



Memorandum

To: Planning Commission
From: Steve Bennett, Planning Director
Date: July 8, 2020
Re: July 14, 2020 Planning Commission Virtual Meeting
Attachments: 1. Observations and Recommendations on 2006 Town Center Framework Design Guidelines Slide Presentation

At the June meeting, interest was expressed in conducting a more detailed review of the Town Center Framework Design Guidelines that were adopted by reference in 2006. The version of the document that is referenced in the City Code was completed in late 2005 after it became known that the Town Center was being put on the market. Madison Marquette, the company that had been managing the Center, purchased it in 2006 and began working the City on preparing a mixed-use redevelopment proposal. An application was never formally submitted and Madison Marquette sold the property to Merlone-Geier Partners in 2014.

General Observations

The tone and content of the Framework reflects a desire to attract an enlightened developer to redevelop the Town Center in a manner that is in keeping with the spirit of the document. The Framework is effective in highlighting the positives and negatives associated with the site. It also does a good job of establishing the identity of LFP and what the community values.

Between 2005, when the final version of the Framework was created and mid-2006 when it was adopted, the idea of how it would be used evolved from a “pre-regulatory” guide into a regulatory tool made up of only certain pages that were adopted reference in the zoning code. Flexibility was still retained after adoption by allowing design departures. The focus on building exterior dimensions allows the market to drive residential unit size and count, however, beyond the stepping back of facades, there is very little guidance as to what the City wants buildings to look like. The photographic examples of building types that are included are not linked to written guidelines.

The Framework provides very specific guidance on how to improve ‘walkability’ and the ‘public realm’ in the Town Center. Being so specific about the location of walkways and public gathering spaces may lead to superior solutions never being considered.

Some of the clearest guidance is found in the two Environmental Stewardship pages. The goals found on page 36 are still very much in keeping with the community’s priorities. Progress has been made by the City towards the achievement of these goals. Future achievements through

redevelopment are probably best accomplished through additional environmental regulations pertaining to the Town Center zone.

Observations and Recommendations Slides

The attached set of slides includes all of the regulatory pages from the Framework accompanied by a sidebar providing specific observations and recommendations related to the content of each page. The intent is to look at the Framework from the perspective of an applicant designing a redevelopment project or the staff/committee members who would be tasked with reviewing the proposed project for compliance.

An updated version of the slides (and probably this memo) will be sent out later which addresses Appendix 2, the 11x 17 matrix which summarizes the Framework.