

I. Call to Order

Members Present: Mike O'Brien, Chair; Amy Houghton, Vice-Chair; Terry Zigmund, Secretary; Abby Bleything; Joe Perron; Sarah van Ryckevorsel

City Staff Present: Paul Sarne, Eric Vorwald

Guests Present: Kristine Lott, Mayor; Kate Coffey; Sam Russo; Nate Dagesse;

Call to Order by: Mike

Meeting Start Time: 6:35 PM

Minutes Recorded by: Eric Vorwald

II. Changes to the Agenda

None

III. Public Comment

Sam Russo provided comments and questions regarding the future of Manseau Street related to parking and uses. Kate Coffey provided comments about parking on Manseau Street and concerns related to developments at the intersection of Manseau and East Allen Streets.

IV. Approve Previous Meeting Minutes

Decision: 5 – 0

Motion by: Terry

Second: Joe

Joe proposed several amendments to the minutes for clarity and editorial corrections.

V. Review of FY 2021 Draft Work Plan

Eric provided an overview of the draft work plan indicating that it included information and updates that were discussed at the July meeting. He stated that the Planning Commission should provide any feedback regarding proposed changes or updates, or agree that no changes were necessary. Terry asked if the issues related to split zoning were going to be included. Eric noted that it is included with the overview of the zoning regulations and would be discussed in that context. After some additional discussion, the Planning Commission agreed that the draft work plan was consistent with their previous discussions and indicated they were in favor of moving forward with this draft as the final version for FY 2021.

VI. Review and Discussion of Parking Comparisons

Eric stated that this item was on for continued discussion regarding the differences between the proposed parking standards that were not adopted as part of the form-based code, and the parking standards that are currently utilized for all zoning districts except the Downtown Core. He indicated that a memo was included with the agenda that analyzed a hypothetical development comparing the two parking standards.

First, Eric reviewed the minimum required parking spaces for the hypothetical development based on the existing parking standards. He noted the total spaces, including the potential lot coverage. Next, he provided information on the possible administrative reductions that are available for developments including shared parking, Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Strategies, off-site parking options, and on-street parking. Questions were asked regarding what constitutes a TDM. There was additional discussion on how off-site parking was maintained and if the agreement continued with the land. Eric indicated that the regulations are not entirely clear on that but it would most likely need to be recorded as part of the land records if it were to be maintained in the future. Finally, he summarized the total parking reductions and stated that the parking for this example would be reduced from 58 to 37 if all of the administrative adjustments were utilized as available.

After some additional discussion on the existing administrative reductions, Eric provided information on the regulations that were drafted for the form-based code, but not adopted. Specifically, he noted that there was no requirement for office or commercial space, and that residential parking would be calculated at .75 spaces per unit. The total parking for the same project under the form-based code parking would be 23 spaces. Again, Eric emphasized that this was the minimum required parking and there was no maximum. He indicated that the reduced parking could allow for additional amenities such as covered bicycle parking or more open space. References were made to the webinar that was shared by Eric on parking in other municipalities and questions were asked about regulations in South Burlington that were referenced in the webinar. After some additional discussion and questions about why the draft was never adopted, Mike indicated that this was only on the agenda as a discussion item and that no formal action was being considered.

VII. Discussion of Equity in Land Use Regulations

Eric introduced this item noting that it was combining several different discussions that were separate but related. These included reviews of equity, equality, and diversity through work that the City has been doing and the relationship to land use planning, as well as legislation that may impact future zoning regulations. Specifically, Eric stated that zoning, by definition, is intended to segregate uses. This can also lead to segregation of people. He indicated that he has been reviewing the City's regulations to identify specific land use policies that may be unintentionally limiting housing options for the community.

Next, Eric provided context for this discussion in relation to a bill that passed out of the state senate, S.237. He specifically remarked that the analysis provided in his memo is only an interpretation of what the bill will do and is not confirmed. He also made a point to inform the Planning Commission that this would be taken up by the house, and could be changed, therefore this is only a starting point for the discussion. He indicated that the purpose of bringing this up was to have the Planning Commission begin thinking about potential changes to ensure the City's regulations were ahead of any potential state legislation that may require these changes to be made.

Eric walked the Planning Commission through his memo and gave specific examples of how our current regulations may be inadvertently biasing one land use over another. He also referenced specific properties in the City where additional development could occur due to large lot sizes, and other areas that have extreme density on very small lots. He also referenced the proposed parking standards and noted that this may have an impact on the future discussions regarding parking minimums.

Eric discussed the legislation in regards to the removal of “character of the area” as a condition of approval for certain residential uses. He stated that the Planning Commission may want to review this to consider either provided metrics for what this means, or identifying alternative options since this is a subjective term that can be interpreted very broadly and that it is referenced in multiple sections of the land use regulations. The Planning Commission continued the discussion regarding how this may impact the community including how we can get more housing for families and not just rentals. Mayor Lott reiterated that the City needs a diversity of housing options and that we are in a housing crisis due to low numbers of available housing options.

The discussion also included a recognition that the current Planning Commission is made up of homeowners and that additional opinions and perspectives may need to be brought into these discussions. The Mayor noted the work that is being done through the school to reach out directly to new American communities to engage them in City business. Finally, it was stated that during the update to the Master Plan, the Planning Commission specifically removed references of character of the area from the vision area on housing, therefore there was precedent to eliminating this as a criterion of review. Mike noted that it was a discussion topic and that we would review more details at future meetings.

VIII. Department and City Updates

Mayor Lott indicated that there would be a special City Council meeting on August 17th to discuss proposed language being recommended from the Charter Change Commission. Eric provided an update on the Historic Resources Survey and the Parking Study indicating that the consultant, RSG, was reviewing the proposed scope of work and would be providing feedback to the City and the RPC for possible changes or amendments.

IX. Other Business

Eric indicated the next meeting would be on September 10th.

X. Adjourn

Motion by: Terry

Second: Amy

Meeting End Time: 8:34 PM