

City of Charlottesville - City Planning Commission - Minutes: December 12, 2000

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**PLANNING COMMISSION REGULAR DOCKET
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2000 -- 7:30 P.M.
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

The Regular Meeting of the Planning Commission was held on this date with the following members present:

Ms. Nancy Damon, Chair

STAFF PRESENT:

Ms. Kathy Johnson Harris
Mr. Jim Tolbert, AICP, Director
Mr. Herman Key
Mr. Ron Higgins, Planning Manager
Mr. Ken Schwartz
Ms. Lisa Kelley, Assistant City Attorney
Mr. Marshall Slayton
Ms. Ali Cheesman, Econ. Dev. Specialist
Mr. Tim Supler, Vice-Chair
Ms. Claudette Grant, Neigh. Planner
Mr. Eldon Wood
Ms. Missy Naylor Creasy, Neigh. Planner
Ms. Susan Thomas, Neigh. Planner
Ms. Tarpley Vest, Neigh. Planner

CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mr. Blake Caravati, Mayor
Mr. Kevin Lynch
Ms. Meredith Richards
Mr. David Toscano

ALSO PRESENT:

Becky Clay Christensen, Facilitator

Ms. Damon called the meeting to order at 7:37 p.m., and extended a welcome to the members of Charlottesville High School who were present.

A. MATTERS TO BE PRESENTED BY THE PUBLIC NOT ON THE FORMAL AGENDA

Ms. Damon asked if there were any matters to be presented.

Ms. Judy Marie Johnson indicated that she had come to speak on behalf of the City Market and the City Holiday Market, including the vendors and the members of the community who support the community. She stated that a long term study suggesting the needs of the City Market had been presented to City Council in 1994, and that through conversations among the vendors, customers, and a number of other people, they had come up with some new ideas for the market. She gave background on their participation with the City, and indicated that they would now like to take a more proactive approach and ask that the City of Charlottesville support the establishment of a permanent home for the market. This would include incorporating the City Market into the Comprehensive Plan.

Ms. Damon asked if there were any further matters not on the formal agenda that anyone wished to present. Seeing none, she closed that portion of the meeting.

B. MINUTES

Ms. Damon asked if anyone had any suggestions, corrections or additions to the minutes for the November 14, 2000 regular meeting. Ms. Damon commented that she had three corrections to offer. First, she stated that the line on page 8, "He felt that the piece of property that Johnson Village owned," was confusing, and Mr. Higgins indicated that the phrase should read, "Johnson Village, Inc." Secondly, she inquired whether Ms. Richards had indicated during the previous meeting that she had not attended any of the neighborhood planning meetings, and Ms. Richards confirmed this. Ms. Damon then suggested striking the third paragraph on page 16 of the minutes.

No further comments or corrections were raised. Mr. Schwartz made a motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Wood seconded, and the motion carried, with Mr. Slayton and Ms. Johnson Harris abstaining.

C. PUBLIC HEARING

Draft Comprehensive Plan for Charlottesville 2025: The Planning Commission is reviewing the draft plan, which includes community-side sections not specifically addressed in the Neighborhood Area Plans, such as: Economy; Historic Preservation; Land Use; Housing; Urban Design; Transportation; Community Facilities & Recreation, and Natural Resources. This draft includes citywide Issues, Goals and Objectives and an Implementation Strategy with Key Actions for the next 5 years.

Ms. Damon thanked everyone who had come to take part in the public hearing. She indicated that this meeting would be strictly a hearing, meaning the members of the Planning Commission and the City Council would not make comments. Rather, all questions and concerns raised by the public would be recorded and taken up in future Work Sessions. She stated that a second public hearing on the Comprehensive Plan would be held in February, at the regular meeting of the Planning Commission, before the Plan was presented to City Council.

Ms. Damon indicated that they would now take a fifteen minute break, to allow members of the public to address questions to Planning Commissioners directly, or to look at the maps, and then they would reconvene for the formal hearing.

