

**PLACE Design Task Force Minutes**  
**July 13, 2017, 12:00 – 2:00 p.m.**  
**Neighborhood Development Services Conference Room**

Members Present

Chairman Mike Stoneking, Vice Chairman Fred Wolf, Rachel Lloyd, Gennie Keller, Chris Henry, Councilor Kathy Galvin, Rachel Lloyd, Scott Paisley, Clarence Green, Paul Josey, Kate Bennis

Staff Present: Alex Ikefuna, Missy Creasy, Katie Hines, Bart Pfautz, Zack Lofton, Carolyn McCray (Clerk)

Guests Present: Dr. Guoping Huang; Chairman Kurt Keesecker, Planning Commission, Mark Rylander

Call to Order

Chairman Mike Stoneking called the PLACE Design Task Force Meeting to order at 12:00pm.

Agenda

1. Public Comment

Mark Rylander, Architect, presented a Neighborhood Transition Zone “NTZ” Zoning Text Amendment draft proposal:

- Charlottesville’s house scale neighborhood fabric is being eroded at its edges by downtown development. Transition zones are needed. Certain existing zones adjacent to these neighborhoods are inappropriate.
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- This proposed zoning text amendment overlay restrictions on the height of new development within a set distance of existing neighborhood fabric. It is based on the intent of the Comprehensive Plan.
- Charlottesville’s zoning map reflects conventional use-based zoning concepts. Height and bulk of allowable form have been analyzed and grouped for this study to identify zones allowing 45 feet height or greater.
- Height (and consequent by-right bulk) has been analyzed and grouped for this study to identify zones allowing 45 feet height or greater adjacent to low density neighborhoods.
- Assumptions for study 1:

- a) Residential lots are R1-S zoned, 50 feet wide by 120 feet deep; houses are 30 feet wide by 40 feet deep and 2 stories nominal.
  - b) Commercial blocks are 200 feet wide by 240 feet deep with 20 foot setbacks.
  - c) Building street elevations matter.
  - d) Topography matters (relative height is not the same things as fixed elevation).
  - e) Bulk matters (not just height).
  - f) “Sky exposure plane” a common tool in cities to assure light and air.
- Assumptions for study 2:
    - a) Solar orientation matters, but considered only implicitly as factor in text amendment.
  - Assumptions for study 3:
    - a) Topography matters (relative height is not the same thing as fixed elevation).
    - b) Bulk matters (not just height).
    - c) In current zoning code, “height” is averaged on sloping sites and does not include some rooftop “appurtenances” so 45 feet can measure 60 feet or more in elevation at downhill property line.
  - Assumptions for study 4:
    - a) Building street elevations matter.
    - b) Topography matters (relative height is not the same things as fixed elevation).
    - c) Bulk matters (not just height).
    - d) Stepbacks in increments of 50 feet.
  - Assumptions for study 5:
    - a) Building street elevations matter.
    - b) Topography matters (relative height is not the same things as fixed elevation).
    - c) Bulk matters (not just height) for buildings at maximum height.

Zoning Text Amendment Draft:

Article IX Generally Applicable Regulations

Division 6 Buildings and Structures Generally

34-1108w)

1. Building Elevation

Any lot in any zone that is within 300 feet of a residential district R-1 or R-2 shall be defined as a “neighborhood transition zone (NTZ)” and shall be subject to an **overlay of additional height restrictions** according to the table below:

<b>Distance from R-1/R-2 Property Line</b>	<b>Maximum elevation above property line</b>
0-50 feet	35 feet with 20' setback
50-100 feet	35 feet elevation
100-200 feet	45 feet elevation
200-300 feet	60 feet elevation

2. Building Mass

Width of buildings in the NTZ shall be limited in one direction as follows:

<b>Distance from R-1/R-2 Property Line</b>	<b>Building footprint width limited to</b>
0-100 feet	60 feet x maximum allowed by setback
100-200 feet	90 feet x maximum allowed by setback
200-300 feet	Determined by required setbacks

Lena Seville: Commented about the Comprehensive Plan community engagement process, noting it went really well and covered a lot of ground for what it was. She said she was lucky enough to be in a small group and we got to get through everything. She could see how it would have been difficult in some of the larger groups. Her comment is she doesn't know what is planned for the rest of this but we really did not have enough time to discuss what we wanted to talk about to what was different from what was specified. She understands that NDS is pretty focused on residential, commercial and that kind of thing but the Comprehensive Plan goes far beyond that and so things like affordable housing she was able to bring up at the end of our group, but we did not have the time to bring up what individuals may be interested in that were not on the defined list of things to talk about.

2. Comprehensive Plan Community Engagement - Presentation Chairman Kurt Keesecker

Chairman Keesecker stated it was proposed by Council for the Planning Commission to move forward with an online review followed by community meetings. He said Missy Creasy and her staff have provided updates to each of the following chapters and coordinated community groups and all members of the public to review and provide comment. The Planning Commission will conduct a series of four (4) kickoff meetings that was held in different locations of the City. At each table a planning commission member and staff worked directly with the community to ensure that issues, concerns, and aspirations are clarified, understood and considered. They also listen to views of community members and provide feedback on their opinions and ideas.

