

City of Lake Forest Park - Planning Commission
Draft Regular Meeting Notes: December 1, 2015
17425 Ballinger Way NE—EOC Room

Planning Commissioners present: Chair Ray Holmdahl; Vice-chair Jon Lebo; Semra Riddle; Connie Holloway; Joel Paisner; and Doug Gochanour

Staff and others present: Steve Bennett, Planning Director; and Jake Tracy, Planning Intern; Mike Dee, Resident; Fred Brown, Resident; John Sims, Resident

Planning Commissioners absent: Richard Saunders; Rocky Oliver; Jean Maixner

Call to order: 7:05 PM

Approval of Meeting Agenda: Cmr. Gochanour moved to approve the agenda. The motion was seconded by Cmr. Riddle and approved unanimously.

Approval of Meeting Notes:

August 25th, 2015 - Cmr. Paisner moved to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded by Cmr. Gochanour and approved unanimously.

September 2nd, 2015 - Cmr. Paisner moved to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded by Cmr. Gochanour and approved unanimously.

Public Comment:

John Sims expressed interest in building cottage housing for seniors on his properties and on properties he is considering buying and stated that he wanted to hear how the process is working its way through the Planning Commission.

Fred Brown expressed that he hopes the cottage housing regulations will encourage collective site planning rather than a disconnected feel (individual homes putting up fences, etc.). He went on to state that he doesn't want them to end up looking like standard subdivisions and that the Planning Commission should consider minimum numbers of houses on cottage housing properties to help meet GMA growth targets.

Mike Dee reminded the Commission that the meetings of the Planning Commission and Transportation Commission conflict and noted that the meeting was improperly noticed on the website. He expressed support for cottage housing and also for a community and senior center. He also asked about how his corrections to the comp plan update have been handled. Steve Bennett said that he appreciated Mr. Dee's detailed review of the document and that Mr. Dee should bring any unresolved comments to Council's Dec 10th public hearing.

Meeting Dates:

Cmr. Riddle made a motion to schedule the regular Planning Commission meeting on the second Tuesday of the month beginning in 2016. Cmr. Holmdahl seconded and the motion was approved unanimously.

Old Business: Comprehensive Plan Update

Carrie Lewith Zoning Code Amendment Proposal

Steve Bennett gave background on the Carrie Lewith property and their zoning code amendment proposal to allow the property to become a conforming use and also add more units. This would allow clustered housing units without a subdivision being necessary. He reminded Commissioners that they had wished to see how allowing cluster housing would affect the city more generally.

Commissioners discussed whether it was appropriate to focus on Carrie Lewith or talk about cluster housing in general. There was agreement that it was best to focus on Carrie Lewith in the absence of a Council imperative.

Commissioners reviewed written comments and questions provided by Cmr. Lebo on the proposal while reviewing the current draft of the proposed code amendment.

Opening Section: Discussion ensued over the phrase “owned and managed by a charitable or non-profit organization,” and whether only non-profits should be allowed to build under these provisions. Cmr. Riddle expressed that she doesn’t think the code should restrict who can build it or who can live in such a development. Cmr. Gochanour stated that, having looked at other cities’ regulations, he hadn’t seen any restrictions on who can build them, though there was, in some cases, a minimum amount of seniors. Commissioners agreed that the language related to non-profits should be removed.

Section A: Commissioners discussed whether Section A, which stipulates that elderly and/or low-income persons should be the only ones who can live in these houses, should have such a restriction. They discussed whether the small size of the units would ensure that they are accessible to seniors and low income persons without this section. The main concern raised was that it would be too difficult to enforce that quotas were being met. There was further discussion about whether there should be some sort of maximum sale or rental price tied to the medium income, and noted that this also would be difficult to enforce. There was consensus to remove Section A.

Section D: Cmr. Lebo questioned whether ½ of the density allowed by the underlying zoning was the right level of density to allow with the proposed amendment. Steve Bennett suggested that the phrase “buildings containing dwelling units” should be changed to “dwelling units,” and “the number of buildings” should change to “the number of units.” The Cmr. agreed to this change. Cmr. Riddle suggested that the section should clarify that the “1/2” number refers to one half the number of units the site could contain were there no sensitive area present.

Section E: It was agreed that the reference to the other code section in “E” should be removed.

Section F: (1) Change to “minimum spacing between buildings within the development shall be 10 feet” and remove the rest of the sentence.

(2) Remove.

(3) Change to “There should be a minimum setback of 20 feet from the parcel lines of adjacent properties.” Remove sentence beginning with “with additional floor above ground” and retain rest of language and re-number.

(4) There was discussion about whether or not a landscaped buffer should be required. A conclusion was not reached.

Steve Bennett suggested that the Commission consider a new title for the draft condition use provisions: “Conservation Cluster Housing.”

Comprehensive Plan Update

Steve Bennett said that the Council is close to adopting the comp plan update. They will likely adopt in January once the comment period is ending. Their changes have generally been to beef up the recommendations of the planning commission.

New Business: Future Agenda Items

Tree Board Recommendations on Updating Tree Regulations.

Planning Intern Jake Tracy gave a summary of the Tree Board's memo to City Council. The memo recommends changes to regulations and policies that would close loopholes, streamline the permitting process, and that is intended to improve retention and enhancement of the City's tree canopy. Steve Bennett explained that once Council receives the memo, they will decide if the Planning Commission should work on an update to the ordinance.

Reports and Announcements

None.

Adjournment: 9:00

Ray Holmdahl, Chair