



Planning Commission Work Session

MINUTES

MARCH 15, 2011

6:28 PM – 7:59 PM

COUNCIL CHAMBERS

FACILITATOR	Chairman Kenneth Hellewell
NOTE TAKER	Judy Merrill
ATTENDEES	Vice Chair Tyler Bodrero, Braxton Schenk, Gary Pratt, T.J. Jensen, Dale Rackham, Gregory Day, Curt McCuiston, and Michael Eggett

ITEM 1: COMMITTEE REPORTS

Gary stated that he had nothing new to report on the Syracuse City Center Corridor Committee.

Gregory reported on the 200 South Corridor Committee, stating that they created the overlay zone by using the Town Center overlay as a template and identifying the parts they liked and did not like in order to put something together for this new overlay zone. Kenneth added that Greg and Ron Sandburg were two new members to their Committee and that they would be meeting again this Thursday, March 3, at 6:30 p.m. in the community center to work on the draft ordinance to present to commissioners. Mike advised him that their Committee could adopt a new zone in the General Plan first and outline the specifics later.

Gary asked if the Commission adopted a specific timeline for considering the various regions of the General Plan. Kenneth told him no but assumed it would be some time that summer. Mike offered to put such an item on an upcoming agenda for them to decide. Gary explained that the timeline directly affected his Committee and recruiting efforts for committee members. His Committee's primary concern was region 1. Kenneth told him that they would be opening region 8 first.

ITEM 2: DEPARTMENT BUSINESS

Mike shared Robert Whiteley's request to advise commissioners of WFRC's public comment period for their 2040 plan, which opened March 2 and would continue thru April 1, and encourage them to make comments regarding the Wasatch Front master transportation plan by emailing sam@wfr.org. Gary asked how it fit in with the West Davis Corridor. Mike told him to look at the 2040 regional transportation plan highway projects draft, which showed the Corridor on the very far west end of the City where they believed there should be a major highway by 2040. He asked them to discuss it among themselves and consider plans for mass transit, etc., and provide comments. Gary asked how much of an impact it would have on UDOT. Mike explained that the public comment process was a key element in their decisions for funding specific highways, such as the Corridor. They were required to justify each corridor, which was why they reviewed them every four years.

Mike then reported that the City administration was in the process of interviewing 7 of the 38 applicants for the Planner I/ Grants Specialist position. All were very qualified, with half having master's degrees. They were hoping to select a final candidate the following week.

Kenneth then asked Mike to report on the presentation given to City Council, during their last meeting, on the West Davis Corridor. Afterwards, Gary asked if staff received his emails regarding the Planning Commission information on the City website. He emailed several times about the need for updating that information. Mike advised him that Troy Moyes and T.J. Peace had been working very hard on upgrading the website, which would switch over the next morning, but he would bring that issue to their attention.

Dale asked if UDOT had a definition for wetlands that they used in identifying those areas throughout Syracuse City. Mike explained that they utilized criteria established by the Army Corps of Engineers and suggested that Dale look at UDOT's website that outlined their methodology.

Greg pointed to routes A and B, stating that they were outside the wetlands delineation study UDOT performed and voiced concern that the Planning Commission ended up forwarding a recommendation to City Council based on incomplete information. That bothered him since he and the other commissioners took their responsibilities seriously. If the City received an incomplete application from someone wanting to appear before the Commission, staff would turn them down. TJ added that Alternative A, which went behind the NDS property and into the flood plain, only showed 3.4 acres of wetlands. He went out and took pictures of it last week and got a report from the Sewer District of when they did their own delineation. Since that wasn't in the study area, UDOT did not count those wetlands, which really skewed the results. Mike explained that UDOT did not provide information regarding their study boundaries until after that particular Planning Commission meeting. Once UDOT posted it on their website, staff was then able to review their methodology.

