

Planning and Zoning Commission Work Session Minutes
March 7, 2024
Conference Room 1A & 1B - 1st Floor City Hall

Call to Order

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

Introductions

Approval of Agenda

Meeting agenda adopted unanimously

Approval of Minutes

The February 22, 2024 work session minutes were approved unanimously.

Old Business

A. UDC Text Amendment – Small Lots

Mr. Zenner introduced the topic and explained the content of the staff memo and noted that Mr. Palmer and Mr. Kunz had produced the Sketchup illustrations attached to the work session agenda. He further noted that post-packet production that Mr. Kunz had been preparing a 3-D version of the Sketchup illustrations to better capture how the proposed small lot area dimensional standards would impact the built environment. Mr. Zenner reiterated that what was to be presented did not alter the lot widths approved in the sample development (Northridge Cottages), but rather applied the dimensional standards that were agreed to at the last work session and shown within the staff memo.

Following this introduction, Mr. Kunz and Mr. Palmer provided an explanation of the four (4) different Sketchup illustrations/views of Northridge Cottages if the proposed small-lot dimensional standards were applied. Mr. Kunz noted the ground floor square footages shown were consistent with the lot size proposed as were the FAR ratio maximums. For variety purpose, he chose to illustrate the ground floor coverage and far in several different configurations which illustrated the inherent flexibility that would be afforded a developer in constructing compliant housing as envisioned on the small lots.

There was general Commission discussion relating to what was presented. Mr. Palmer noted that if the proposed alterations to Northridge Cottages were compared with the adjoining development there was very little difference in lot coverage. Basically, if the structures in the adjoining development were rotated 90 degrees the two developments would be very similar; however, given the reduced lot size and lot frontage requirements more lots are possible within the Northridge development. What makes the development similar in character even though the Northridge lots are smaller is the application of the proposed ground floor limitations and FAR ratio related to the size of the lots. Mr. Kunz discussed and showed graphically what would happen between the two development if none of the proposed constraints were applied.

Mr. Zenner asked if the visualization had helped the Commissioners in understanding the possible impacts that the proposed dimensional standards may create on existing development. He noted that from the visualization it appeared the proposed standards will offer an alternative in lot creation and control possible negative outcomes. To further minimize negative outcomes additional use-specific standards could be developed which was what part of the next steps would be in completing the staff and Commission work on this proposal. He also noted that given agreement on the proposed dimensional standards the staff could move forward in identifying the necessary subdivision regulation changes need to ensure creation of the new lot typology could be effectively implemented.

Commissioner noted the visualization was helpful. There was general discussion of the acceptability of the proposed dimensional standards. There was some confusion expressed that it was some Commissioner's understand that the issue of the acceptability of the dimensional standards was already approved. Mr. Zenner noted he wanted to make sure before moving on.

There was discussion about the manner in which the ground floor coverage was calculated. Mr. Zenner explained what was originally proposed and how that was modified to reflect the two groups of lot sizes that had the limitations as shown in the table contained within the work session memo. It was recommended that the ground floor coverage be converted to a percentage of the total lot area thereby allowing the ground floor coverage to increase as lot size increased. The FAR restriction would remain unchanged within each of the lot size groups. Mr. Zenner noted that he would look at making the requested change such that there would be a gradual "ramp-up" of allowed ground floor cover as the lot size increased within each lot size range.

There was also discussion about the historical zoning provisions and how back in the 1936 zoning code a second dwelling was allowed on all residential lots without the need for subdivision. This discussion was offered as a way of suggesting that what was being proposed in the way of smaller lots was not entirely new for the City's zoning code, but rather a different way of approaching the issue of increased density. Additionally, it offered a possible alternative to addressing "infill" parcels in the same way that was being discussed for "greenfield" development.

Mr. Zenner noted that given the proposed text change's radical departure from the standard form of development the community has become accustomed and the concerns expressed with current development proposals, the benefits of allowing small lot development will need to be presented in a non-threatening manner to garner the greatest amount of support. One method of doing so is to illustrate what has historically been permitted, but at the same time showing how advancements in the regulatory processes can successfully address perceived threats if allowed today.

There was additional discussion on if the 3000-5000 sq. ft. lot sizes should be proposed within the R-1 district. Mr. Zenner noted that the purpose of this amendment was to increase lot diversity. Removing this element from the proposal would undercut that objective. He noted that the work done thus far on creating the lot category should be retained and if Council so chose to remove it from consideration in the final amendment based on opposition that would be possible. Mr. Zenner further noted that any future amendments to the subdivision regulations could be categorized by lot sizes as well as any use-specific standards. Finally, Mr. Zenner noted that the work of the Central City Consultant may offer prospective on how to address character-related elements that would help harmonize future small lot development into the existing community context.

To ensure that the staff had clear direction on how it should proceed given the concern and ideas expressed, the Chairman as for a vote to have staff proceed with using the presented dimensional standards that would retain the 3000-5000 sq. ft. lot type. Commission indicated support of moving forward with what was presented. Mr. Zenner noted that he would begin working on assessment of the subdivision regulations and that Commissioner should begin to consider possible use-specific standards.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 6:55 pm.

ACTION(S) TAKEN:

Motion made to approve the agenda as submitted by Commission Dunn and seconded by Commissioner MacMann. Motion made to approve the February 22, 2024 work session minutes as presented by Commissioner MacMann and seconded by Commissioner Carroll.