

Planning and Zoning Commission Work Session Minutes
February 22, 2024
Conference Room 1A & 1B - 1st Floor City Hall

Call to Order

Commissioners Present – Carroll, Geuea Jones, Ford MacMann, Loe, Placier, Stanton, and Wilson
Commissioners Absent –Dunn
Staff Present –Ahamed, Kraus, Palmer, Teddy, Thompson, Zenner

Introductions

Approval of Agenda

Meeting agenda adopted unanimously

Approval of Minutes

The February 8, 2024 work session minutes were approved unanimously.

Old Business

A. UDC Text Amendment – Small Lots

Mr. Zenner introduced the topic explaining that staff has incorporated revisions (highlighted within the staff memo) relating to the proposed dimensional standards for small and medium-sized lots. He noted that in essence the maximum ground floor area limitations were collapsed from four categories to just two and that the permitted area for the lower tier of lot sizes was the approximate average of all four original lot size tiers. He noted that with that the proposed consolidation and increase in allowed area, the smallest possible lot (3000 sq. ft.), would still not exceed the maximum buildable area for that sized lot. He further noted that he did not change the ground floor area for the second tier of lots given the separation between that tier and a standard 5000 sq. ft. lot was believed appropriate to ensure a “stepped” approach to increased development intensity on the smaller lots.

There was general discussion on the revisions to the dimensional standards table. There was back and forth relating to the underlying methodology that produced the square footage limitations. Concerns were expressed relating to the application of the new standards with respect to greenfield and infill development. Mr. Zenner noted that the prior revisions to address lot consolidations principally impacting the already built environment (i.e. infill) would be impacted by this amendment if passed since the proposed lots contained within the prior amendment would become legal, albeit existing lots not considered “legal” would need to pursue platting as authorized by the most recent UDC changes.

Mr. Zenner noted that it may be possible to create a clean break between infill development and greenfield development by including a provision within the enabling ordinance of the new provisions that they only applied to lots created after the effective date of the new provisions. He noted this would be similar to what is done for determining “legal lot” status today. Ms. Thompson expressed caution in pursuing such a distinction given that it may make matters more complicated. There was additional Commission discussion that addressing the issue of integration of small/medium lots into “infill” areas would hopefully be addressed by the consultant currenting looking at the “central city”.

After additional discussion, the Commission was polled to determine if what was being presented by staff in the dimensional standards table was unacceptable. The majority of the Commission expressed support of the standards presented and directed staff to pursue forward with the additional UDC revisions needed to make small/medium lots function, specifically from a subdivision platting perspective.

Mr. Zenner then discussed the proposed definitions needed within the UDC to make sure the terms “buildable area”, “building envelope” and “Floor Area Ratio (FAR)” were clearly understood. Mr. Zenner noted that “buildable area” was already defined in the UDC and its definition was not to change. He further expressed that “building envelope” was used by staff interchangeably with “buildable area”; however, really should be defined since it refers to the three-dimensional influences of lot development not just the two-dimensions associated with “buildable area”. Furthermore, inclusion of a definition for “building envelope” was supported by the fact a definition for FAR would be added to the UDC since it also was expressing a three-dimensional aspect of lot improvement.

Commissioners were supportive of the continued use of the definition of “buildable area” and the proposed definition for “building envelope”. There was considerable discussion with respect to the definition for “Floor Area Ratio (FAR)”. Concerns were expressed by the Commission that the definition did not specifically draw the distinction between “gross” or “net” floor area. Commissioners noted that the UDC had a definition for “floor area, gross” and a definition for “total floor area” within Chapter 26 of the City Code [Taxation]. Commissioner requested that the definition of FAR be revised to match the definition found within the UDC. Mr. Zenner noted that he would look into how the definition could be modified.

As part of the discussion with the definitions, Mr. Zenner noted that the City did not review single or two-family home construction plans. As such, the definition of FAR would need to take this into account least there be an expectation that permit staff be required to obtain information that is not readily provided today. Mr. Zenner noted that as with many text changes, minor tweaks to internal process are sometimes necessary. The inclusion of total square footage on a plot plan would be an example of such a tweak, but is not believed to be something insurmountable to ensure that the introduction of a FAR factor can be successfully integrated into the regulations and applied on small and medium lots in the future.

In an effort to define next steps with this amendment, the Chairman asked if the Commission was ready to let staff move onto its further work with preparing possible subdivision regulation revisions relating to this topic. Concerns were expressed that an insufficient amount of visualization had been prepared to fully consider the impacts of the proposed dimensional standards. A request was made for additional graphics. Mr. Zenner noted that Mr. Kunz was working on refining what he had presented previously; however, was diverted to other projects relating to his transportation planner responsibilities. Mr. Zenner noted that staff could bring forward an illustration at the next meeting that would hopefully address the concerns expressed. Commissioners noted that this would be acceptable.

Having concluded its discussion on the topic of small lots, Mr. Zenner and Commissioners took the opportunity thank Ms. Thompson for her contributions to the Commission and wished her well in her new role as the Director of the City’s Housing and Neighborhood Services Department.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 6:45 pm.

ACTION(S) TAKEN:

Motion made to approve the agenda as submitted by Commission Carroll and seconded by Commissioner Wilson. Motion made to approve the February 8, 2024 work session minutes as presented by Commissioner Loe and seconded by Commissioner Wilson.