The PLACE members participated in a mapping exercise that was also presented at the kickoff meetings.

Chair Keesecker said the initial goal is to bring these updates (data) to Council for approval and then update the Comprehensive Plan needs and policies; enactment of updated ordinances implementing zoning practices; implementation of policies and procedures necessary for service delivery.

He said that the drafts will remain available on line through the end of summer 2017 and updates will be made and available in fall 2017 to include additional feedback.

3. 3-D Modeling, presented by Dr. Guoping Huang, Professor at the School of Architecture University of Virginia

Dr. Huang said his idea is to present the city as it is today and then incorporate design proposals so people can see their three-dimensional form.

The city entered into an agreement earlier this year to create a method that will allow any developer to project how proposed buildings will look on the landscape and Dr. Huang was paid \$5,000 for his efforts.

Mr. Pfautz, a GIS analyst in Neighborhood Development Services, said this was a pilot project where we are nearing the end and a few of us staff are trying to learn what Dr. Huang has done and are going through the documentation he provided to transfer the data over to the city. The work may help decision-makers and citizens understand how Charlottesville's future might look under existing rules compared to what it might look like under scenarios, such as form-based code.

Dr. Huang presented the PLACE group with a virtual model of how sections of the city's Strategic Investment Area might look in relation to existing structures. He and his students took the Piedmont Housing Alliance's design for the proposed redevelopment of Friendship Court and placed it into a geographical information system known as City Engine. He said we can look at this on the web and maybe in the future we can wear a virtual reality headset to see the three-dimensional city. He also showed how under the existing zoning, the entire 12-acre parcel at Friendship Court could instead have been developed as one large monolith. The land and other sections of the SIA are within the city's Downtown Extended zoning district, which can allow for large buildings.

Chairman Stoneking said this is a picture of what could happen if we don't take the reins and this is a tool to massage the zoning and to realize an outcome that we want as opposed to one that we don't want.

Councilor Galvin said the modeling can show where alleyways might go and how block sizes might be shortened.

The difference between existing 3D models such as Google Earth and Dr. Huang's work is that the latter takes the city's topography into account using an airborne sensing method known as LIDAR (Light Detection and Ranging). That allows for a more accurate depiction of how the buildings actually fit into the landscape.

Dr. Huang said he would like to eventually establish a historical record of all buildings in Charlottesville so that people could see how the city has evolved over time. He has previously worked as the senior GIS editor for the Digital Atlas of Roman and Medieval Civilizations at Harvard University.

Chairman Stoneking said he could imagine a day when developers are required to submit 3D models for particular overlay districts to see how the buildings would compare to others.

Dr. Huang said that is possible, because eventually it's going to be standard procedure to use accurate LIDAR data as a background to begin with so all the information will be geo-referenced.

Ms. Lloyd said even without all the finely-rendered detail, just to be able to visualize the massing is a huge uptick in assisting us.

#### 4. Code Audit: Legal Review

Ms. Keller: Last year September Council asked for information about the code and City Attorney, Lisa Robertson has been working on this for several months. She said there has been a lot of buzz about this throughout the community and her point of view about this is informed by staff and the work that the commissions has been doing. She said some people see this this as re-writing the code in the back room and she does not buy into that but thinks it is happening in the light of day and that primarily we are offering suggestions to correct things that are no longer legal and perhaps never were, that are inconsistent in the code for example in some parts of the city specifications are given in feet and some are given in stories. There are some areas where the letter on the use matrixes is not interpreted consistently by applicants, staff and reviewers. What does the letter M on that chart mean? There are things like that that need to be cleared up and we have had lots of conversation about having formed based code and having a new code but in the meantime the code gets used. Every day, every week and every month; decisions get made by the code that we have now so it really needs to be cleaned up. She said Chairman Stoneking was calling it a triage and yes it is urgent work that will allow us to have less difficulty until the code is re-written. We have a work session Tuesday night and then and before that was talking about how to measure the point of a building, what is mixed use, is there a percentage or not, is it

okay to have one opposing use in one apartment, an office building or one leasing space in a residential building. Those are the kinds of thing really being dealt with.

Ms. Creasy said we were given the initial direction in September [2016] to be done faster and we are still going to have to present this idea in a tiered manner to Council because right now they expect the whole thing. This tiered manner is taking issues that are thought to be more urgent to be looked at and getting those to a public hearing setting so those discussions can be had whether folks are interested in moving forward with them now or moving forward with them later. General consensus is to push most of the code changes, at least significant things until after the Comprehensive Plan is complete. That is not the direction we have from Council at the moment and that will have to evolve.

Chairman Stoneking said PLACE could help propose ways to manage those conditions by diagramming; talk about how to measure a building, slope, adjacencies, and different zoning. Those things need to be flushed out.

A sub-committee was formed of Chairman Stoneking and Mr. Henry to propose different diagrams of heights of buildings for the Planning Commission code Audit.

A sub-committee was formed of Ms. Lloyd and Mr. Josey to talk to Parks and Recreation Director, Brian Daly, regarding the downtown mall.

Adjourn 2:00 p.m.