

**CITY OF CHARLOTTESVILLE
PLANNING COMMISSION WORKSESSION
TUESDAY, January 27, 2009 -- 5:00 P.M.
NDS CONFERENCE ROOM**

Planning Commissioners present

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

Staff Present:

Mr. Brian Haluska, Neighborhood Planner
Ms. Ebony Walden, Neighborhood Planner
Mr. Nick Rogers, Neighborhood Planner
Mr. Richard Harris, Deputy City Attorney

Public Present:

Leslie Middleton, Rivanna River Basin Task Force

The meeting began at 5pm. The commission proceeded to review each priority outline and provide comments.

Tree Canopy:

Ebony and Mike F. spoke regarding the current efforts to figure out what the current tree canopy over the City is. It was noted that release of the current number from Parks should occur shortly.

PC Suggestions for supplementing the current outline:

- Efforts from the PC should be coordinated with Parks and Recreation efforts in this area. It was noted that a presentation from Parks on the Urban Forestry plan would be the best first step of this project to assure that work efforts are complimentary.
- Measurement of the relative health of the tree canopy, as well as the distribution of the canopy, and the diversity of species. Review will be done to see if there is raw data from the forestry study. If not, a plan for what would need to occur to accomplish this will need to be explored.
- Efforts to track the canopy over time.
- Comparing neighborhoods for their share of the canopy. While the entire City may have 40%, particular areas may be deficient.
- Efforts to involve citizens in surveys and information gathering.
- The PC now has a copy of the urban forestry plan to review in preparation for this project.

River Corridor:

- Bill Emory suggested linking the corridor plan with the Hallowed Ground Initiative. The PC raised some questions about whether or not the Mayor would need to be involved in getting the City considered by the initiative.
- Mike Osteen said the water quality portion of the outline was the most important.
- Staff responded to questions about the resources required to complete the project. Ebony mentioned that corridor plan are typically handled by contracting with consultants, and that staff was confident that the other three outlines could be handled in house, but that the river corridor plan may require additional resources that were not available at this time.
- Dan Rosensweig asked whether adding the River Corridor into the Comprehensive Plan during the next update would be appropriate. Cheri Lewis supported this idea. Gennie Keller supported as well, provided it covered the tributaries as well as the River. There appeared to be support for creating a chapter for the river corridor in the next comprehensive plan.
- Leslie Middleton mentioned that the Rivanna was an impaired waterway, primarily because of runoff. She further mentioned that efforts to reduce the impermeable surfaces were the best way to combat the impaired waterway conditions. She mentioned that there were many ongoing efforts in this area, and that the outline presented may overlap some of those efforts. Further, she said that the river was designated by a program called “Save America’s Treasures” but that designation had not been leveraged in any way.
- Mike Farruggio asked how the program would be handled in light of the other ongoing efforts.
- There was some discussion as to the focus of the plan, as to whether it should promote a more active or passive usage of the river corridor. A consensus was reached that more active and open use would be encouraged.
- The river should be used to its fullest extent while having the most protection, which connects into Mr. Osteen’s commentary on water quality being the primary component of the plan.
- Other discussion centered on connecting the river to the rest of the city through greater access.

PC Suggestions for supplementing the current outline:

Focus on information gathering and potential linkages/partnerships to assure that efforts are not being duplicated.

Review to determine the feasibility of completing this project.

Density:

Gennie Keller mentioned that the outline could be broadened to a city-wide examination of density. There is interest in looking at more than just R-1 and R-2 zoning. Dan likewise felt that there were density issues throughout the City that could be examined. The PC agreed that the current outline was a good grouping of tasks, after some discussion of whether or not the fourth and fifth steps could be separated.

PC Suggestions for supplementing the current outline:

Provide a more concrete schedule

Comp Plan-Zoning Ordinance:

Cheri mentioned keeping the process as comprehensive as possible. Jason Pearson was volunteered for this task.

Priorities:

- Comp Plan-Zoning Ordinance review can start right away, but will need to come back to the Commission prior to further action.
- River Corridor Plan needs further evaluation in light of ongoing efforts in other places, and the data collection may be lengthy. Probably should be re-scoped and brought back to the Commission before further action is taken.
- Tree Canopy and Density projects will move forward at this time.

Interests:

Code Review – Bill, Gennie, Jason?

Density – Dan, Cheri, Mike F.

Trees – Mike F, Mike O, Bill

River - Bill