

COUNCIL: CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1A

wetlands within the property while creating a replacement wetland.

The alterations are to allow the development of the residential and commercial community.

The public can submit written statements by Dec. 19 requesting a public hearing on the notice to Regulatory Branch, Attention: J. Ruben Hernandez, 3701 Bell Road, Nashville, TN 37214-2660.

EQAB submitted a communication to council Monday with concerns pertaining to flooding, safety, loss of natural amenities and a lack of details on mitigation plans.

Flooding concerns stemmed from the loss of 2.27 feet of

Roberts Branch, loss of a natural channel from the Roberts Branch tributary and loss of associated floodplains.

The safety issue pertained to the potential difficulty of maintaining the culvert and keeping it from becoming clogged with debris and the potential for children to play in and become trapped in the culvert.

Jimmy Groton, EQAB member, said Roberts Branch is the main stream on the property, and relocating it would destroy a natural amenity.

He said a public hearing would allow questions to be asked of the developers and regulators of how specific mitigation goals would be reached.

"We need to understand more of what they are planning to do and how they are planning to do it so we can evaluate it," Groton said.

City Manager Paul Boyer said the flooding issue had been discussed and that the city engineer said he was satisfied the developers had met those requirements.

Boyer said the Planning Commission "has reviewed this project at great length and acted on behalf of the public," adding that all the meetings have been open to the public.

Boyer said his concern is that the permitting process would be held up by a public hearing that would affect the "ambitious housing goals."

"We've already been held back a year," Boyer said.

Parker Hardy, president of the Oak Ridge Chamber of Commerce, stated his opposition to a public hearing, saying it would be "counterproductive to throw additional obstacles in this developer's way" at a time

when the city needs an increase in housing stock.

"Most communities would ache for an opportunity to have a project like Rarity Ridge come before them," Hardy said.

Council member Leonard Abbatiello said he doesn't want to delay this project but does think it's appropriate to see what the rechannelization involves, the risks associated and the pros and cons.

Boyer said there is no assurance that even with a request that a public hearing will be scheduled. He said it is up to the regulatory groups.

Council voted unanimously to receive the communication from EQAB for the record.

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Request for hearing gets mixed reaction at council

BY HEATHER MCCOY
OAK RIDGER STAFF

**OTHER COUNCIL
ACTION PAGE 5A**

People expressed mixed feelings at Monday night's City Council meeting on the Environmental Quality Advisory Board's request for a public hearing on altering some wetlands and the course of a stream for phase one of the Rarity Ridge development.

Council met in the Municipal Building Courtroom.

EQAB asked council to ask the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the state Department of Environment and Conservation and Tennessee Valley Authority to schedule a public hearing to discuss Rarity Communities Inc.'s proposed plans

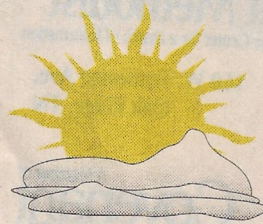
for Rarity Ridge.

The three agencies had jointly issued a public notice stating that Rarity Communities had applied for a permit pursuant to the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899 and the Clean Water Act as well as state certification under the Clean Water Act.

Rarity Communities needs the permit to relocate a 2,274-foot segment of Roberts Branch into a new 2,047-foot channel, to divert a tributary into a 800-foot-long, 60-inch-wide culvert and to fill two

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Tomorrow's weather —



▲ 42 ▼ 36

— DETAILS ON PAGE 2A

PARADES

Clinton and Lake City have scheduled parades for the next two Saturdays, and the Oak Ridge Chamber of Commerce has listed the winners of last Saturday's parade in Oak Ridge.

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