Gary referred to a point he made during their last meeting regarding the Mayor and City Manager suspending the Transportation Committee. He took issue with the fact that commissioners were then given a map from which to choose one of three options when, in reality, commissioners never had an opportunity to digest any information from the committees and draw their own conclusions without being spoon fed those specific maps. He believed commissioners had been overlooked on the matter. Mike disagreed, stating that staff reviewed the information presented in that meeting. As they prepared that report, commissioners could see there were routes fairly close. Some of the problems identified were areas of wetlands staff verified as mitigated and that the Corridor options advanced by UDOT went through one major area of mitigated wetlands, so there was no real way staff could have changed how they put that map together. Gary understood but explained that, from a commissioner's standpoint, they were never able to submit an official presentation other than voting on either A, B, or C without justification. As of that evening, they were still under suspension and denied an opportunity to make a detailed presentation the Committee had actually been putting together, which was similar to what the City did with Police, Fire, and Community Development departments outlining the pros and cons. He asked that staff include his sentiments in the record.

TJ reported on the last City Council meeting.

ITEM 3: DISCUSSION OF AMENDMENTS TO PRD ZONE

Kyle Hamblin, of Castle Creek Homes, came forward and explained that he was helping his company with a proposed subdivision. They developed similar subdivisions in both Davis and Weber counties as well as others. Last year, the Wasatch Homebuilders Association named Castle Creek their homebuilder of the year. They currently had two town home prices in Harrisville and West Haven. He then presented their conceptual idea with applicable data. They believed their subdivision would provide opportunities for younger residents to stay in Syracuse close to family. MLS was a website realtors used to drive sellers and buyers together. Currently, as of that morning, there were about eight rambler and split-entry homes for sale in Syracuse, which fell into the price range of \$145,000 to \$155,000. That information indicated a great need for their type of product in the City as well as an appropriate buffer between commercial, along Antelope Drive and 1000 West, and residential on the west and south. These would be single-family homes, not rental properties, with an HOA.

Kenneth asked if they could incorporate language into their CC&Rs that would prevent homeowners from renting out their houses. Kyle believed it was possible but preferred not to and pointed out that their development had to be 75% owner occupied in order to qualify for FHA clients.

Kenneth explained that the proposed changes to the PRD zone were a direct result of Castle Creek Homes' desired subdivision on the Stoker property, currently zoned GC. The Stokers originally requested a rezone of the subject land from GC to R-4. This time, staff recommended a possible change in the General Plan to allow a rezone from GC to PRD, if the Commission and City Council approved changes in the Ordinance to allow consideration of PRD developments with a minimum acreage of only 5 rather than the current 10 as well as an increase in the allowed density from 8 units per net acre to 12, based on specific conditions, such as buffering against a commercial zone, having a full-sized publicly-dedicated street that connected to a main thoroughfare, a provision for 35% of green space, etc. By requiring these conditions, the Commission would have the authority to grant up to 12 without opening the door for other developers to request similar increases in density for their subdivisions. Mike explained the benefits of utilizing the PRD zone in this manner, because it provided commissioners more discretion and oversight with development-type agreements, collaboration between City and developers, and the security of having legally-protected HOAs in place to prevent developments from falling into disrepair. Kenneth emphasized the fact that conditions provided the City more control and allowed commissioners to keep developments at the 8-units per net acre unless applicants qualified for the higher density. R-4 zoning did not provide any latitude, and the public spoke out very clearly, during the last proposed rezone, in opposition to anymore R-4 zones in the City.

Braxton asked if they would simply be facing a different version of R-4 if they opened the PRD zone too wide by such changes. TJ suggested adopting a point system for the PRD similar to that in the cluster subdivision chapter of Title X. Mike cautioned them in implementing such a process that might be too complicated to defend against future demands and challenges to the Ordinance.

TJ asked Kyle if their 6 acres provided enough land to develop a sufficient number of units to support an HOA. Kyle explained that they had 6.12 acres, 34% of green space, and an HOA governed by a different entity. That overseer would take care of the exteriors of the units and enforce the CC&R regulations. The HOA would be in effect throughout the existence of the subdivision. Their estimated number of units, based on the proposed changes to the PRD requirements, would give them enough residents to support an HOA.

