

MINUTES  
CITY COUNCIL AND PLANNING COMMISSION JOINT WORK SESSION  
Tuesday, September 22, 2015  
5:00 – 7:00 p.m.

**I. PLANNING COMMISSION WORK SESSION**

Location: NDS Conference Room in City Hall (610 East Market Street)

Present: Chair John Santoski Commissioners, Kurt Keesecker, Genevieve Keller, Jody Lahendro, and Dan Rosensweig;  
UVA representative Bill Palmer

Staff Present: Brian Haluska, Missy Creasy, Carolyn McCray

Call to Order: by Planning Commission Chairman John Santoski at 5:00 p.m.

**Small Area Plan**

Commissioner Lahendro said that small area plans would be expensive. He had looked at some alternatives to the full small area plan recommendation that was considered here. He asked if we need to spend extra money for 18 months to study each area.

Commissioner Keesecker said the trigger is the CIP which can direct the public infrastructure investment as a rezoning or a market place. The small area plan should be directed to the place where the city is going to spend money. Mr. Keesecker said he is with Mr. Lahendro - to use the CIP to direct this to places where the money is going to be invested.

Commissioner Lahendro said there should be a triage of small area plans established through demographics.

Ms. Creasy said we don't need a full blown plan for every area but there are a good number of the areas that have specific concerns. For example, the Rose Hill Neighborhood has zoning for industrial but developed as single family many years when that was an allowable use. Also Fontaine came up as a concern as this area may not be similar to Belmont which is the other area zoned NCC.

Commissioner Rosensweig said this discussion has continued since the 2013 Comprehensive Plan review. He said there is not enough money or enough time. Maybe we should focus on the River or Hydraulic Road as previously suggested by Jim Tolbert.

Commissioner Keller said to combine W. Main, Cherry and Preston Avenue into one area and look at the River.

Commissioner Keesecker said these areas make a lot of sense. He thinks it's helpful to not get into details but determine if there is a consensus for the vision. Free bridge is one thing but Woolen Mills is something else, a neighborhood plan or recreation plan.

Ms. Creasy said the thought is to wait and see what happens for the River. There is a work session on West Main on Thursday night and there is a committee working on behalf of the Board of Supervisors and City Council on the River.

Commissioner Rosensweig said this is not a traditional recreational plan along the river, it is an opportunity to merge the areas around free bridge and the woolen mills. He wonders if there is an area to focus on adjacent to that planning

effort that would be in line to what the community has told us. The Comprehensive Plan identifies this area for focus. He recommends we focus on that now and spend time on the Comprehensive Plan update of small area plan.

Commissioner Lahendro said are they tied together, recreational and industrial, and should be planned in concert.

Commissioner Rosensweig said you can't plan one without the other.

Ms. Creasy said we are further along then we have ever been.

Commissioner Lahendro said Hydraulic and Hillsdale would be a good place to work. He said the design of Hillsdale and how it is being considered in the development of that area is important. The shopping center is a lot of concrete and needs reviving.

Ms. Creasy said once the alignment is set it will provide a lot of data to how the right-of-way has been changing.

The pyramid design was reiterated with Hydraulic at the top followed by Woolen Mills, Cherry Ave/West Main and the River in the middle and all other potential areas at the bottom.

Commissioner Keesecker said he understands what is happening. The booklet he made explains this matrix and it proves we have come up with the right top five. He said he thinks Free Bridge and River Road and Market Street are all connected to the mall. Is there some way to get across the river or a recreation thing that goes on, and some agreement of something on the north end? When we chose the next areas for small area planning, what it is leading to is "connectivity"

Commissioner Green said to note that priorities are being set for us, we need to look closer. She asked about what should be done for 5<sup>th</sup> Street.

Commissioner Rosensweig said to start with existing conditions. It feels like these are two different things. The maps are based on existing conditions, but areas have some potential.

Commissioner Keesecker said we don't have to plan the whole city, just which ones can we tackle and recognize that vision so after those are successfully done and budget comes around - there is an idea to accomplish these goals.

