

Planning and Zoning Commission Work Session Minutes
March 10, 2022
Conference Room 1A & 1B - 1st Floor City Hall

Call to Order

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

Introductions

Approval of Agenda

Meeting agenda adopted unanimously.

Approval of Minutes

February 24, 2022 work session minutes adopted as presented.

Old Business

A. UDC Text Changes – Phase 4

Mr. Smith introduced the topic and explained the purpose of the discussion tonight was “restart” and “reacquaint” the Commission with text amendment topics that were put on hold at the end of last year when the Commission was asked to focus on parking for auto repair and gas stations. He noted that given that issue was addressed the Commission could re-engage in several of the other topics previously presented. Mr. Smith noted that there were several topics that staff considered “ripe” for consideration given recent Commission discussions and referenced the work session memo that was prepared as a starting point.

He began his presentation by introducing the topic of “Drive-thru Window” placement. He noted that given several recent cases and the alternative ways the Commission had addressed how to handle the requirements staff felt this was a very timely topic to consider. He gave an overview of the standards from the UDC and staff’s interpretation of what the code was trying to achieve. He noted that site characteristics and the drive-thru restaurant’s typical layout often complicated matters when trying to achieve compliance. He showed several local examples of non-compliant and compliant drive-thru window placements and noted he had done some preliminary research.

There was general Commission discussion on the subject and several questions were asked. There was general agreement that the placement of a drive-thru window did need to consider what the adjoining land use was (i.e. prohibiting such next to residential uses or zoning). There was also discussion regarding the development of a potential set of defined criteria that was not subjective that would better establish what the community objective of the screening requirement was and when a design exception (PD projects) or a zoning variance (straight zoned projects) would be required.

Given the discussion on this topic was wide ranging, Mr. Smith asked for clarification on what the Commission would desire the staff to further investigate and come back to them with in the way of a proposed text amendment. He asked for votes on three “themes” that appeared to be common throughout the discuss which included flexibility in window location, regulation specific to the location

of a window when adjoining residential property, and regulations that addressed site layout issues such as stacking lanes that may block drive aisles. The Commission made motions to approve that staff perform the necessary research on these themes and come back at a later meeting with proposed text amendments.

Mr. Smith noted that there were other topics contained within the work session memo that he desired to cover; however, given the time constraints and the other agenda items he would yield the remaining work session time to the next topic. He thanked the Commissioners for their contributions.

B. Comprehensive Plan Public Outreach – Research and Recommendations

Mr. Zenner and Mr. Cantin provided an overview of the topic and noted that following the December 9, 2021 work session meeting there was additional internal discussion regarding the engagement processes used by peer communities to which the City of Columbia’s upcoming plan should attempt to utilize. Mr. Zenner noted that many of the processes previously identified as worthy of emulation were undertaken prior to the COVID 19 pandemic occurring. As such, he asked Mr. Cantin to perform additional research to determine if any planning activities similar to that the City was preparing to engage in occurred. The outcome of that additional research did not yield any significant findings.

As a result of these limited findings, it will be imperative that the chosen consultant to assist in the engagement phase of the upcoming Plan update have extensive experience in hybrid meeting formats. Mr. Cantin further reiterated the importance of the concept of “Plan Ambassadors” as the bedrock of the updating process for keeping the community engaged.

Mr. Zenner further added that the Health Department had recently presented a public engagement process to the City Council showing an estimated budget of over \$200, 000 that would be managed by two full-time employees whose sole job would be to manage engagement. He noted that engagement strategies would likely be underway prior to the beginning of the Comp. Plan update and the success of the proposed approach could be used as a model as well as a budget measurement tool. He noted the 2013 Comp. Plan was completed with a budget of only \$130,000 which likely was not sufficient to meet current community engagement expectations.

Mr. Zenner noted that the update being provided at this evening’s meeting was to inform the Commission of staff’s additional research efforts since December. He noted that to ensure the appropriate steps were taken to have resources allocated for the FY 2023 budget staff would need to be identify a general cost for services and then be prepared to present those costs to the City Manager during budget discussion in July. Mr. Zenner noted that an RFP for consultant services would likely be issued in late 2022 with an anticipated engagement start date of January 2023.

There was general Commission discussion relating to the topic. Commissioner expressed a desire that local firms be included in potential RFP applications and that any chosen consultant provide project management as well as technical expertise in facilitating completion of the Plan update. Concern was expressed that without the consultant taking an active role in the process the staff and the “Plan Ambassadors” may not be capable of yielding the intended results. The Commissioners acknowledged the timeline and budget to effectively perform the update process.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned approximately 7:00 pm

ACTION(S) TAKEN:

Motion made by Commissioner Geuea-Jones, seconded by Commissioner MacMann, to approve the agenda as presented. Motion passed unanimously. Made motion by Commissioner Geuea-Jones, seconded by Commissioner Kimball, to approve the February 24, 2022 work session minutes as presented. Motion passed unanimously.