

Syracuse City Planning Commission Meeting April 5, 2011

1. Meeting called to Order and Adoption of Agenda

Planning Commission Chair Kenneth Hellewell called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m., indicating that City staff posted the agenda 24 hours prior to the meeting and delivered copies to all Commission members. Braxton Schenk offered the prayer, and Dale Rackham led the pledge of allegiance.

Members Present: Chairman Kenneth Hellewell, Vice Chairman Tyler Bodrero, Braxton Schenk, Gary Pratt, T.J. Jensen, Dale Rackham, Gregory Day, and Curt McCuiston as well as Community Development Director Michael Eggett and Administrative Secretary Judy Merrill

Visitors: Robert Favero Jerry Stoker Wade Stoker Craig Johnson
 Debbie Woodrow Scott Woodrow

Commissioners reviewed the April 5, 2011, Planning Commission meeting agenda.

T.J. JENSEN MOVED TO ADOPT THE APRIL 5, 2011, AGENDA AS OUTLINED, SECONDED BY BRAXTON SCHENK; ALL VOTED IN FAVOR.

2. Approval of Minutes

There were no minutes ready for commissioners to review.

T.J. JENSEN MADE A MOTION TO TABLE CONSIDERATION OF THE MARCH 15, 2011, PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING AND WORK SESSION MINUTES, SECONDED BY GARY PRATT. ALL VOTED IN FAVOR.

3. Public Hearing to Consider Proposed Amendments to Chapter 16 of Title X

Staff presented a draft of the proposed amendments to commissioners. Director Eggett stated that, based on the discussion during the last Planning Commission meeting, staff added language that would allow up to 12 units per net acre subject to the approval of the Commission and City Council and based on clear, conditional criteria that ensured the development: **1) was a transitional residential buffer to commercial, industrial, and/or retail zones, as established in the General Plan; 2) provided a standard local road right-of-way of 60 feet, which included curb, gutter, and sidewalk improvements; 3) provided 35% of parks/open space within the development based on the overall acreage of the proposed development; 4) provided a superior residential environment through aesthetics and landscaping; and 5) provided adequate off-street parking area(s), subject to requirements of this Chapter and off-street parking requirements as found in Title 8.** Director Eggett said he reviewed the draft with the City Engineer for feedback and suggestions, and those were five criteria they decided were most important in order to yield a better product. Another proposed change in language would be in 10-16-050(B) to reduce the minimum lot standard, by which to qualify for the higher density, from 10 acres to 5, which would apply to both sets of maximum dwelling units per net acre of up to 8 or up to 12.

Commissioner Rackham asked about the definition of open space and what developers could claim as such. Director Eggett was uncertain as to whether the Ordinance required landscaping of open space but assumed it needed some type of groomed characteristics. He reminded them that the Commission would have full input on open space to ensure it met the needs of the neighborhoods as well as the community. Chairman Hellewell preferred tying the language, in Section 10-16-050(B), for a reduction in the acreage requirement specifically to just the option for the highest density. Director Eggett explained that his reasoning for not doing so was because the applicants would need to acquire approval from the Commission and City Council for either a General Plan change or a rezone first. Chairman Hellewell pointed out that the Ordinance needed specific conditions that allowed the City to approve these requests for the higher densities. He suggested the language require the acreage to remain at 10 unless it met certain conditions to qualify for just 5 acres.

Commissioner Pratt stated that the only reason the City was addressing this issue was to accommodate the applicants in reaching their desired retail factor. Director Eggett explained that the Mayor and developer were advancing this proposed amendment in an attempt to address the R-4 zone issue due to the City's reluctance in applying it, even though the Ordinance allowed it. This new option would provide the higher densities with greater oversight. Commissioner Pratt suggested eliminating the R-4 zone with a proposed revision to the PRD zone. Chairman Hellewell asked how a potential rescindment could affect the

General Plan. Director Eggett explained that the zoning regulations for R-4 would remain tied to existing developments, making them legal nonconforming, but no one would be able to develop anything new under that zoning.

