

**City of Columbus
Regular Planning Commission Meeting
August 5, 2015**

The August 5, 2015 regular meeting of the Planning Commission for the City of Columbus was called to order at 7:04 p.m. by Chair Garth Sternberg at the City Hall. Present were Commission members Jim Watson (7:45), Pam Wolowski, Jesse Preiner, and Jody Krebs; City Administrator Elizabeth Mursko, and Recording Secretary Karen Boland.

Also in attendance were City Council Members Denny Peterson and Bill Krebs; Pat Preiner, Mary Preiner, Roberta Gronquist, Mike Mulvihill, and Aaron Bedessem.

AGENDA APPROVAL

Motion by Preiner to approve the Agenda as presented. Second by Krebs. Votes as follows: Krebs –aye; Preiner –aye; Wolowski – aye; Sternberg – aye. Motion carried.

APPROVAL - REGULAR PC MEETING MINUTES OF JULY 15, 2015

Motion by Krebs to approve the minutes of the July 15, 2015 regular Planning Commission meeting as written. Second by Wolowski. Votes as follows: Krebs –aye; Preiner –aye; Wolowski – aye; Sternberg – aye. Motion carried.

APPROVAL - 9331 W. BROADWAY AVENUE VARIANCE APPLICATION PUBLIC HEARING MINUTES OF JULY 15, 2015

Motion by Wolowski to approve the minutes from the 9331 Broadway Avenue Variance Application Public Hearing held on July 15, 2015 as written. Second by Krebs. Votes as follows: Krebs –aye; Preiner –aye; Wolowski – aye; Sternberg – aye. Motion carried.

PLANNING COMMISSION WORKSHOP DISCUSSION:

Commercial District Policy Questions

- **Should the City reduce acreage requirement for existing houses in the commercial areas?**

Mursko explained that in the freeway district and CI districts we don't allow residential lots of less than five acres. There are currently some residents in the freeway district that are in danger of losing their homes. They need to sell something. However, they are not able to sell any of their land to commercial development and keep their homes, because they would then be under the five-acre minimum. A commercial development is allowed on as little as ½ acre.

After lengthy discussion PC members unanimously agreed to recommend that the CC allow one dwelling per ½ acre in the freeway district for existing houses in commercial areas, with the requirement that the house hook up to City utilities.

Krebs asked PC members to consider decreasing the required side yard setback for senior housing in the CR district. Currently, Section 7A-801 E. of the City Code requires a 30-foot side yard setback. In the same section, a 10-foot side yard setback is required for commercial uses in the CR district, with the addendum that no structure, except fences and signposts, shall come

within 35 feet of any RR or SR district boundary line. She suggested the PC recommend that the CC change the side yard setback for senior housing to 10 feet.

PC members unanimously agreed to recommend that the CC change the side yard setback for senior housing to 10 feet in Section 7A-801 E. of the City Code to make it consistent with the commercial uses in the CR district.

- **Should the City allow a residential use on a commercial zoned property with a new commercial use?**

Mursko said this has come up repeatedly, that a business wants to buy the property but does not want to tear down the house. They want to rent it out. Currently the City says once the property is sold to a commercial use, the residence must be torn down. We do not allow for a dual use. We have required a number of businesses to tear down the old house. We need consistency in this area.

There was discussion about a business wanting to keep an existing home to convert it into office space. Mursko said this is very difficult to enforce. The City has, in the past, allowed a business to keep an existing home for this reason, but the home has instead been rented out to a residential occupant.

Mursko said roughly 25% of people that come in to the City counter want to live and run their business on the same piece of property.

There was lengthy discussion of enforcing compliance with CUPs, commercial vs. residential taxation, and a trend in developments with commercial property below and residential above. PC members agreed to revisit this issue for further discussion.

Residential District Policy Questions

- **Should the City implement a program that charges residential zone businesses a fee/tax/license for their residential zone business?**

Mursko explained that these businesses pay taxes at a commercial rate only on the portion of the land used for commercial purposes, and that is at a residential value. Mursko said the City would need legal advice about whether to charge a fee tax or licensure cost.

After discussion PC members unanimously agreed to recommend that the CC explore the concept of a fee/tax or license for residential zone businesses as a way to get equalization from these businesses.

Met Council Process

Mursko and Planner Dean Johnson will meet with Met Council staff next month to discuss the City's desire to be reclassified from urban diversified to rural residential. They will then bring information on the reception of that concept back to the PC.

