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Council votes to allow more housing in Laveen

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LAVEEN - The Phoenix City Council took a vote Monday that paves the way for denser housing in the Laveen community.

It prompted criticism from residents who say that the area was designed for more rural lifestyles.

In the 6-2 vote, the City Council agreed to amend the city's general plan in Laveen to allow for higher-density in an area where a developer wants to build triplexes and villas. However, the final vote on the Laveen zoning case was continued until Sept. 19. Councilmen Tom Simplot and Michael Johnson voted against amending the plan.

Steven Follmer of GSG LLC Land Development is proposing to develop a 60-acre subdivision between 35th and 39th Avenue and north of Carver Road.

Twenty-two homes would be built on 40 acres. But Follmer also plans to build 136 multi-family units on 20 acres, which has has Laveen neighbors upset.

Jason Morris, an attorney representing Follmer, is requesting zoning on the 20-acre parcel to be changed from one unit per acre to 10.5 units per acre.

Laveen, which borders the South Mountain Park, has historically been known for its one house per acre homes though new subdivisions have smaller lots. Still, it is home to a dairy farm, several horse properties, a mule farm, cotton and cornfields.

"We all bought our homes thinking it would be like this," said Ruth Franklin, a Laveen home owner. "Urban high-density living wouldn't like the horse flies and the horse poop on the streets."

Morris said that the development requires higher density on the 20-acre parcel because of development costs needed to repair the blight done by a prior mining activity.

The Laveen Village Planning Committee unanimously voted against the zoning changes.

Councilman Doug Lingner, whose district includes Laveen, voted for amending the city's general plan so zoning could be changed.