

I. Call to Order

Members Present: Mike O'Brien, Chair; Abby Bleything, Vice-Chair; Joe Perron; Sarah van Ryckevorsel; Brendan Sage; Connor Daley

City Staff Present: Eric Vorwald

Guests Present: Kristine Lott, Mayor; Bryn Oakleaf, Councilor; Robert Millar

Call to Order by: Mike O'Brien

Meeting Start Time: 6:33 PM

Minutes Recorded by: Eric Vorwald

II. Changes to the Agenda

None

III. Public Comment

None

IV. Approve Previous Meeting Minutes

Decision: 4 – 0

Motion by: Joe

Second: Sarah

Joe made a motion that was seconded by Sarah to approve the minutes as presented. All were in favor.

V. Public Hearing on Proposed Amendments – Sections 4.1 - 4.12, 5.15, 6.6, and Article IX

Brendan made a motion that was seconded by Abby to open a public hearing on the proposed amendments to Sections 4.1 thru 4.12, 5.15, 6.6, and Article IX. All were in favor. With the affirmative vote, the public hearing was opened at 6:35 PM. With the public hearing opened, Eric highlighted several changes that were added or proposed since the hearing was advertised. This included new language for accessible parking, and clarification under Section 4.1 related to specific resources to protect. The Planning Commission discussed these changes and were generally in agreement with the updated language.

Next, Mike opened up the meeting for any public comments. Councilor Oakleaf provided comments related to certifications for the Residential Building Energy Standards, and if those certifications could be more formally included in the regulations. Eric explained the process that is currently used and noted that this could be added to formalize the requirements. Robert offered no specific comments.

Following this, the Mayor made reference to prior comments she had received about possible negative impacts the parking amendments would have on developments. She recommended outreach to identify what specific sections of the proposed amendments would impact development and recommended requesting that specific detail regarding the draft text be provided to better understand these concerns. The Commissioners debated whether or not to advance the draft language or to invite various interest groups to a future meeting in order to better understand the specific concerns. After a robust discussion on this, it was determined to close the hearing and continue the discussion further. Joe made a motion that was seconded by Connor to close the hearing. All were in favor and the hearing was closed at 7:16 PM.

With the hearing closed, Mike outlined several options for moving forward. Following this discussion, Abby made a motion to advance the draft amendments to City Council for their consideration. The motion died for lack of a second. With no motion, the Planning Commissioners generally agreed to have Eric reach out to various groups including housing providers and developers to invite them to the May 11th meeting. They requested very specific comments to highlight how these proposed changes would impact development potential including development density. Following this discussion, Abby left the meeting.

VI. Continue Discussion on Section 4.4 – Design Review

Eric provided an overview of the design review language to the Planning Commissioners. He started the discussion with the draft district map and highlighted several changes that were made since the last discussion. With the updated boundary, Eric reminded the Commissioners that they should be mindful of the fact that some properties may be adversely impacted by the proposal depending on how the draft text was written. Specifically, he highlighted a property along Weaver Street that would need to go through a design review process, including a public meeting for projects that are currently not covered under the zoning regulations.

Eric stated that the draft text for design review would impact changes to exterior materials and windows. The Planning Commission discussed options or exemptions for properties. Eric commented that the design review district boundary would be inclusive and that properties could not be exempted. The text in Section 4.4 could be more narrowly focused, but design review standards may require certain elements to be included per statutory regulations. Given the time, the Commissioners agreed to continue the discussion at their next meeting.

VII. City Updates

The Mayor provided updates on Council discussions including reports on public safety, discussions of the Chittenden Solid Waste District budget, the return of the Memorial Day Parade, the start of the Housing Initiative Director, and other housing specific activities related to housing quality. She also reminded the Planning Commissioners of the upcoming policy and priority strategy meeting of the City Council on May 13th. Eric noted that the decision of the Development Review Board on the St. Stephen's Church demolition was appealed to the Environmental Division of the Vermont Superior Court.

VIII. Other Business

Eric indicated that a future amendment to the zoning map, and possibly the text, may be coming forward related to the O'Brien Community Center. He noted that this was related to possible redevelopment activities on the property. Eric also indicated that the next meeting would be on May 11th. Finally, he requested that the May 25th meeting be cancelled as he would not be available. The Commissioners agreed to cancel the May 25th meeting.

IX. Adjourn

Motion by: Joe

Second: Sarah

Meeting End Time: 7:59 PM.

DRAFT