At 7:58 p.m., Ms. Damon called the meeting back to order.

Mr. Tolbert made a brief presentation on the draft Comprehensive Plan. He first gave an overview of the neighborhood plans, which were not up for consideration at this meeting, and indicated that pursuant to the Planning Commission's recommendation that all 18 plans be adopted, the City Council was going to take them up at their January 2nd, 2001 meeting. He commented that since there were 400 to 500 recommendations to be prioritized, the Planning Commission had suggested to City Council that the neighborhoods be given a sum of money and allowed to prioritize the items each year according to their own interests.

Concerning the Comprehensive Plan itself, Mr. Tolbert indicated that the first 12 chapters contained background information, and then chapters 13 and 14 contained recommendations for Issues, Goals and Objectives and for an Implementation Strategy, respectively. He went over the guiding principles that were considered by the community and adopted at the June 3rd, 2000 meeting of the Planning Commission, and then highlighted a number of the goals.

Mr. Tolbert indicated that once the Comprehensive Plan was adopted, it would be a working document, subject to annual review. He stated it would become part of the CIP process, and Staff would work to incorporate it into the budget process, to assist in deciding what to do with the money that Staff requests.

He indicated that following the comments given at this hearing, several Work Sessions would be held where the comments would be considered, and after final editing, a second public hearing would be held at the February meeting. He then turned the floor over to Becky Clay Christensen to conduct the public hearing.

Ms. Christensen introduced herself, and commented that she had been impressed by how much the plan had been driven from the citizen and community level.

She stated that, of the 100-plus meetings that had been held, this meeting was the "pull it together" meeting, and was the first public airing of the plan in full draft form. She then went over the process of the meeting, indicating that it would be focused highly on participation, and referred everyone present to the list of questions that she had passed out. She stated this list would give them an idea of the kind of input the Planning Commissioners and Staff were looking for. Particularly, the members of the public were asked to consider issues that they liked or didn't like about the plan draft; issues that had possibly been omitted from the draft; an assessment of the value of the document for individual citizens, neighborhoods and the city as a whole; and finally, how they would like to see the plan move forward.

Ms. Christensen asked if there were any questions or comments about the list of questions or anything else in general. Seeing none, she called the first person on the sign-up sheet to come forward and make her comments.

Ms. Judy Marie Johnson commented that the members of the City Market would really appreciate having a permanent home. She stated that the City Market might be missing in the plan, in terms of a proactive stance and the City actually manifesting a permanent home for the City Market.

Ms. Camille Wilson, Chair of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, indicated that she would like to express some of the frustration and disappointment of the Advisory Board about being left out of the Comprehensive Plan process. She stated that they had submitted some goals to Mr. Tolbert and had been promised a draft to the part of the plan that dealt with recreation and open space, but had not seen any such draft. The Board therefore did not feel they had been well-served by Staff. She commented that she had observed that the line, "Prepare and maintain a coordinated five-year capital improvement program in consultation with the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board and Planning Commission," had been deleted, and she requested that it be put back into the Comprehensive Plan. Concerning the objective calling for the City to complete a needs assessment and master plan for all City Parks and Recreation sites, she indicated the Advisory Board agreed with this, but pointed out that they already had a master plan, called, "City as a Park," which was completed in 1996 and included conceptual planning for sites. She added that of those sites, Washington Park and Greenbrier Park had been completed. The Advisory Board therefore did not want the existing master plan left out of the Comprehensive Plan, but was in favor of having a total master plan for the parks. She indicated that if changes to the use of Jefferson School eliminated that as a recreation site, she felt that some replacement should be provided, perhaps along the Preston Avenue corridor, close to Washington Park, which could serve as a community site for the neighbors there. Concerning the location of the skate park, she stated that a number of people on the Advisory Board would like to see some landscaping at the current site, since it was such an important entrance to the City. She observed that the Advisory Board had not been put on any of the Action Plans, and requested that it be included in Action Number 113, which concerned completing a needs assessment and master plan for the City Parks and Recreation. She stated that Action Number 112, to replace and plant shade trees and care for existing trees, was a proposal originally put forward by the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board two years ago, and commented that she hoped that would be the first phase of the urban forest program. Lastly, concerning the neighborhood surrounding Angus Road, she indicated that the neighbors there needed a park or a sitting park, and requested that that issue be looked at.

