

CITY OF CHARLOTTESVILLE

PLANNING COMMISSION WORK SESSION

TUESDAY, MARCH 25, 2008 -- 5:00 P.M.

BASEMENT CONFERENCE ROOM

Planning Commissioners present

Mr. Michael Farruggio

Ms. Cheri Lewis

Ms. Genevieve Keller

Mr. Dan Rosensweig

Mr. Michael Osteen

Staff Present:

Mr. Jim Tolbert, Director

Mr. Richard Harris, Deputy City Attorney

Ms. Missy Creasy, AICP, Planning Manager

Mr. Nick Rogers, Neighborhood Planner

Ms. Ebony Walden, Neighborhood Planner

Mr. Brian Haluska, Neighborhood Planner

Ms. Mary Joy Scala, Preservation and Design Planner

Mr. Neil Currie, Planning Intern

The meeting began at 5:05pm.

Ms. Lewis began by noting concern about the Whole Foods item showing up on the work session agenda and didn't want that issue to take time away from other issues.

Gennie asked if there was a formal policy on what comes forward to the commission on a work session agenda. Is it intended for regular agenda items for specific projects to come forward to work sessions?

Mike F. noted that there are many pending conceptual issues and sessions should be focused on those.

The meeting was then turned over to Jim Tolbert to review the ordinance proposals. He provided a history on the downtown zoning concerns as well as introducing the members of the committee who worked on the ordinance. He explained each change for each district individually as well as presenting it on a map.

Gennie asked if BAR comments in reference to this item had been addressed. Jim noted that they had. He also clarified that buildings fronting on Water St. west of 2nd Street would have a 45' maximum.

Gennie followed up by asking that since we have minimums listed, do those only apply to new buildings. Is there a concern for hardship if a building is destroyed? The nonconforming regulations were explained to clarify that one can build back what is lost within the specified timeframe.

Cheri asked why the committee allowed for a height of 101 by SUP for West Main South and only 70 feet on the Northern side. It was noted that it was to take into account the residential areas backing up to the north side.

There was a discussion about building shadows and it was noted that the sun angles of 38 degrees took this into account. Gennie was interested in seeing that information. She also felt any application for SUP would need to contain that data. There was also interest in seeing the street wall height in relation to the existing heights. Jim noted that information was not available for all sites.

Mike F. asked why 70' height was allowed on Jefferson Street by right. He was concerned this was too high. Jim noted that it was a balance between the height allowed in the past and what is allowed today. Gennie would like to focus on this area more.

Dan expressed concern with having differing heights on different sides of the street specific to the South Street district. It was mentioned that there was an attempt to balance the heights and step backs.

Gennie compared the map given in November 07 and the one in January 08 and was concerned about the differences. It was noted that the area south of the tracks in the West Main South district was not focused on but should be looked at.

David Brown asked about the timeframe for this issue coming forward to Planning Commission for hearing. Jim noted it was scheduled for the April meeting though parts may come at a later date. David felt that there would always be changes and that it needed to come forward soon.

The discussion on the zoning differences on West Main continued. Gennie suggested that there may be a downtown, uptown and university hospital node and the character of the uptown node was lost as part of this proposal. Mike F. wanted the density in this area in order to support transit. Mike O. felt that it would be developed incrementally and not seen from the street as much. Gennie wanted to have visual criteria for tall buildings as they can really change the character.

The discussion moved to the density reduction proposal. Jim reviewed the proposal and noted that this has not been discussed in detail with any group. He noted that the attached ordinance did not reflect the density proposals and to focus on the chart. It was noted that the densities would come forward at a different time than the height changes. Cheri asked if there was a square footage bonus in any district besides the former transition zone. It was noted that there was not and this zone should be looked at again.

Mike F. asked if the development community had reacted to this proposal. It was noted that it had not but can go forward to them soon. Mike F. wanted to make sure that a mix of units was encouraged. Dan asked why the number of bedrooms was being limited if a mix is desired. It was noted that was only in the university area to minimize only 4 bedroom complexes.

Jim asked if the commission was interested in pursuing this issue. There was interest in this. Gennie requested text to note the rationale for the changes. Mike F. requested that developers in the room who were interested in commenting should take that opportunity. It was noted that there is not typically a

comment period and additional persons may have attended if they thought they could comment. Gennie noted that a policy on this would be helpful. It was also noted that a 5 minute public comment time should be added to the end of work sessions.

John Matthews noted that he was concerned with West Main Street and wanted to see it grow. He felt the 3D models would be helpful for visualizing and that it should be by SUP.

Ivo Romenesko said that he was okay with the density by SUP which would allow for review by individual projects. He wanted to make sure sensitivity was given to the mall. He did not want to decrease the height and liked higher density.

Keith Woodard would like to see the SUP process simplified so it would be clear if projects were appropriate early in the development process. He did not want the by right density decreased and asked what would happen if a project was adjacent to open space.

Ashley Cooper liked the densities. She would like to see all the information in one place, remove the bedroom limits in the University area and have information available on the internet for the public.

Ivo noted that he did not want to limit bedrooms. Ashley followed up by noting that most applicants will come forward with SUPs. John felt it would be great to keep people downtown.

Gennie noted that design guideline criteria and guidance should be presented on how to handle SUPs prior to the language coming forward. Cheri wanted to see how other communities are handling these applications. Also, is there a way to do design review in non-entrance corridor areas. She also wanted to look at plaza requirements.

The meeting ended at 7:00pm.