Planned Unit Development (PUD)

Mursko said the residential PUD ordinance was completed last October. The other existing PUD ordinance is in the freeway district in the Suburban Overlay area. The Suburban Overlay allows

for 6 units/acre for any type of housing. Senior housing is already at 16 units/acre. This is for senior housing only, in the CR district. Commercial Retail allows senior housing anywhere in the CR district.

Krebs handed out an ordinance used in the City of Blaine creating a zoning district called the Development Flex District. She asked the PC to consider recommending the CC adopt this into the City's PUD ordinance to help attract development.

There was lengthy discussion about density issues, ability to make changes in various districts, land uses vs. flexibility in design standards, and zoning in other communities. Mursko explained that changes in commercial to commercial zoning do not need a Comp Plan Amendment, but moving residential to commercial does require amendment to the Comp Plan. She handed out zoning maps for the communities of Blaine, Hugo, Wyoming, Elko New Market, Corcoran, and Lino Lakes.

Commissioner Krebs asked to speak, and encouraged the PC to pass along the Blaine ordinance for consideration by the CC for adoption. He feels that if a Comp Plan amendment is needed, it should be started right away in order to not miss out on any opportunities.

PC members agreed to read through the Blaine ordinance and bring back thoughts and questions for discussion at their next meeting.

McCombs Study

The McCombs study concluded that the City needs to come up with new uses and new zoning districts for 106 acres of land in the freeway district.

Each PC member took the maps and chose one of the communities. They will look at the zoning districts in those communities and what the allowable uses are in those districts, and see if any of this information might be helpful to Columbus in coming up with new zoning districts for the freeway district. Krebs took Blaine. Preiner took Wyoming. Wolowski took Lino Lakes. Watson took Hugo. Sternberg took Corcoran. And City staff took Elko New Market.

On September 10th a workshop will be held with the CC, the PC, and landowners in the freeway district. The City is seeking input from landowners on potential uses of their land and what types of interest they've seen. The focus will be on land identified in the McCombs study as needing new zoning designation. About 30 landowners are expected to attend. The City will also invite brokers for input as to what market trends they are seeing.

TH97-I35 Bridge Project

U.S. Representative Tom Emmer will be holding a community gathering in Forest Lake on August 26th. Forest Lake invited Columbus to use 15 minutes of time to discuss the bridge project. Mursko invited PC members to attend, though there will be a limited number of speakers assigned. Anoka County will be making a more formal presentation on the project.

Mursko said there are also plans for an October legislative tour. Legislators will make a short visit to the bridge as part of this tour. City staff are currently making plans as to the best, most efficient way to conduct our portion of the tour.

Review of the 2105 PC Work Plan

Review was made of the progress by the PC on the following 2015 work directives given by the CC:

- Meet with the City's new Met Council representative and get feedback on zoning possibilities. **Completed**
- Look at the zoning map and consider potential uses based on the current development climate. **In progress**
- Consider the concept of allowing private roads in residential developments. **Completed**
- Consider an ordinance related to ambient lighting for both residential and commercial property. **A public hearing on the proposed ordinance will be held 9/2/15**
- Write and generate letters in support of the bridge project. **Continuing**

PUBLIC OPEN FORUM

Councilmember Bill Krebs said that Aaron Bedessem with Running Aces had to leave the meeting, but asked that he pass along an invitation to the Running Aces trout pond grand opening on Saturday, August 8th. The ribbon cutting will take place at 11 a.m.

Councilmember Krebs also said he went to visit a new townhome development for residents 55 and up. These are completely separate townhomes with no shared walls -- approximately 1600 square feet. They also have three-car garages. The prices are \$250,000-\$300,000. He suggested that this could be ready to happen in Columbus, and the City needs to look hard at the changes that might be needed to allow for it. He would like to see any necessary Comp Plan amendments made to get this going. He also thanked PC members for their hard work.

CITY ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Mursko said the Regional Rail Authority has asked if the PC would like a presentation about what's going on with the Rush Line. They are scheduling presentation in September and October. PC members agreed they would be open to a presentation at an October meeting.

PC members were asked to attending the workshop with freeway district landowners on Thursday, September 10th. Also, there are three public hearings scheduled for the next PC meeting.

PLANNING COMMISSION MEMBERS' REPORT

WOLOWSKI COMMENT:

Sternberg said there is a 25-acre parcel on Coon Lake that just went up for sale. He also said that in line with Councilmember Krebs' comment, he is seeing a lot of new townhomes again. Mursko added that this concept of detached townhomes with large garages, are a new, popular thing. They are also being built to be more affordable.

Motion by Krebs to adjourn. Second by Sternberg. Motion carried.
Meeting adjourned at 9:50 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Karen Boland, Recording Secretary