

MEETING RECORD

NAME OF GROUP: PLANNING COMMISSION

DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING: Wednesday, December 6, 2006, 11:00 a.m., Rm. 113, First Floor, County-City Building, 555 S. 10th Street, Lincoln, Nebraska

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Jon Carlson, Gene Carroll, Michael Cornelius, Dick Esseks, Gerry Krieser, Roger Larson, Lynn Sunderman and Tommy Taylor; Mary Strand absent

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: Rick Peo of the Law Department; Kristi Mundt of the County Attorney's Office; Marvin Krout, Ray Hill, Mike DeKalb and Michele Abendroth of the Planning Department.

STATED PURPOSE OF MEETING: **Proposed Amendments to Planning Commission Bylaws**

The meeting was called to order at 11:04 a.m.

Ray Hill began by explaining that staff is in the process of making revisions to the Planning Commission bylaws. The first change is regarding the submittal date for filing applications. This change is being proposed in order to provide more time for processing applications and for staff to review the applications at a Friday staff meeting.

The next change is regarding timely action by the Planning Commission on use permits, special permits, community unit plans, planned unit developments, change of zone applications and subdivision applications. The proposed change is to limit the amount of time for final action to four weeks after the first public hearing. Peo stated that the purpose of this change is to establish a standard for a reasonable amount of time to make a final decision or a recommendation to the final decision-maker. Prior to this, there was no time frame established.

Carroll expressed a concern with the proposed sentence regarding the failure of the Planning Commission to timely act as being a recommendation of approval. Esseks also expressed a concern with this sentence as he does not feel the applicant should get the benefit. Peo stated that the assumption is that there should never be a failure to act.

Mundt stated that the County Board has to get an approval or denial, either in whole or in part, from the Planning Commission. There is language in the statute that if there is no action from the Planning Commission, they can assume approval.

Carroll asked if the Planning Commission can be allowed to vote for deferral instead of

having an automatic approval.

Carroll stated that he does not agree with a time limit but would support 60 or 90 days as an appropriate amount of time to act. Esseks stated that he feels 90 days would be a more adequate amount of time. He also feels that there should not be a default finding.

Larson feels that it should be left at 30 days so as not to delay action. He also feels that the burden should be on the applicant to provide information in a timely manner when it is needed.

Krout stated that the intent today was to get some informal feedback. Staff will draft revised language based on the Commissioners' concerns.

Hill stated that the last proposed change is regarding the expiration date for items placed on pending. It is being proposed to have a one year expiration timeline. At that point, the application will die.

Hill noted that the remaining changes are to clean up language and to make the County's and City's procedures similar.

The meeting concluded at 12:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Michele Abendroth
Planning Department

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MEETING RECORD

NAME OF GROUP: PLANNING COMMISSION

DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING: Wednesday, December 6, 2006, 11:45 am - 12:45 pm, Conference Room 113, First Floor, County-City Building, 555 S. 10th Street, Lincoln, Nebraska

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Jon Carlson, Gene Carroll, Michael Cornelius, Dick Esseks, Gerry Krieser, Roger Larson, Lynn Sunderman and Tommy Taylor; Mary Strand absent. Marvin Krout, Steve Henrichsen and Teresa McKinstry of the Planning Department; and other interested citizens.

STATED PURPOSE OF MEETING: Continued Workshop on Density

Steve Henrichsen stated that on Monday, December 4, 2006, the City Council unanimously approved the Woods Park downzoning as proposed and as approved by Planning Commission.

Henrichsen provided an article from the Urban Land Institute that talks about higher density development, myth and fact.

Marvin Krout stated that he believes there are issues with approving one downzoning after another without looking at the bigger picture. He wondered if we are leaving enough land available for development at a higher density. Another issue is looking at the citywide issue of density. We don't seem to be meeting the goals of density in the fringe areas. A prolonged downward market in multi-family housing is one factor to consider. Tracts of multi-family have been converted to uses that are more readily available. He would like to hear more discussion about the core area and the fringe and what the Commissioners think we should be doing.

Carroll believes it becomes more and more difficult to revitalize the core area. He would like to identify areas where a neighborhood can be revitalized. The housing stock in older areas will continue to spiral down. At some point it will need to be removed and new housing put in its place. He wonders where this can be done.

Krout stated one recent example of an entire block is Liberty Village on Vine St. The city has not been very active in tearing down houses. It is very difficult to find those parcels. We are in a post chemo era where it will be difficult if not impossible to change state law to prevent government from condemning land for private use. Unless there is a situation such as along the Antelope Valley floodplain where property was acquired for a public purpose, there aren't very many of those opportunities.

Carlson believes there are areas in the Antelope Valley area that are scheduled to be revitalized.

