

**CITY OF CHARLOTTESVILLE
PLANNING COMMISSION WORKSESSION
TUESDAY, February 24, 2009 -- 5:00 P.M.
NDS CONFERENCE ROOM**

Planning Commissioners present

Mr. Jason Pearson
Ms. Genevieve Keller
Mr. Bill Emory
Mr. Dan Rosensweig
Mr. Michael Osteen
Ms. Cheri Lewis
Mr. Michael Farruggio

Staff Present:

Ms. Missy Creasy, Planning Manager
Ms. Mary Joy Scala, Preservation Planner
Mr. Jim Herndon, GIS Planner
Mr. Read Brodhead, Zoning Administrator
Ms. Melissa Celii, Grants Administrator
Mr. Brian Haluska, Neighborhood Planner
Ms. Ebony Walden, Neighborhood Planner
Mr. Nick Rogers, Neighborhood Planner
Mr. Richard Harris, Deputy City Attorney

The meeting began at 5pm. Nick provided an overview of the River Corridor project progress. He noted that data collection is set to commence through April of this year. Ebony provided an overview of the Urban Tree Canopy project. She stated that there are plans to have the data back from VA Tech at the March 5th Parks Meeting to clarify project goals. There are a number of goals we can do that will compliment the efforts of the Parks department. There was a discussion about green building practices. It was noted that the forestry plan is broader than just trees – expanding to natural resources in general. We can support these broader goals but have chosen to focus more directly on tree canopy. On the broader goal however, the Commission has talked about acquisition of additional park land through the budget process. The Commission will continue to have a role in requests for that initiative.

The discussion moved to Accessory Apartments. Read presented an overview of the memo included in the packet of information. Cheri asked if there was a way to identify the number of units in many of the previously R-2 Areas? She would like additional data on the location of accessory units, where they are located, what the demand is and how many nonconforming units have lapsed. She thought that realtors may have some of this information. Dan asked where the number for the proposed 900 square foot limitation came from? Jason requested focusing the discussion on the scale of units since that was the main question for debate. He also asked staff to continue the presentation to allow for a full perspective for the discussion. Jim Herndon and Read explained the visuals to the Commission and addressed questions. Commissioners had varying opinions on whether the scale was a concern or just the design. It was also noted that 30% of a rear yard could be too much. Jason noted that the ideal is to create more density. He felt the height was too much but other existing criteria might be appropriate. Bill noted that

accessory apartments are meant to be subordinate to the main unit. Mike F. stated that a further increase in density is not needed all over the City. The Infill SUP process was put in place to address appropriate areas of the City for increased density. This tool was explained to refresh the commission on its requirements.

Missy noted that the accessory apartment regulations were expanded in 2003 to allow for increased density but to promote it in compatible ways in single family areas. One would not “feel” the increased density because the impacts of it were minimized. The discussion on Infill SUPs continued with discussion about increasing the area it encompassed. It was not seen as an issue to pursue at this time. For people to use this housing option, the rules need to be clear and concise.

Dan noted a concern that passage of a single ordinance of this sort could end up being too blunt of a regulation – could be a too much of one size fits all approach that could have the unintended affect of discouraging added density in areas for which an increase could be appropriate.

In summary, the following was obtained/requested through this discussion:

- The Commission would like to continue to encourage the community to establish accessory apartments
- Note in the text of Section 34-1171 that the accessory unit is “subordinate to the main unit”
- More information was needed on where the 900 sf size limitation came from. Five commissioners felt a percentage of the size of the home should govern rather than a set sf limitation. There was debate over the 40% limitation that exists.
- Height – Should 25 feet be the maximum or should a ratio of adjacent buildings be taken into consideration?
- Data on the sf of existing structures to see what size range most structures fall under.
- Locations of existing accessory units
- Look at what other localities are using for design focused regulations.

Mike O noted that he would try to draw different scenarios and share those with commissioners.

The meeting ended at 7pm.