Leroy Bruton, of 2576 Free Union Road, commented that he had not had an opportunity to review chapters 13 and 14, but from what he had seen of the Comprehensive Plan, he was impressed. He stated that the plan appeared to open up opportunities for creative design, which he felt the city needed, with its limited land resources; but the balancing side of that was property rights, which would create a more subjective plan. He indicated he would like to see reference to property rights included in the plan, since he found no mention of them everywhere. He stated he would like to reserve the opportunity to review the document and submit in writing anything of concern to him. Concerning the neighborhood meetings, he indicated he had attended all but one of them, and he felt that they could have been conducted better, particularly in regard to providing the public with more information, such as subdivision and zoning ordinances, to allow people to be better able to contribute to the process. He added that it appeared to him that every idea mentioned was put into the plan, and there should have been some deliberation to weed out the good ideas from the bad.

Beyond that, he commended the Planning Commission and Staff on their work, and indicated he would like to address the rest of his concerns in writing.

Mr. Art Keiser, of Edgewood Lane, commented that he had enjoyed the process and appreciated the hard work of Staff. He stated that the Venable neighborhood had had a worthwhile set of discussions, but unfortunately had neglected to address two concerns. The first was the corridor study. He felt that the neighborhood had not had sufficient opportunity to have input into that study. Secondly, he noted that the University of Virginia master plan had been restated in its entirety in the Comprehensive Plan, and he felt that because of the impact of the University of Virginia on the Venable neighborhood, the master plan should have been presented during the neighborhood planning meetings, rather than at a regular neighborhood meeting. He stated he was a member of the Rivanna Trails Foundation, and so he liked the emphasis on walkability and green space. He indicated that by the end of next year, the Foundation would have completed a 21-mile trail linking trails around the city and the county, but they would need help in maintaining the trails. Concerning how to move the Comprehensive Plan forward, he liked the idea that there would be an annual implementation strategy to go with the budget, and would recommend that Staff highlight the Actions in the plan that were either going to be started or completed each year.

Ms. Maria Chapel, of 1029 Hazel Street, indicated she would like to commend everyone who had anything to do with putting the Comprehensive Plan together.

However, on behalf of the Martha Jefferson Neighborhood Association, she wanted to express frustration with how the process was set up for the neighborhood planning meetings. She listed several problems with the process, particularly the rehashing of issues that occurred because people were not able to attend every meeting, and the fact that a generic program was followed that did not allow the neighborhood association to focus on what was important to it, but instead seemed to dilute some of the issues. She then commented that she wanted to echo Mr. Bruton's comments about every idea being put into the plan, instead of coming to some conclusion about what the most important ideas were. She stated that all of these ideas made the plan look impressive, but in reality, there would only be funds available to realize some of them, and therefore she wanted to know how much money each neighborhood was going to get and how all of the plans were going to be implemented. She then added that it was symptomatic of the problems with the process that both the City Market and the Parks and Recreation department felt left out of the Comprehensive Plan. For the future, she would suggest that Staff not follow a prescribed format, but instead consult with each neighborhood separately to determine their priorities.

Mr. Wyatt Johnson commented that he wanted to commend everyone on the job they were doing with the Comprehensive Plan. He thanked them especially for coming into the black communities and listening to what they had to say. He urged Staff and the Commissioners to pay close attention to what was expressed by the black community, and not to go back after listening to them and change or ignore what was expressed.

