

PLANNING COMMISSION RECORD

Briefing Session

NAME OF GROUP: PLANNING COMMISSION

DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING: Wednesday, May 18, 2005, 12:30, Room 113, First Floor, County-City Building, 555 S. 10th Street, Lincoln, Nebraska

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Jon Carlson, Gene Carroll, Gerry Krieser, Roger Larson, Dan Marvin, Melinda Pearson, Mary Bills-Strand, Lynn Sunderman and Tommy Taylor. Marvin Krout, Steve Henrichsen, Ray Hill, Greg Czaplewski and Teresa McKinstry of the Planning Dept.; and other interested citizens.

STATED PURPOSE Staff briefing on the **Downzoning Committee**

Marvin Krout stated that a packet of information was provided to Commissioners on areas that have been downzoned in recent years. Staff brought a map today of downzoned areas and areas that are zoned R-4 through R-8. Greg Czaplewski is present and has outlined areas where parties have talked to him about downzoning.

Greg Czaplewski presented the map and stated that Witherbee Neighborhood Association has expressed some interest in downzoning. Woods Parks Neighborhood contacted him earlier this month. He has talked briefly to Clinton and Hartley neighborhoods.

Krout believes the scope might include what could be revisited in areas that have already been downzoned. He has noticed that it has become almost impossible to re-build a duplex for example, after a fire or destruction. The question is how to keep this from being a spot zone. The city could be more accessible about accessory apartments. There is also the issue of areas that want to be downzoned. Do we want to have a more formal showing of support from property owners? There used to be a threshold in Dallas of a certain amount or percentage of property owners who were for the downzoning. These are some of the issues that come to mind.

Larson is unfamiliar with downzoning. He has the idea it is an ever expanding circle. It makes sense to have less density as the circle grows. Now, there seems to be a concentration of multiple family living units everywhere. Doesn't downzoning somewhat lead to urban sprawl? Krout replied that everyone must look at what we want the inner city to become. Some areas can't afford to take on more density. Some people prefer to live on the outer edges of the city.

Bills-Strand is concerned that there are city and state workers and college students that use the mass transit system. Affordable housing is an issue. The area around downtown provides affordable housing that can't be found in other parts of Lincoln. She understands that preserving other areas of Lincoln is important also. There has to be some kind of a happy medium. How do we strike the balance of protecting some areas while allowing for affordability of older homes? Some other cities have to be dealing with this. She wonders what they are doing.

Carlson believes we need to clear up the grandfather issue. Some say R-6 to R-2 is a dramatic jump, but it doesn't hurt anyone if grandfathering is clear.

Marvin understands this is something that needs to be clearly defined.

Carroll sees this as more of an internal committee. He would like to see three areas explored; clearing up the requirements for downzoning your neighborhood, make a clear review process and the effect of the downzoning. He questioned the current mechanisms to trigger a downzone. Is it a percentage of the property owners? There should be requirements that Planning Commissioners should have. He thinks that if we build a system ahead of time that it would help everyone.

Bills-Strand would like to see a list of all property owners in the requested area. Have they received the information and signed a petition? She knows that some items have been signed by tenants and she would like to see that the property owner has been notified. She would like to explore the idea of a special permit or some process, if an owner wants to remain in their house and create a duplex. She wants to be able to hear their case and make a decision.

Carlson sees a big difference in a house that stays looking like a house and a big apartment complex.

Bills-Strand wondered if there are design standards that would or could apply.

Krout stated that in the past, staff has mapped the property owners who are in support. Perhaps a PUD could be utilized. The PUD could be amended by changing a lot and it wouldn't be spot zoning. These are some procedures that could be talked about. He foresees this as an internal committee, but others could be invited to speak to the committee.

Bills-Strand had thought that Cecil Steward and Greg Schwinn would be good members because they have indicated interest in the past. Perhaps they could be invited in as speakers.

Carlson sees this as being technical in nature. Carroll would like to stay away from the issue of whether downzoning is good or bad. Sunderman agreed. He would like to see a whole process created.

Bills-Strand would like to encourage neighborhoods to please wait until the issues are worked out through this subcommittee.

Carlson, Carroll and Bills-Strand volunteered to be on the committee.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Teresa McKinstry
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