closely with Oak Park Heights to determine the final placement of buildings to conserve green space.

will prove to be strong; we wanted to do our part," Junker said.

On Thursday, Aug. 11, we will be looking at an "absolute masterpiece."

"The 'masterpiece' I'm talking about is the Oak Park Heights Comprehensive Plan put together by a number of the existing Plan Commission members, the City staff led by Eric Johnson, city administrator, and building official Julie Hultman and Scott Richards, long-time Oak Park Heights consultant of the City from The Planning Company, City Council and other volunteers," Junker said.

Kevin Sandstrom from the iconic St. Croix Valley law firm Eckberg Lammers anchors the compliance responsibilities of the City Planning team.

"Oak Park Heights emphasizes doing things right," Junker said.

The Comprehensive Plan is a remarkable accomplishment and vision. If followed, it will lead the City of Oak Park Heights to overcome revenue obstacles for the next 30 years.

"By studying the Comprehensive Plan, I came up with more than a dozen areas of the comprehensive plan in addition to the existing 4.5-acre buffer zone along our property that we comply with for a higher density. We meet all aspects of the Comprehensive Plan for a higher density. I've shared the application with many residents of Oak Park Heights, and the informal verdict is that we are clearly in compliance with the Comprehensive Plan," Junker said.

The objectivity and vision of the Comprehensive Plan will allow the project to move forward.

"We are not asking the City for expensive changes such as new roads," Junker said.

As designed, underground and on-site visitor parking at Walk-a-Bout will allow for not even a single car to be parked on the adjacent city streets. This is one of the reasons the project stacks up well with any annexation choice the City of Oak Park Heights may consider in the future.

"We've done our homework. Walk-a-Bout will attract people coming to invest in Oak Park Heights. New homeowners want a 'transformational home experience,' they don't just want a house anymore. They want to come to Walk-a-Bout @ Oak Park Heights, Minnesota USA to make that investment, and you could say, 'walk all over the city trails,'" Junker said.

This will be an economically efficient addition to the City compared to other alternatives. Besides, very few buildable residential sites are left in the City per the Comprehensive Plan.

"I grew up in Oak Park Heights. My wife Maureen and I started our family in our first home just two blocks from the property. For nearly 25 years, we have lived on our hay and cattle farm in Forest, Wisconsin. It's time to Go Back Home. We will have a residence at the project," Junker

said.

Who says, "You can't go Home?"

Jaime Junker

Oak Park Heights Condos

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