Mr. Greg Jackson, of 613 Belmont, commented that he was genuinely impressed with the Comprehensive Plan, particularly the Principles and Goals, and the emphasis on new urban or neo-traditional design. He suggested that neo-traditional design was a better word than neo-traditional style. He indicated that he shared the concerns expressed about how to implement the goals. In particular, he felt an approach to try to improve transitional areas such as Belmont would help throughout the city, and he was in support of human-oriented design with bikes and pedestrians. He indicated he was glad to hear Parks and Recreation expressing their concerns, since he had heard comments from a number of people in neighborhood meetings that there was a need for more park space. Concerning the economic corridor proposals, he stated he was impressed by what he had read, and he commented that having maps and plans available to look at was helpful in visualizing and thinking about the different issues. Lastly, he indicated he would like to see recycling bins back in the downtown area.

Ms. Christensen asked if there were any more comments. No further comments were raised. She requested those people who had spoken who had not signed up, to sign their names on the sheet before leaving. She reiterated that all of the comments had been recorded, and summarized what she had heard expressed, from supportive comments to frustration or skepticism. She stated that all of that would be factored together and put into a report for the Commissioners and Councilors to review at a Work Session for fine-tuning the Comprehensive Plan, and then repeated that there would be opportunity for additional public comment at the meeting in February.

Ms. Damon asked if any of the specific questions that were brought up in the comments would be addressed at the February meeting. Mr. Tolbert replied that the intent was to address the questions before then on the web site. He stated that the minutes from the meeting, as well as additional comments, would be posted there. However, if that was not satisfactory, additional concerns could be raised at the February meeting.

Ms. Damon then thanked everyone for participating, and closed the public hearing.

D. LIST OF SUBDIVISIONS AND SITE PLANS APPROVED ADMINISTRATIVELY

Ms. Damon requested that the Commissioners review the site plans to see if they had any questions for Mr. Higgins or Mr. Tolbert before entertaining a motion to approve them.

Concerning the redivision of the Huntley Hall, Ms. Damon asked if the three plats had been redivided. Mr. Higgins replied that the back ends of the lots next to Huntley Hall had been purchased and made part of the Diamond property.

Mr. Supler made a motion to approve the site plans as submitted. Mr. Slayton seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.

LIST OF SUBDIVISIONS APPROVED ADMINISTRATIVELY

11/1/00 - 12/1/00

1. Redivision of TM 48-41.A & TM 49-158 Three new duplex lots

"Tatum-Frank Cottages" Stan & Judy Tatum,

Locust Lane (off of north side) Jonathan & Janet Frank

File No. 1088-C preliminary & final

Final Signed: 11/3/00

Parcels A, B, C, Lots 5 & 6, Block 3, Two new single-family lots
"Maury Addition"

2314 & 2316 Fontaine Ave. at Montpelier St. Michael & Barbara Carmagnola

File No. 1206-A preliminary & final

Final Signed: 11/14/00

3. Redivision of Block "A" & part of "D" No new lots

"Huntley Hall" Huntley LLC

Stribling Avenue at Dymond Road preliminary & final

File No. 1242

Final Re-signed: 11/15/00

LIST OF SITE PLANS APPROVED AMINISTRATIVELY

11/1/00 - 12/1/00

1. File No. 1238-A Tractor Supply Co. – use of River Road

building

2. File No. 683-B Technology Center - Addition Dale Avenue at Forest to Ovenshire Complex Street

3. File No. 1234 Woolworth's Building 100 West Main Street

Redevelopment and (Downtown Mall)

Apartments addition – 28 units

4. File No. 1145 Covered Storage Structure 1009 Linden Avenue Addition to Blue Ridge Roofing, Inc.

5. File No. 1273 King-Grove Property Between King & Grove Development Streets at 9th/10th Realignments

E. COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS

Mr. Slayton indicated he had nothing to report. However, he added that the building he was in was having a Christmas party from 1:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. on Friday, and he invited everyone to attend.

Mr. Supler indicated he had nothing to report.

