

Planning and Zoning Commission Work Session Minutes
March 21, 2024
Conference Room 1A & 1B - 1st Floor City Hall

Call to Order

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

Introductions

Approval of Agenda

Meeting agenda adopted unanimously

Approval of Minutes

The March 7, 2024 work session minutes were approved unanimously.

Old Business

A. UDC Text Amendment – Small Lots

Mr. Zenner introduced the topic and referenced the staff memo that was part of the work session packet. He noted that discussion would start with the second topic in the memo (i.e.; graduated ground floor area) which was believed to be a bit more challenging. Mr. Zenner then noted he would circle back to the definitions discussion that was not covered during the March 7 work session.

Mr. Zenner explained the staff concerns and challenges with what he understood the Commission was seeking within the graduated ground floor area calculation. He noted that to keep the proposed regulations simple, predictable, and easier to explain to future users, staff thought it best to keep the calculation at the proposed limits. The limits were initially established using approximately 32% of the total lot area of each of the four lot size ranges (3000-3499, 3500-3999, 4000-4499, and 4500-5000). After initial concern expressed by the Commission, staff consolidated the four ranges into two (3000-3999 and 4000-4999), calculated the average square footage between the four ranges, and then assigned 1250 sq. ft. (approximately mid-point) to the lower band and 1450 sq. ft. to the higher band.

Commissioners explained that what they were concerned about was that an applicant would make the lot 1 sq. ft. larger to gain the greater ground floor area which in essence may remove any incentive to construction homes on the smaller lots. Upon making this statement, there was additional discussion about the underlying premise for having the ground floor coverage requirements in the first place. Mr. Zenner noted that the limitation was to ensure that home scale was proportionate to available lot area and building area. Commissioners recognized this purpose; however, still noted that a more flexible sliding scale would better address the matter.

There was further discussion with respect to how the original ground floor calculation was computed. Commissioners recommended that creating a flat 35% percent lot coverage with the opportunity to seek a bonus may be a better approach. Mr. Zenner noted he'd have to look at what the actual percentage should be such that lots smaller than 5000 sq. ft. would not be permit greater ground floor area than a standard 5000 sq. ft. lot such that conventional lot development be discouraged. Commissioners agreed that evaluating this impact was appropriate.

With respect to the potential for a bonus in ground floor area, it was recommended that a maximum of 40% may be appropriate if such lots were to utilize traditional setback standards or standards similar to those found within the UDC relating to solar or conservation subdivisions. Mr. Zenner stated he would look at the

possible standards that could be utilized from these existing provisions. He also recommended that an increase in ground floor coverage could be tied to “use-specific standards” applicable to the newly created lot sizes.

Having gained the added clarity on the Commission’s desired outcome relating to the ground floor area limitations, Mr. Zenner moved onto the unfinished business of definitions. He noted that the Commission’s prior discussion had raised concern with the term “floor area”. Mr. Zenner noted the UDC and the City’s Taxation provisions contained definition relating to this term. The UDC’s definition was specific to uses within the floodplain regulation. Given the narrow nature of the UDC’s definition Mr. Zenner noted that the Taxation definition was more appropriate. He further noted that bolded text within the Taxation definition would exclude all accessory structures (i.e. ADU’s, detached garages, and sheds) from counting toward a lot’s maximum FAR.

There was general discussion on this point. It was noted that by counting everything within the foundation walls would also include a basement. There was some concern with this; however, it was noted that such an inclusion is how property is taxed and if a different definition was created it would likely result in more confusion than clarity. A question was asked about the instance of a carport being attached to a dwelling in lieu of a garage. Mr. Zenner noted that he’d have to research that question, but thought given the exterior supports of the carport (holding up its roof) were not on a foundation wall such area may not count toward the dwelling’s FAR. There was also discussion on how this definition would impact the new style of lots that could accommodate an ADU.

Mr. Zenner noted that Commissioner Loe raised a question at the March 7 Regular Planning Commission meeting when discussion was occurring on the ADU amendments about a statement in the work session memo in which it stated ADUs were not being permitted on small lots. To clarify, Mr. Zenner noted that the statement was meant to apply to lots smaller than 5000 sq. ft.. So with respect to how a “medium-sized” lot using the reduced setbacks would be impacted by the proposed Taxation definition of “floor area” it was noted that an ADU of any size could be constructed on such a lot provided the total ground floor area limits that were just discussed were not being exceeded.

Given this clarification, the Commissioners agreed to support the definition of “Floor Area Ratio” based upon the Taxation definition of “Total Floor Area”. Having resolved this matter Mr. Zenner recapped the other definitions that were discussed and agreed upon previously to ensure everyone understood that the UDC would now cover all aspects of lots with respect to the lot sizes – building area, building envelope, and Floor Area Ratio.

Mr. Zenner noted that he would be providing the Commissioners with the previously distributed form-based code provisions relating to the “detached” frontage type as a primer for potential “use-specific standards” that could be considered applicable to new small and medium lot subdivisions. He further noted that the City’s consultant preparing design guidelines for the Central City Study Area may also have standards that could be incorporated in the future. Finally, Mr. Zenner noted he would continue to work to identify UDC subdivision standard revisions to ensure effective integration of the small/medium lots into the built environment.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 6:55 pm.

ACTION(S) TAKEN:

Motion made to approve the agenda as submitted by Commission Ford and seconded by Commissioner Carroll.
Motion made to approve the March 7, 2024 work session minutes as presented by Commissioner Carroll and seconded by Commissioner Ford.