

Text of July 22, 2021 email from Fire Chief Doug Spears to City Manager Gabe Reaume

“ Mr. Reaume,

At our most recent City Council meeting there were some comments made questioning the safety of the single family home development that is being proposed off of W. McLeroy Blvd. In attempt to prevent the public perception of the proposed development as being unsafe it is likely necessary to address the safety concern. Beginning with my tenure as the Fire Marshal in 2006 and up to present as the Fire Chief, the fire department has never permitted any project to go forward in the city that was not built to the adopted code standards. The very purpose of every model code adopted by the city is to ensure minimum standards to protect the public health, safety, and general welfare as related to the construction and occupancy of all buildings and structures.

Specific to this project all the structures will be equipped with an automatic fire sprinkler system. Automatic fire sprinkler systems provide the greatest level of protection and survivability for occupants should a fire occur. The automatic fire sprinkler systems are required to be professionally monitored at all times to immediately notify the fire department in the event of activation, shutdown or tampering. Notification to and response of the fire department is immediate. This is a greater level of protection for the occupants and structures than currently exist in any single family structure within the city today.

Emergency access to the development and to all the proposed structures meets the requirements of the adopted Fire Code. Fire department access is inclusive of all roadways and fire lanes upon the property. Lengths, widths and turnaround provisions are designed to accommodate fire apparatus and firefighting activities.

Fire hydrant installation will meet the requirements of the adopted fire code as will fire alarm and smoke alarm systems.

I believe the separation distance between structures was also mentioned as a safety concern. Minimum accepted widths between structures as designated by the fire code is typically 10 feet. The fire department has approved a 9 feet minimum width between structures for this development. The project was originally designed to meet the 10 feet minimum width however with the developer agreeing to 75% masonry, additional build width was necessary to accommodate the brick masonry on the sides of each the structures. The fire code authorizes the fire code official to consider reductions and exceptions in multiple areas when a building is equipped with an automatic fire sprinkler system throughout. Reducing the width between structures by 1 foot does not pose any safety concern due to the fire sprinkler system requirement.

As mentioned previously, these single family homes will be equipped with a greater level of protection than any single family home that exists within the city today.

The presumption that this development or any of the buildings will be unsafe, pose a greater safety concern than any other development or structure within the city, or will not be built to the city's adopted codes and standards is inaccurate.

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