

**Planning and Zoning Commission Work Session Minutes
October 21, 2021
Conference Room 1A & 1B - 1st Floor City Hall**

I. Call to Order

Commissioners Present – Burns , Carroll, Stanton, Geuea-Jones, Loe, Rushing, Placier, and MacMann
Commissioners Absent – Kimbell
Staff Present – C. Smith, Kelley, Zenner, Thompson, Teddy

II. Introductions

III. Approval of Agenda

Meeting Agenda adopted unanimously.

IV. Approval of Minutes

October 7, 2021 work session minutes adopted as presented with one abstention.

V. New Business

A. UDC Revision - Maximum Parking Provisions

Mr. Smith introduced the topic of maximum parking regulations as it pertains to the use category 'Light Vehicle Service and Repair'. He noted that Planning and Zoning has been directed by City Council to research current business trends after a recent Board of Adjustment case in which Dobbs Tire and Auto Center had been denied a variance to exceed 200% of the of minimum required parking for their facility.

He reiterated that the purpose of including a maximum parking limit in the Unified Development Code (UDC) is to put a finite cap on parking constructed on a site as parking, when left unregulated, can often exceed what is reasonably needed on a site. Parking is expensive to construct which can be reflected in the price of goods and it can take up physical space which can contribute to sprawl and inefficient use of infrastructure. He noted the UDC requires developers to construct parking within a narrow range of 100% to 200% of the minimum and that consideration should be given that this range is accurate.

Mr. Smith presented the parking requirements from the prior zoning code utilized before the adoption of the UDC in 2017. He presented examples of service centers that had been constructed in Columbia under the previous zoning ordinance and noted several would not conform to the requirements of the UDC if built today as each exceeded the maximum permitted without a Board of Adjustment variance.

Commissioners inquired as to why these service centers needed so many parking spaces. Staff and the Commission discussed the operations and scheduling of service centers. They noted that a portion of the additional parking desired by this type of use is likely for temporary and/or long-term storage of vehicles which is not intended whereas parking requirements are intended to provide parking for employees and customers. Commissioners were concerned with long-term storage of vehicles and inquired about an inoperable vehicle ordinance. Mr. Smith stated use-specific standards could be provided to account for sales, warehousing of cars, and other potential concerns in specific zoning districts.

Some Commissioners expressed concern with amending the UDC at the request of one business. Mr. Smith and Mr. Zenner reminded the Commission that the purpose of this discussion was to research

current business trends of service centers and to ensure that the required parking is accurately reflected in the UDC as requested by City Council.

Mr. Smith continued his presentation noting that there are several alternatives and provisions that allow for reducing parking but none that allow increased parking. He provided examples of other municipal codes in relation to service center parking requirements noting that Columbia appeared to be on the lower side of minimum required parking which in turn results in a lower maximum being allowed. In comparing parking requirements of various cities, he reminded the Commission that few cities had maximum parking provisions. He also noted that one example city, Fayetteville, AR, did not have a minimum parking regulation and instead relied upon developers to construct parking as necessary.

Mr. Smith concluded his presentation offering two draft text amendments; one which authorized the [Community Development] Director the ability to grant relief from the absolute maximum parking requirements up to a limit if certain criteria were met, similar to the current authority to grant relief to minimum parking, and another method which more directly addressed the parking requirements for 'Light Vehicle Service or Repair' use within the on-site parking table.

Some Commissioners stated that members of the community desire compact and walkable development but excess parking is counter to that desire and made reference to the aforementioned effects excess parking may cause. Staff and the Commission discussed the parking demand and traffic patterns associated with Columbia Public Schools (CPS). Mr. Zenner noted that CPS has frequently requested Board of Adjustment relief and that the [Community Development] Department has frequently asked CPS to work with staff to proactively address that matter rather than seek recurring variances.

Chairman Loe polled the Commissioner's on their preferred approach for addressing the matter at hand. Commission's unanimously supported the more focused approach of amending the parking table to revise the method by which required parking was calculated. There was general consensus that calculating minimum required parking using "bay doors" and "employees" was appropriate. The Commission directed Mr. Smith to preparing a formal text amendment based on that concept and the comments provided during the work session. Mr. Zenner noted that staff would advertise the public hearing for the November 18 Commission meeting and that an interim draft of the text change would be distributed during the November 4 work session for informational purposes, but would not be a topic for lengthy discussion on the agenda.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned approximately 7:05 pm

ACTION(S) TAKEN:

Motion made by Commissioner Geuea-Jones, seconded by Commissioner Carroll, to approve the agenda as presented. Motion passed unanimously. Made motion by Commissioner MacMann, seconded by Commissioner Geuea-Jones, to approve the October 7, 2021 work session minutes as presented. Motion passed unanimously with one abstention (MacMann).