Esseks wondered if the urban walk areas of Antelope Valley will become mixed residential development or something else. Krout replied that we expect it to become a residential area.

Larson also wondered about neighborhood revitalization. Krout stated that he will invite Kent Seacrest to make a presentation to the Planning Commission regarding Antelope Valley.

Henrichsen displayed a map from the Antelope Valley Redevelopment Plan. He pointed out the roadway, University, where residential could potentially be and where mixed use has been shown. There is an area of higher density south of the Capitol. There is a lower density conservation area, some medium density areas and new construction. There is a mix of densities shown.

Krout noted that there is a block of 17th and "L" St. that staff has a zoning request for. There is B-4 zoning on either side. The property is zoned R-6 today. Not everyone on the block is requesting a change of zone. The Antelope Valley Plan shows a mixed use. The Downtown Plan shows it to be residential. There is no specific plan for the property. The applicant wants to know his flexibility on what can be done with the property. Staff is currently working with the applicant.

Carlson wonders if areas are available for revitalization. This seems to be a house by house idea. A lot of ideas don't work.

Cornelius thinks good high density development is a good thing. It is not buying up housing stock and converting it. There needs to be a vision. He would love to see some higher density development with a forward looking plan. He would like to see some participation from the City with perhaps a blight study or redevelopment plan.

Carroll thinks if design standards are high enough, you can create good development. Good variety in a block raises the density.

Carlson thinks we have the same vision, but different strategies. An area close to the State Capitol was left out. The thought was to create a neighborhood plan. He thinks design standards can be created specific to that area. That is something the city could participate in. He wondered if perhaps a community unit plan could be created with specific design standards.

Cornelius thinks if a developer comes in with a good plan, a neighborhood would view the plan favorably.

Carlson thinks the flight of the middle income person is the problem. Carroll disagrees. He thinks affordable housing can be a catalyst for improvement in a neighborhood.

Carlson does not believe that is what happens.

Esseks wondered what the next step is after downzoning. So much has been invested in this area.

Larson stated there seems to be a good opportunity to create some sub zones in the Antelope Valley with high design standards, particularly along the Mall from the Capitol to "A" St.

Krout noted that Planning has been in discussion with Urban Development. They are hiring someone to design some standards for Antelope Valley. He wondered if this is an opportunity to work with them on some design standards issues.

Carroll sees the city continuing to sprawl north and we need to work on revitalizing the inner city.

Larson thinks more workers will want to live in the inner core. Larson believes this is not just a question of income, but also an issue of lifestyle. He foresees the new Verizon workers as being younger and perhaps craving more of the lifestyle of downtown.

Henrichsen noted that affordable housing is in the areas that have been downzoned a lot of times. Sometimes there are non zoning things that can be done. The area schools are scheduled to receive air conditioning and other upgrades.

Larson thinks a climate needs to be created in the core area that is more conducive to home ownership.

Cornelius noted that more people want single family detached houses in the suburbs. We are fighting a false sense that it is a safer, more secure area. The urban core is where you want to go. We have to fight that perception in the market place.

Esseks stated that the older area of Chicago has done really well. He thinks the really nice amenities along the channel will do very well.

Larson believes the area south of the Capitol could be subject to a blight study and urban development project. Henrichsen noted that anything in the Antelope Valley Redevelopment Plan has been declared blighted and is subject to TIF funds. True higher density could be done in downtown with R-4 density.

Krout questioned what the Commissioners think is holding back higher density. Carroll believes there should be bonuses available for affordable housing with higher design standards.

Esseks wondered if there is a limit on what can be done in the older parts of town.

Carlson thinks there are still areas with lots of flexibility. He doesn't think our downzonings are stopping anyone from redevelopment.

Carroll thinks the downzoning is a difficult hurdle to get over.

Krout questioned if anyone has comments on the fringe area. We aren't getting the density that the plan called for. There are more duplexes and townhouses, but no apartments. Village Gardens has a nice mix of units but the overall density will not be very high. There are some things that could be discussed. The city has talked about holding out industrial land before it gets converted to housing use. Another is our taxing system, impact fees for example. It is based on the per unit generation so if you develop one acre with eight lots instead of three or four, you are going to pay twice as much in impact fees. If you were trying to redesign you might be more oriented toward taxing the land which would encourage people to use the land more efficiently.

Esseks likes that idea. The real issue is the market. The whole thing is people want their own separate house.

Carroll sees more of a condominium structure. As the population ages, that might be a better way to get more density. He thinks the market is yet to come in that area.

Larson noted that sooner or later we will hit the acreage barrier.

The meeting concluded at 12:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Teresa McKinstry
Planning Department