
**Mill Creek Rifle Club
Site Plan for Special Use Permit/Expansion of Facility**

Committee Members: Toni Caldwell, Mary Guntert, Charlie McNemee

Absent: Dave Servos, Doug Weis

Staff: Linda Bohnsack, City Planner; Mike Brungardt, City Engineer

Applicants: Lance Scott, Engineer (CFS Engineers), Witold J. Grzymala-Busse, President, Mill Creek Rifle Club, Vitold (Vito) ???

The City Engineer gave a brief history of the Club in this location. The use actually began in the early 70's, but the property was transferred to the Club in 1986. There is a reversion clause on the deeds that require the property to be returned to the former owner if the Club sells the property or ceases to use the property for a gun club. The property was annexed into the City of De Soto in the late 1990's. In 1999, the Club rezoned the property to an M-1 Industrial Light District, but they withdrew their application for a Special Use Permit and chose to continue operating as a non-conforming use within the City.

They come now wanting to expand the club by adding additional specialized firing ranges and extending others. The extension of a rifle range from the current 500 yards to 600 yards will result in the need to realign the right-of-way for Gardner Road and encroaches on adjacent property owned by the Zimmerman Trust. The Trust has signed an affidavit agreeing to the proposed Special Use Permit use and application. Encroachment on the road right-of-way will require a petition to the Council to vacate the ROW, then re-dedication of new ROW and re-building the road by the applicant.

SITE PLAN DISCUSSION:

1. Environmental impact of use. The use can result in contamination of groundwater and soil through leeching of copper and lead from ammunition and from fragmentation of bullets. A thick growth of grass on the top and sides of the berm is important to shed water and reduce leeching. Berms are also the best way to contain ammunition, While bullets are caught and contained by the berms, they generally stay within 1-2 feet of the surface. The berm will begin to 'sag' when too much penetration of the soil layers occurs and need to be sifted—usually about every 3 years. When sifted, the copper and lead are extracted and recycled into new bullets. This process will put a range area out of use for 3-4 months until the grass re-grows sufficiently to be used again.
2. Berms. The range uses berms as protection for shooters and back stop for bullets. Berms also help to muffle the sound of the range, though there is still a lot of noise from the site. Site is at least 6300 feet from the nearest residence in Johnson County, but much closer to uses on the Leavenworth County side of the river. The nearest residence is only 2800 feet away and the businesses across the river are only 1650 feet away.
3. Realignment of Gardner Road. Engineer Brungardt stated that he would need to confer with the Street Department concerning establishing gravel road standards for this section of road. The existing Gardner Road in this location is gravel surface with a dust suppressant. Since the Club is at the northern terminus of the road, there is no need for paving this small amount, but the road must be sufficient for emergency vehicles. The right-of-way will need to be a minimum 50 feet wide with a cul-de-sac or other means of turn-around provided. Mr. Scott noted that there is an

existing right-of-way for an unnamed street in this location and proposed a hammerhead turn-around using that right-of-way.

4. Security. The site currently has security cameras that record vehicles and license plates when entering the site. They have an electronic keyed gate that records persons entering the site as well. There is a lockbox on the gate that the Johnson County Sheriff's Department has access to. There are also warning and keep-out signs on the gate and there will be more on the proposed fences.

5. Utilities. The site has electricity for all needs. There is a well, but the water is non-potable, so they bring in water for drinking use. There are restrooms and showers in the clubhouse that drain to an approved septic system on the site.

6. Floodway. The site also has floodplain issues. The entire site is within a designated floodway and engineering studies have been performed for the required FEMA permits. Changing the site in any way will have to be strictly engineered so that there will be no increase to the floodway elevations. All changes will need to be designed as a 'cut and fill' type of process that results in a 'no-rise' situation on the site. The applicants are ready to apply for the FEMA permits, but are waiting until the completion of the SUP process. The range has not been flooded since it began in 1971—including the 1993 flood which covered Gardner Road, but not the range site.

7. Wildlife. Hunting is not allowed on the site; therefore they often have wildlife that cross or intrude on the site and ranges, stopping activity.

8. Membership/Users. The club has a membership limit/cap of 1300 and a waiting list for memberships. In addition, the Club contracts with local police departments for use of the site. The Club also hosts tournaments and competitions on a regular basis.

9. Structures. There is a clubhouse, a 'pavilion' and a couple small storage buildings on the site currently. The pavilion is enclosed with garage doors and used for loading guns. Some of the firing lines are roofed walkway structures with benches and firing platforms. No new enclosed structures are planned.

10. Parking/Camping/Circulation. No specific areas of the site are designated for parking. When use is minimal, members will usually drive directly to the location or range they will be using. There is also a large area just inside the gate that is used for parking (football field size). Some tournaments last several days and shooters may bring campers to stay on the site. The parking area is sufficient to contain these uses without overflow off-site. The entire area is graveled unless involved in ranges. A new access road will allow the police units to have a direct connection to their ranges on the south side of the facility. They usually bring large amounts of equipment and vehicles when visiting the range.

11. Alternative Compliance Landscaping Plan. Staff suggested that the Club submit an Alternative Compliance Landscape Plan due to the predominance of high berms on the site. The southern part of the site will be largely buffered with tall berms (minimum 15 feet) and chain link fencing. The SPR Committee agreed that in this location, this type of plan would be sufficient, combined with the Club's practice of keeping the site well maintained.

12. Club members asked about the potential term of the use permit. Although this aspect of the application is not within the scope of considerations for the site plan review committee, the issue was discussed and the applicant expressed a strong desire for a perpetual permit.

Revisions to the site plan will be made and resubmitted.