Ms. Johnson Harris indicated that the Ridge Street Task Force meeting was going to be held that coming Wednesday at 7:00 p.m., and the Court Facilities meeting for discussing how people felt about the previous meeting would be held at 3:30 p.m. on Thursday. Otherwise, she had nothing to report.

Mr. Schwartz reported that the Court Facilities meeting on November 16th, 2000, was very well attended, with vibrant discussion in ten break-out groups. He commented that the follow-up meeting mentioned by Ms. Johnson Harris was an important one, and they would try to digest the public comments that came out through that public meeting. In particular, the steering committee was going to try to weigh the five alternative scenarios that were presented and discussed at length in the break-out sessions. He stated he was unsure when the committee would report the results to the community, but he suspected it would be within the next one to two months.

Mr. Key reported that the CDBG Task Force had broken into subcommittees to deal with different issues such as housing, infrastructure and social programs, and the next meeting was scheduled for Tuesday, December 19th, 2000, to look at recommendations. Ms. Damon asked when the Planning Commission would be hearing those recommendations, and Mr. Key indicated that would depend on the tenor of the meeting on the 19th.

Ms. Johnson Harris commented that she had forgotten to mention that she was on the CIP Committee, and they had to turn in their matrix that coming Friday, to be presented to the Planning Commission in January. Mr. Tolbert commented that the intent was to bring it up at one of the planned Work Sessions in January, and then to have the hearing at the February meeting.

Mr. Slayton asked if the Wednesday Work Session had been cancelled, and Mr. Tolbert confirmed this.

Mr. Supler made an announcement that if anyone was upgrading their computer system over the holidays and needed something to do with their old computer,

Computers for Kids was actively looking for computers and peripherals, Pentium grade or above. He stated that Computers for Kids now had 501(c)(3) status, so all donations would be fully tax deductible.

Mr. Wood reported that something interesting had come up at the Urban Design Committee, namely that the project which was planned for 10th Street between Water and Market Streets had new owners and a new architect, and the new design for it looked better than what had been presented before. He stated that preliminary plans for the development of the coal tower on the CSX property were also presented at the Urban Design Committee meeting. He then indicated that at the last MPO Technical Committee meeting, plans had been presented for the university area which he thought would be interesting to the Planning Commission at some time, as well as plans for JPA from Emmet Street down to the bridge. Ms. Damon asked if he was suggesting that the Planning Commission put that on

their agenda, and he stated he thought it would be worthwhile to consider. Mr. Tolbert added that he would put the JPA streetscape project on the agenda for January, since that would be taken to City Council the following week.

F. CHAIR'S REPORT

Ms. Damon reported that the Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission met the previous Thursday, and much of the time was spent going over their audit. In January, they would be meeting with their legislators -- namely, representatives from Louisa, Greene, Nelson, Fluvanna and Charlottesville/Albemarle -- with a dinner on the first Thursday night of the month, followed by time for discussion with them concerning things the Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission would like to see them do. She commented that she had taken the Trolley to the meeting, and would be taking it home. However, her bicycle had been stolen the previous Saturday, and she was talking to the neighborhood planning director about getting new bicycle racks, since the present ones did not allow one to chain the whole bike very well.

G. DEPARTMENT/STAFF REPORT

Mr. Tolbert commented that because the meeting went so well the previous Saturday, the Work Session for Wednesday, December 20th, had been cancelled, and so there would not be a Work Session until after the January 9th, 2001 regular meeting. He indicated he would like to suggest dates for the two January Work Sessions, and after general discussion, January 10th and 18th were selected, both at 5:30 p.m. He then reminded the Commissioners to come for lunch with Staff on December 19th, 2000, at noon, outside of Mr. Tolbert's office.

Mr. Slayton made a motion to hold a public hearing on the second Tuesday in January at 7:30 p.m. Ms. Johnson Harris seconded, and the motion carried.

Whereupon, the meeting was adjourned at 9:31 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

James E. Tolbert, AICP
Secretary

APPROVED:

Nancy Damon, Chair
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