

Planning and Zoning Commission Work Session Minutes
April 22, 2021
Conference Room 1A & 1B - 1st Floor City Hall

I. Call to Order

Commissioners Present – Burns, Carroll, Geuea-Jones, Loe, MacMann, Rushing, Russell, and Toohey

Commissioners Absent – Stanton

Staff Present – Kelley, Smith, Teddy, Thompson, and Zenner.

II. Introductions

III. Approval of Agenda

Meeting Agenda adopted as presented unanimously.

IV. Approval of Minutes

April 8, 2021 work session minutes adopted as presented unanimously, with one abstention.

V. Old Business

M-BP Zoning District: Intent and Uses

Mr. Zenner introduced the topic by reminding the attendees that Mr. Paul Land initially approached the Commission in February with a request to look at how Light Industry was regulated within the M-BP (Business/Industrial Park) Zoning District. At the Commission’s direction, Mr. Zenner reached out to Mr. Land with an invitation to present his request to the Planning and Zoning Commission at this evening’s work session. Mr. Zenner mentioned that the next round of UDC Text Amendments may begin in June. He handed the presentation over to Mr. Land and introduced additional guest presenters, Jay Burchfield and Ben Ross.

Mr. Land began by saying this request has been brought forward as the Commission was currently looking into other UDC amendments and revisions following its adoption in 2017. His request centered on the point that light industry uses are not permitted “by-right” in the M-BP zone which he stated was prohibitive for businesses wishing to locate within a business/industrial park.

He stated that the conditional use aspect creates a second step in the planning and zoning process for a prospective business or industry. Mr. Land gave the example that under current policies a business would need to seek a zoning map amendment to rezone a property to M-BP and then subsequently request a CUP (Conditional Use Permit), both of which would require a public hearing and council approval. [Staff should note it is currently permitted to seek a rezoning and a CUP request concurrently and hold one public hearing thereby eliminating the two-step process]. Mr. Land indicated that this two-step process is politicized, intimidating to prospective businesses, and largely cost prohibitive.

The presenters relayed that they had reached out to real estate competitors, the Loop CID, the Columbia Area Jobs Foundation, and various construction contractors regarding this request. Mr. Land referenced a few of the organizations and business that supported this request. The Commission questioned which organizations did not support the request. The Commission indicated their understanding was that the Loop CID was not interested in large-scale light industry on the business loop corridor.

Mr. Burchfield and Mr. Ross discussed various sites in the City where light industry and other uses are currently compatible or may be compatible. LeMone Industrial Park was presented as the prototypical example of a successful business/industrial park. At this location, the presenters stated that the site contains many compatible office and light industry uses but is short of vacant space. Low vacancy for appropriate light industry sites in Columbia was a key theme of Mr. Land's presentation.

The group presented highlights from REDI's ongoing discussions and projects involving prospective businesses. These 18 projects total 462,000 square feet of industrial space (averaging ~27,000) and are known by aliases as the prospective businesses wish to remain anonymous related to such factors as business competition and the aforementioned political process. Several of these projects have been unable to find sites in Columbia and have moved on to other cities.

Examples of potential sites with zoning conflicts included Beyond Meat's location at Commerce Court; the former Ellis Fischel Cancer Center; the State Farm area on S. Providence; the I-70 and Lake of the Woods Exit area; the US-63 and New Haven Road SE Corner area adjoining Lenoir Woods; the US-63 and Vandiver Drive area; and Officer Mechanical at 2306 Oakland Gravel Road.

After hearing the presentation, the Commission asked the presenters why they or another developer wouldn't request a rezoning to IG if they wanted to permit Light Industry by-right. Mr. Land replied that IG is not often supported by the Commission or planning staff. He added that the public is very sensitive to industrial zoning due to its negative connotations. Additionally, he reiterated that the rezoning and CUP process is intimidating and cost-prohibitive for prospective developers. Mr. Zenner asked how this request would resolve the low vacancy issue for industrial land. The Commission mentioned that it may be necessary to look at the appropriateness of the uses within each zoning district as detailed in the Permitted Use Table.

The Commission agreed that it does appear inconsistent that a business/industrial park district does not permit Light Industry by right but countered that the appropriate solution for the nomenclature inconsistency would be to simply omit 'industrial' from the name of the district as that may be more consistent with the intent of the district. Mr. Land replied that the main issue at hand was the current two-step process regarding zoning and the conditional use permits for Light Industry uses.

The Commission highlighted the issue where Light Industry and Mechanical/Construction Contractors are only permitted by-right in one zoning district and suggested that the appropriate course of action may be to design a new zoning district intended for Light Industrial and/or develop use-specific standards for Light Industry to permit the use more broadly- similar

to the Artisan Industry exercise. Mr. Zenner concurred and added that a potential amendment on this topic could potentially be included with the next round of UDC Text Amendments in June.

Mr. Land thanked the Commission for their time and for the opportunity to provide recommendations. He looked forward to continued collaboration and potential amendments to the UDC.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned approximately 6:52 pm

ACTION(S) TAKEN:

Motion made by Commissioner Russell, seconded by Commissioner Toohey, to approve the agenda as submitted. Made motion by Commissioner Russell, seconded by Commissioner Toohey, to approve the April 8, 2021 work session minutes as presented.