Tyler asked for an explanation as to why Castle Creek decided R-3 was not enough. Mike Schultz, owner of Castle Creek Homes, stood and told commissioners that a PRD would be a lesser impact to adjacent residential uses than commercial. Most homeowners preferred having a buffer between their neighborhoods and commercial uses, and he believed the Stoker property was a great location. The current 8 units per net acre would not allow them to sell the homes at the desired price range of \$145-155,000 in order to make them affordable and profitable. He would have to increase the price to \$160,000, for which he did not believe there was a market. He displayed the elevations, showing half of the units with two-car garages and the other half with one-car garages. They would be 1,400 square-foot homes. Gary referred to the size of such garages as being just storage units, since they were usually so small that car owners ended up parking in the driveways instead. Mike Schultz assured him that these garages would be 21 feet deep and 9 feet wide, which was 2 feet deeper and 1 foot wider than the typical town-home garages, so that residents could park and open their car doors inside the garages. This development would also have two parking spaces in front of the one-car garage units for mid-sized, rather than compact, cars to park side by side. Each end of the streets would also have three parking spots, which would create more parking than a single-family residential home. This development would not include Wade Stoker's home, which would be Lot 1. The Stokers entered into an agreement with an adjacent property owner for the purchase of the shop behind the Stoker parcel. The building would provide another good buffer between the proposed development and nearby homes to the west.

Commissioners discussed the issues with Castle Creek's proposed road alignment. Mike Eggett explained how it would bring a connection closer to the other dead-end street on the southwest and provide another route to 1000 West.

TJ asked for a timeline. Mike Schultz told him he wanted to start construction during the upcoming summer, if possible.

Gary asked to know the minimum density Castle Creek required to develop the subdivision. Mike Schultz advised him that anything less than 12 units would make it impossible for a successful development.

Kenneth asked commissioners if they were comfortable considering an amendment to the PRD zone. Braxton answered in the affirmative. Gary felt it opened the door for existing developments to increase their densities. Kenneth disagreed. Mike Eggett reminded Gary of the goal for specific and limited criteria that would prevent legal loopholes. Tyler was open to considering such proposed language. Gary decided he was comfortable with at least considering an amendment but preferred a point system, such as the cluster subdivision chapter. Curt voiced concern with such a drastic change from 8 to 12. Greg asked if the City ever conducted a needs assessment. Mike told him it was his understanding that Syracuse did meet the State requirement but still felt this proposed housing would be a benefit to the City. Kenneth remembered the last needs assessment indicating that 40% of Syracuse qualified as medium-income housing.

Curt asked about access requirements and whether the definition of a single-family residential dwelling would apply to each unit or each set of buildings. After some discussion, staff and commissioners agreed that the Ordinance definition of a single-family residence applied to each unit within the larger building.

Kenneth referred to the Subdivision Ordinance, Section 8-2-11, regarding the requirement for a second access whenever a subdivision exceeded 35 homes and asked for the City Attorney to provide them with an opinion as to whether each building or each unit qualified towards that 35-home limit. Mike Eggett agreed, since he would already be meeting with the City Attorney later that week. Braxton suggested adding clarification to the Ordinance definition, so it would not require interpretation. Mike Eggett assured Braxton that staff could always rely on State law whenever they deemed the ordinances as vague. Mike Schultz stated that he took that requirement into account by designing the knuckle large enough for emergency turnaround for fire trucks, etc.

Wade Stoker came forward to explain that they had been talking with adjacent land owners in an effort to try and develop that road connection with this proposed subdivision. They designed a layout that lined up with the stub road, which would be a benefit to the City.

Robert Favero, 2049 South Bluff Ridge Drive, then stood to clarify that road connection. Since it could be difficult for the developer to install the road up front, he suggested basing an approval on the condition of acquiring an easement and maybe even dedication of property for that road with the stipulation that the developer install those improvements at some future time when they were more economically able to proceed with the subdivision. An easement would guarantee the development and dedication of that road so that the City could eventually own and maintain it.

Mike Eggett encouraged commissioners to submit suggested conditions to staff for inclusion in the proposed language commissioners would consider during the April 5 meeting. Kenneth asked staff to first give them a draft with which to start before they submitted ideas.