



City of Columbia, Missouri

Meeting Minutes

Planning and Zoning Commission

Thursday, January 18, 2024
5:30 PM

Work Session

Conference Rooms
1A/B
Columbia City Hall
701 E. Broadway

I. CALL TO ORDER

Present: 7 - Sara Loe, Michael MacMann, Sharon Geuea Jones, Peggy Placier, Shannon Wilson, Zack Dunn and Matt Ford

Excused: 2 - Anthony Stanton and Valerie Carroll

II. INTRODUCTIONS

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Meeting agenda adopted unanimously

Approve as submitted

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

December 21, 2023 Work Session

The December 21 work session minutes were approved unanimously with Commissioner MacMann abstaining.

Approve as presented

V. NEW BUSINESS

A. Assigned Council Topics

Discussion of this item occurred during "Staff Comments" at the Planning Commission's Regular 7 pm meeting. Staff noted that the Council had requested consideration of 3 amendments to the ADU regulations within the UDC. Mr. Zenner noted this topic would be discussed at the upcoming February 8 work session and that discussion on the text amendment for small lots would be temporarily suspended.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

A. UDC Text Amendment - Small Lots

Mr. Zenner introduced the topic and began by discussing the changes that were prepared following the conclusion of the December 21, 2023 work session. He noted that cancelling the January 4 work session had allowed he and Mr. Kunz to further dig into the lot data and develop an approach to integrating the proposed small lots into the R-1, R-2, and R-MF districts. The proposed approach contained two parts each intended to address underlying concerns the Commission had expressed in earlier meetings.

Mr. Zenner explained that staff did not believe a specific lot coverage maximum was necessary given the maximum lot cover (aka the “building envelope”) was defined by setbacks applied to a lot. He continued to explain that staff was not proposing that the “cottage” setbacks previously agreed upon would be modified, but rather suggested that a modification could potentially be implemented if an individual wanted more building area than what staff believed to be appropriate on the proposed small lots.

Mr. Zenner then explained that the staff was proposing two factors - maximum ground floor area and floor area ratios as tools that would be implemented to control the lot coverage and size of a dwelling on a proposed small lot. He explained that the ground floor area calculations were arrived at following an observation made by Commissioner Loe. The observation pointed out that based on previous discussion it appeared that a greater amount of ground floor area could be constructed on a small lot than a traditional R-2 lot. If the small lot standards were pursued without examining this issue it may result in the traditional R-2 district being less likely to be used for single-family development.

Mr. Zenner explained how staff calculated the maximum ground floor area for lots less than 5,000 sq. ft. to ensure the percentage of lot coverage was approximately equal to that of a traditional R-2 lot based on the standard setbacks within the UDC. He pointed out that due to the reduction in the setbacks proposed for small lots the actual “building envelope” was larger which partially explained why ground floor area was greater when comparing the two types of lots. He noted that staff calculations found that the building envelope of an R-2 lot was approximately 30% of its 5,000 sq. ft. The 30% lot coverage was then applied the proposed small lot groupings to arrive at the maximum ground floor area that was shown with the proposed dimensional standards table included in the staff report.

Mr. Zenner noted that once the proposed lot size exceeded the 5,000 sq. ft. and transitioned into what is being considered a “medium lot”, the maximum ground floor area proposed for each lot grouping was based on the building envelope allowed for that particular lot size when standard setbacks were applied. Mr. Zenner noted that Table 3 attached to the staff report provided the breakdown between small & medium lots with and without reduced setbacks for all proposed lots at 500 sq. ft. intervals been 3,000 sq. ft. to 7,000 sq. ft.

Mr. Zenner then explain the second factor that staff was proposing that dealt with floor area ratios (FAR). He explained what FAR is and how FAR it is calculated. He also noted that Mr. Knuz had crafted a real cool formula that could be placed on the City’s website for people to use to calculate FAR on specific building sites. Mr. Zenner noted that while really cool and more advance than the crude calculations presented in the staff report and Table 3, simplicity was what he was going for at this point.

With respect to the FAR calculations, it was staff belief that they would result in greater housing style diversity. Additionally, using a FAR calculation to control structure size would ensure that on small and medium lots there could never be a structure constructed that was greater than that allowed in a traditional zoning district. Furthermore, given that small and medium lots are being afforded the opportunity to use lesser setbacks the added control was believed to be reasonable.

Having completed his explanation of the proposed revised structure of the

amendment Mr. Zenner sought Commissioner feedback. There was general Commission discussion which was supportive of the restructured amendment. Commissioner's noted that it would be easier to explain to the public and it afforded some controls to curb abuse and construction disproportionate on small or medium sized lots.

Concern was expressed that the limitation on ground floor area may restrict development opportunities and that the groupings were too "granular". There was also a question seeking clarification if the limitations proposed were chosen to recreate the patterns of existing development or to allow for a different form of development to occur. Several examples of existing "cottage" projects having greater development densities than that proposed on lots of equal size where offered as a counterpoint to Mr. Zenner's presentation.

Mr. Zenner noted that to address the issue of "granularity" the breakdown of maximum ground floor area for the four categories of lots less than 5,000 sq. ft. could be compressed and the average of the four floor areas be calculated. This would potentially allow more floor area on the smallest lots, but when considering a 3000 sq. ft. lot only permits 1,260 sq. ft. construction any possible bump would be self-regulating. An individual cannot build more than the "building envelope" allows. The Commissioner like this idea in that it creates more opportunities, but at the same time simplifies the proposed regulations. Associated with this discussion was the recommendation that "building envelope" be defined within the UDC. Mr. Zenner noted that would not be an issue. He would work on preparing a definition prior to the next work session.

Mr. Zenner further noted that in the spirit of "carrots and sticks", the proposed regulations could incorporate "use-specific standards" which would allow for adjustment to ground floor limitations or FAR if an applicant agreed to use standard setbacks within the underlying district. He further noted to ensure construction did not get too far out of whack, a percentage on the increase could be established. It was further suggested potentially considering a reduction in required parking may be an option to ensure that building sizes were kept small and the goal of increasing more affordable construction could be promoted. In making this recommendation, the Commission and staff were reminded that with ADUs of 800 sq. ft. or less the UDC only required a single parking space instead of the traditional 2 per single-family dwelling.

Mr. Kunz distributed a graphic prepared that was intended to help Commissioners visual the discussing and tabular information that Mr. Zenner presented. Given the lack of time, it was agreed that Commissioners should look the materials over and prepared to offer comments on it at the next work session.

VII. NEXT MEETING DATE - February 8, 2024 @ 5:30 (tentative)

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 6:58 pm.

Move to adjourn