Commissioner Pratt asked about size requirements for the development's turnaround for emergency access. Chairman Hellewell referred him to Title VIII, the Subdivision Ordinance. Director Eggett reminded commissioners that Section 8-2-11 of the Subdivision Ordinance allowed the Commission and Council to accept an appropriate alternate to the second required access: **"Providing for emergency response, all subdivisions having more than 35 homes shall have a minimum of two ingress/egress roads, except that other acceptable alternatives for emergency accesses can be made and approved by both the Planning Commission and City Council."** He then suggested that the commissioners focus on the proposed Ordinance amendment and then the General Plan before the specifics of this development. From a safety standpoint, due to the number of residents in these types of subdivisions, Commissioner Pratt preferred having the Land Use Ordinance require two accesses for developments with more than 35 homes unless there were absolutely no other alternatives.

Commissioner Rackham pointed out a conflict between the proposed language in 10-16-040(A)(3), requiring 35% open space, and 10-16-040(G), requiring 50% open space. Director Eggett concurred, saying they would need to decide which percentage to apply. Commissioner McCuiston suggested adding the word 'functional' to the definition of open space and changing the requirement from overall acreage for common space to net acreage. Commissioner Jensen asked for clarification in the definition to exclude parking lots as common space, since he did not believe the exclusion of roads applied to parking areas.

Commissioner Rackham asked why the City selected a base requirement of 10 acres for PRDs. Chairman Hellewell explained that the Commission wanted to ensure that such developments were large enough to create subdivisions of sufficient quality and to avoid small, high-density developments throughout the City. If they approved the reduction in acreage, Chairman Hellewell wanted the smaller developments to be the exception rather than the norm. Commissioner Jensen suggested changing the language to say 'over' 5 acres, since the General Plan used 5 acres or less for amendment requests.

Chairman Hellewell proposed adding a condition, in order to qualify for higher density, of having a direct connection to a major or minor arterial or major collector road. That way, traffic would flow from major roadways, through higher density, and into lower density neighborhoods, rather than vice versa. These developments would not have to front such roads but would need direct connections. He believed this would preserve the integrity of lower-density zones by preventing increases in traffic from these higher-density subdivisions. Commissioner Pratt agreed with the proposal, especially since traffic was always such a concern when considering home daycares. Syracuse was a bedroom community made up primarily of single-family homes. This amendment provided opportunities for the construction of less-expensive homes on properties that would otherwise be of no benefit. If traffic were not a concern for PRDs, then the City should not have any concerns for traffic caused by daycares. If the Ordinance required PRDs to abut commercial zones, they would probably already connect to major roadways anyway.

Chairman Hellewell reviewed the Commission's requests for changes to the proposed amendment: Add the word 'functional' to the term open space in 10-16-040(A)(3), add (6) to that same section for the condition that it have a direct connection to a major or minor arterial or major collector street, and allow a reduction in the minimum acreage requirement, in 10-16-050(B), from 10 to 5 if the proposed development met all the other conditions. Director Eggett mentioned the request to change the open-space percentage based on overall acreage to net acreage.

Commissioner Rackham voiced concern with the lack of parking in PRDs. Commissioner Pratt agreed, stating that the garages were too small for vehicles, so residents used them as storage units. Commissioners discussed various ways to ensure the appropriate number of parking spaces, based on number of units. Commissioner Pratt preferred designated parking areas for the additional spaces. He also mentioned that the 60-foot rights-of-way might give enough space for street parking as well, but Commissioner Rackham pointed out that the driveways would be too close together to leave room on the streets. Chairman Hellewell noted that the reference to Chapter 7, in Section 10-16-080, needed to reference Chapter 8 instead. Everyone agreed on recommending a minimum of 2.5 parking spaces per dwelling unit in Section 10-8-040 for six-family dwellings.

Chairman Hellewell opened up the meeting to public hearing. No one came forward, so he closed the public hearing. He asked if anyone was ready to make a motion or if they preferred to have staff revise the proposed amendment for their review again. Everyone agreed that they preferred to see the changes to the language again before making a recommendation to Council.

4. Adjournment

T.J. JENSEN MADE A MOTION TO ADJOURN AT 7:10 P.M.; ALL VOTED IN FAVOR.

Kenneth Hellewell
Planning Commission Chair