

NOTICE OF SPECIAL MEETING

A JOINT WORK SESSION of the CHARLOTTESVILLE CITY COUNCIL and the Charlottesville PLANNING COMMISSION will be held on Thursday, August 15, 2019, AT 6:00 p.m. AT CITY SPACE, 100 5th Street NE, Charlottesville, Virginia.

THE PROPOSED AGENDA IS AS FOLLOWS:

Discussion of Form Based Code

BY ORDER OF THE MAYOR

BY Kyna Thomas, Clerk of Council

CITY SPACE – August 15, 2019

City Council met in joint session with the Planning Commission on this date with the following members present: Mayor Nikuyah Walker, Vice Mayor Heather Hill and Ms. Kathy Galvin. Absent: Dr. Wes Bellamy and Mr. Mike Signer.

Planning Commission Chair, Lisa Green, called the Planning Commission meeting to order at 6:05 p.m. and turned the meeting over to Mr. Alex Ikefuna, Director of Neighborhood Development Services.

Mr. Ikefuna gave background information for the occasion of the meeting and the directive given by City Council in 2014 after the adoption of the Strategic Investment Area (SIA) Plan as an appendix to the City's Comprehensive Plan. He announced open houses to be held on September 4 and 5, 2019, and made notice of a number of community engagement opportunities scheduled. Mr. Ikefuna introduced Ms. Marta Goldsmith, Executive Director of the Form Based Codes Institute at Smart Growth America.

Ms. Goldsmith introduced other members of the consultant team: Ms. Marina Khoury – Principle at DPZ, and urban design architecture and town planning firm; and Ms. Anita Morrison – Co-founder and Principle of Partners for Economic Solutions.

Ms. Goldsmith gave a recap of the history of the Form Based Code (FBC) project, beginning in September 2017, as well as a forecast of upcoming action items:

Recap of Process - History

- Sept. 2017: Hold kick-off charrette in the SIA
- Oct. 2017: Hold work session with Planning Commission and City Council
- Dec. 2017: Submit first draft of FBC
- Mar.2018: Submission of Second Draft of FBC

- April 2018: Submit housing needs assessment & financial analysis of affordable housing options
- June 2018: Housing Assessment Presentation to City Council
- Sept. 2018 Hold community engagement workshops with public housing residents to discuss FBC and housing strategy
- Sept. 2018: Review Friendship Court site plan and meet with PHA leadership
- April 2019: Meeting with CRHA and PHRA Boards

Future steps include:

- Sept. 2019: Hold two stakeholder open houses
- Sept. 2019: Summarize comments from all meetings
- Sept/Oct. 2019: NDS provides guidance to FBCI/DPZ on revisions
- Oct. 2019: Submit final draft of FBC to NDS

Ms. Khoury gave an overview of FBC and the SIA for Charlottesville. She advised that coding Form versus coding Use is more effective and makes the process more predictable for private property owners.

Four Common Factors of FBC:

- Regulating plan (zoning map)
- Building type/use and form
- Open space considerations
- Design and function of streets.

Potential Benefits:

- Make it easier to walk, bike, use transit
- Set standards for community scale and character
- Integrate uses better
- Offer more cohesive design and development
- Are simpler, easier to understand development regulations.
- Interpret the public's vision into simple language, pictures, and diagrams to guide future development.

Potential Limitations:

- Streamlined review process (benefit for some)
- Cannot solve every important local issue
- Not an affordable housing policy
- Density bonuses are not enough to meet communities' affordable housing needs
- Subject to state law and zoning limitations in Virginia

Ms. Anita Morrison reviewed the intent of FBC, as listed below:

- Guide the evolution of, and further the goals of the SIA
- Honor the Residents Bill of Right and support the City's affordable housing policies
- Enable a greater range of housing and locally-oriented businesses
- Create a healthy neighborhood, with walkable streets in a safe, high-quality public realm; and
- Promote small, incremental development.

Ms. Morrison described the housing needs assessment that she created. Some results specific to Charlottesville included:

- Typical rents and land and building costs do not support mid-rise housing
- Most sites can support only wood frame construction 3-4 stories with surface parking
- Only downtown sites can support even five stories with structured parking
- Bonus height at above six stories has no value
- With a few exceptions:
 - Student housing near UVA
 - Luxury rental housing
 - Condominiums

Ms. Morrison explained the alternative of Tax Increment Financing, specifically in synthetic form.

Ms. Walker asked questions to clarify where the intended housing voucher recipients would live and timing of the availability of funds.

Ms. Morrison advised that it could take around twenty years for the full benefit of the program to be realized. She advised that the FBC is only one of many housing affordability tools and should be used in conjunction with other approaches to creating affordable housing and developing a housing strategy.

Ms. Green asked for examples of localities with success so that staff could research. The consultants gave the examples of Columbia Pike in Arlington County; Miami, Florida; and New Rochelle, New York.

Ms. Walker opened the floor for Public Comment.

Mr. Michael Payne questioned whether cost-benefit analysis affects where FBC changes according to where FBC is implemented in the City. He also asked based on the height bonuses whether there was a limit to the number of years that those units could be made affordable.

- Ms. Morrison advised that the additional height is earned by providing affordable housing units. She advised that it would be more valuable to get additional height near UVA than in the SIA.
- Ms. Khoury suggested activating every tool to develop affordable housing in all areas of the city, and making areas as dense as the market can bear because the need for affordable housing is so great.

A citizen spoke of conditions for open space in relation to the private sector; concern about a transition zone, building heights in relation to the look and feel of welcoming public space; the need for a companion citywide parking plan and transportation plan; missing the linear park; and walkable streets.

- Ms. Khoury provided additional information about design options including linear parks. She also suggested shared parking between commercial and residential, and talked about the potential for off-site parking.

The consultants asked City Council for feedback on the format for upcoming open houses. Mr. Ikefuna suggested a brief presentation followed by a question and answer period.

Mr. John Hall asked whether the term “government subsidized housing” should be used instead of “affordable housing”.

Ms. Walker closed Public Comment.

The consultants reviewed next steps.

Ms. Goldsmith asked that City Council, Neighborhood Development Services, and the Planning Commission publicize the September 4th and 5th open houses as much as possible.

Ms. Walker adjourned the City Council meeting at 8:15 p.m.

Ms. Green adjourned the Planning Commission meeting at 8:15 p.m.