Commissioner Rosensweig said he feels like an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan enables us to talk on a community level. We have to accomplish the plan to identify this area. His recommendation is to get working on these plans and put it in the Comprehensive Plan as an amendment.

Commissioner Keesecker said this will act as an anchor to that side of town without bringing all traffic into the city.

Commissioner Santoski asked are these areas for consideration? We should note the four areas which could come up at any time.

Commissioner Rosensweig said that we do because it's of part of the Comprehension Plan.

Commissioner Santoski asked do we prioritize those and do we think that is where we should focus. How do we narrow down to 4-5 items? Something might occur, then how would we address?

Commissioner Keesecker said what can the city can do is instill confidence where the small area planning process is concerned? What are the tools that are at the city disposal, a streetscape, change the zoning; build something, planting trees, underground utilities. What are we trying to do? On Cherry Avenue, what is the opportunity? How can we get

the community to buy in? What are the city tools to make things happen and what are we trying to lead to with this small area plan?

Commissioner Green said we don't have a lot of major grocery stores or ways to get to the new shopping center off 5<sup>th</sup> Street. What if we get a ripple effect on West Main, what happens then? Is 5th Street extended becoming something due to it becoming this type of place?

Commissioner Keesecker said is the path between those two a place to get back and forth.

Commissioner Santoski asked how do we prioritize?

Commissioner Keesecker asked if there needed to be a whole sale change. Small area planning is an effort the city would undertake for long term implementation and is not ready to spend 10 million dollars. Why do the plan if you are not going to roll up your sleeve and do it. If there is an area with some small amount of money we need a focused plan.

Commissioner Santoski asked how we prioritize these and give some direction to staff.

Commissioner Rosensweig said we should probably recommend a corridor where there is not a ton of pressure from a land use or transportation. He thinks it is an area that over time will need a planning effort and re-alignment of the road.

Commissioner Green said we have the same conversation over and over and are going to be forced to do something like at Roosevelt Brown. Then it forces our hand. We are behind the eight ball.

Commissioner Keesecker said it is just to build on the peer ideas; there are more plans that are more pressing that should move into the planning stage. What is the final execution of it?

Commissioner Rosensweig said to make a recommendation to initiate discussion of a Comprehensive Plan amendment using the information provided in Kurt's maps. He also noted the areas outlined in the triangle should move forward.

Commissioner Santoski said they are both important (the River and Hydraulic.)

Commissioner Rosensweig said if you create edge city walkability, by doing that you take some of the pressure off some of the other places.

Commissioner Green said how much control are we going to have to change the transportation infrastructure?

Commissioner Keesecker said a comprehensive district study is a possibility. It may have different qualities but the river has neighborhood qualities that are like three plans in one.

Commissioner Santoski said do we want to recommend Woolen Mills and Hydraulic Road. One or the other?

Commissioner Rosensweig said those two are clearly at the top of the pyramid, Cherry, Preston, and West Main are triaged. He noted we should have a work session on the other areas to prioritize.

Commissioner Lahendro said in the back ground research that it might be buried, generally small areas have character, and we certainly want to build upon this. He suggests the good and bad, age and conditions, streets, and what is working and what the vision is would be good points of information for a basic review.

## **Public Comments**

Natasha Sienitsky, said she wants to tell you all what is going on in Fifeville for small area planning. There is a small committee in the neighborhood including longtime residents looking at Cherry Avenue past, present, and future. We realize Cherry Ave was the center of the African-American community along with Vinegar Hill. We are taking a present day look at existing zoning in the corridor including the issues of zero lot lines, Cherry Avenue CDBG, street trees, setbacks and heights. In addition, there are potential effects to the neighborhood from the development on West Main Street. We are hoping to provide information on what Cherry should look like in the future and work with Economic Development on incentive programs.

Bill Emory provided background on the Woolen Mills including stormwater and zoning concerns. He asked that past studies be looked at as well as City and County cooperation occur.

Commissioner Keesecker said it raises the question if citizens would organize themselves then how does that play into decision making. The public can form for themselves, but how can they bring that into this.

Commissioner Lahendro said that's another piece of the puzzle.

Commissioner Keesecker explained his green map to the Commissioners.

The meeting ended at 7pm.