

City of Columbus
Regular Planning Commission Meeting
June 17, 2015

The June 17, 2015 regular meeting of the Planning Commission for the City of Columbus was called to order at 7:05 p.m. by Chair Garth Sternberg at the City Hall. Present were Commission members Jim Watson, Pam Wolowski, Jesse Preiner, and Jody Krebs; City Administrator Elizabeth Mursko, Planner Dean Johnson, and Recording Secretary Karen Boland.

Also in attendance were City Council Member Bill Krebs, Mary Preiner, Pat Preiner, and Mayor Dave Povolny (7:40–8:15).

AGENDA APPROVAL

Motion by Krebs to approve the Agenda as presented. Second by Wolowski. Motion carried.

APPROVAL – JOHNSON PRESERVES PRELIMINARY PLAT APPLICATION PUBLIC HEARING MINUTES OF MAY 20, 2015

Motion by Krebs to approve the minutes from the Johnson Preserves Preliminary Plat Application Public Hearing held on May 20, 2015 as written. Second by Preiner. Motion carried.

APPROVAL – RUNNING ACES HARNESS PARK CHAPTER 7A-777B PROPOSED CODE AMENDMENT APPLICATION PUBLIC HEARING MINUTES OF MAY 20, 2015

Motion by Krebs to approve the minutes from the Running Aces Harness Park Chapter 7A-777B Proposed Code Amendment Application Public Hearing held on May 20, 2015 as written. Second by Watson. Motion carried.

APPROVAL – RUNNING ACES HARNESS PARK CUP AMENDMENT APPLICATION PUBLIC HEARING MINUTES OF MAY 20, 2015

Motion by Krebs to approve the minutes from the Running Aces Harness Park CUP Amendment Application Public Hearing held on May 20, 2015 as written. Second by Wolowski. Motion carried.

APPROVAL - REGULAR PC MEETING MINUTES OF MAY 20, 2015

Motion by Krebs to approve the minutes of the May 20, 2015 regular Planning Commission meeting as written. Second by Watson. Motion carried.

DISCUSSION:

Outdoor Lighting Ordinance

PC members reviewed the Planner's draft ordinance. Preiner presented testing results using a light meter at the property line of various commercial properties. Sternberg gave PC members photos of full-cutoff luminaires and standard wallpacks, and representations of the light patterns they throw.

The Planner pointed out that we currently have inconsistency in the Code between Chapter 5: Public Nuisance and the building code Chapter 7A, Section 7A-813, Subsection B. Chapter 5 defines as a nuisance reflected glare or light from private exterior lighting exceeding one-half footcandle as measured at or near the property line where the lighting abuts residential property, and at one footcandle where it abuts commercial property. Chapter 7A currently allows for exterior lighting with an intensity of illumination up to ten footcandles. This inconsistency has to be resolved.

Commercial vs. residential lighting needs were considered. The only complaints the City has received from residents, involved lighting of a commercial property that abutted residential. Shrouding resolved that complaint.

Mayor Povolny spoke, saying that this is about shielding the source. You eliminate the potential nuisance if you shield the light at its source.

There was discussion that, in looking at changes to the ordinance, the issues of shrouding, downcasting, and the trespassing of light beyond the property line of the source should all be taken into account. The current ordinance already requires shielding.

Planner Johnson will re-write the draft ordinance and bring it to the next PC meeting. It will include definitions of “outdoor lighting fixtures,” “luminaire,” “lumen,” and “cut off luminaire.” All references will be to both footcandles and lumens. In both Chapter 5 and Chapter 7 the standard for lighting in any zone abutting residential property will not exceed one lumen or one footcandle at the lot line. There will be no specified lumen or footcandle standard for commercial abutting commercial property.

Met Council Future Meetings

The City received an e-mail from the Met Council as a follow-up to the joint meeting with Sandy Rummel and Ryan Garcia in April. They are waiting for an overview of questions from the City so they can assemble a panel of people to come and address those questions. Mursko asked what kind of follow-up meetings the PC would like with the Met Council, and what content would they like to cover more in-depth.

Johnson feels the City must decide internally if they would like to request a change in designation by the Met Council in order to gain flexibility to go beyond the current 5-acre lot standard. Under our current diversified rural designation, we will no longer meet the density standard if we want to allow development of any large pockets of land into, for example, 2.5-acre lots. The process for developing the City’s next Comp Plan, should we want to pursue areas of higher density, would be to consider requesting the designation to rural residential.

Ham Lake, Oak Grove, and Nowthen are designated rural residential. They all have lots of less than 5 acres scattered around the community. The description of rural residential is the only Met Council category with a loosened 1 per ten-acre standard. It says there can be existing lots sizes in the community of 2.5 acres or less. It also says the Met Council *would like* the rest of the community to be developed at 1 per 10 acres. The rural residential designation should only be pursued by the City if it is quite certain sewer will not be extended beyond the freeway district.

The Planner recommends the CC and PC request the rural residential land use designation if they want the flexibility to develop parts of the City at lot sizes smaller than 5 acres.

Both Johnson and Mursko emphasized that it is important for the CC and the PC to be in consensus about whether they pursue the rural residential designation with the Met Council.

There was discussion about large land parcels being lost to conservatorship because owners cannot find developers if limited to 5-acre minimum lots. In the event the Met Council approved the City to become rural residential, allowing for some development of 2.5-acre lots, the City would still have to go through its regular public hearing process to change the designation of any specific land to the smaller lot size.

The PC agreed that at the next CC meeting, they would like Commissioner Krebs to ask the CC if they would be willing to pursue a change in land designation with the Met Council to rural residential. This would allow Columbus the flexibility to potentially allow development of some lots smaller than 5 acres.

Johnson reiterated that the Comp Plan is due December 31, 2018. If the CC and PC want to initiate discussions with the Met Council to have the flexibility to develop some higher densities in our rural area -- not across the board -- we can engage in discussions now to get that change done by the time the Plan is due. We can work with the Met Council to determine how we'd fit into the rural residential district designation.

PUBLIC OPEN FORUM

There was no topic raised for discussion for Open Forum.

CITY ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Mursko gave PC members a schedule of 2015 Land Use Planning Workshop classes offered by GTS. She said they offer great classes. In the past, the CC has supported PC members who wish to attend. She encouraged PC members to consider taking a class.

PLANNING COMMISSION MEMBERS' REPORT

KREBS COMMENT:

Krebs reported that there will be a Water Summit Meeting on July 16th. Some PC and CC members will be attending. The City is going to be in this regional water plan, and will need to develop a water plan.

ATTENDANCE - NEXT CC MEETING

Krebs is scheduled to attend the City Council meeting on June 24, 2015.

Motion by Krebs to adjourn. Second by Watson. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 9:22 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Karen Boland, Recording Secretary