

Local Planning Agency Workshop
Renaissance Center
9:00 to 10:45 AM, Thursday, January 19, 2017

Planning Staff Present:

Barry Wilcox, Division Manager, Comprehensive Planning & Urban Design
Artie White
Stephen Hodges
Debra Thomas
Julie Christesen

Planning Commissioners Present:

Timothy Edmond
Patrick Madden
Sylvia Alderman, Attorney for Planning Commission

Two or three other folks who we could not identify were there as well: an apparent assistant for Ms. Alderman and a couple of additional planning staff acting in support of the presenters. The Tallahassee Democrat and WFSU had reporters present. There appeared to be between eight and twelve folks attending on behalf of PCM201706. The Killearn amendment had a similar number of followers.

The full staff report on PCM201706 can be seen at the link below.

<https://talgov.com/Uploads/Public/Documents/planning/pdf/compln/2017/srpt201706.pdf>

The staff report includes all of the comments received by email, regular mail, and the online comment form. Also included are a synopsis of the comments made at the First Public Open House. However, the report does not address any of these comments and concerns, but suggests that these are better addressed in the RFP for development. In a conversation after the workshop, Mr. Wilcox suggested that there would be opportunity for public best soccer predictions for today input regarding the RFP at some future date.

The meeting started with a brief introduction by Mr. Edmond for the benefit of the audience about how the workshop fit into the comprehensive planning cycle. He made some suggestions to staff to help the flow of the February 7th public hearing.

The introduction was followed by a statement from Sylvia Alderman, the attorney for the Planning Commission. Ms. Alderman explained that there are two sorts of proceedings in the meeting: quasi-judicial and quasi-legislative. The map-only amendments are quasi-legislative and therefore ex parte communication was allowed. Amendments that include map and zoning changes are quasi-judicial and therefore ex parte communication is not permitted. She instructed the planning commissioners to forward any emails from interested parties regarding the zoning changes to her.

Both planning commissioners present indicated they were getting a lot of emails regarding one or more amendments. They suggested creating a generic planning commissioner email address so they would not have to personally sort through their emails for ex parte

communication.

The amendments were presented by staff in numerical order.

Regarding the Killlearn rezoning issue, Mr. Edmond did ask staff what the expectation of home buyers in the affected properties were at the time of purchase: would they reasonably expect that the open space/recreation land abutting their property be maintained in that state?

Artie White, the planner in charge of PCM201706 presented the staff report and recommendation to the Planning Commission for approval. Mr. White laid out the City arguments in favor of the rezoning. The main arguments are that

- rezoning to CU-12 makes the activities on the parcel consistent with the zone,
- this land is near the urban core and should be zoned as such, and
- CU-12 allows for an urban infill type residential development that will serve as a buffer for the nearby neighborhoods.

There was a small bit of discussion about the RFP and how the City can negotiate and control the flavor of any resulting development. Mr. Wilcox stated that contrary to reports, there had been no contact from developers about the development idea and the it was an in-house idea as a reaction to the wall. Mr. Edmond advised staff that involving the neighborhoods with the RFP going forward would be constructive.

After the workshop ended, several of us engaged Mr. Wilcox and asked further questions. The upshot of this discussion was the following.

- Myers Park/Woodland Drives residents have 6 times the area of park land per capita that folks in Betton Hills have (as a reference comparison).
- The City wants to develop the land so that they can grow the tax base.
- The City has no concrete development plans and maintains there are a whole range of options available.
- Saving or rebuilding the structures and function currently on the parcel will likely cost as much as the parcel is worth, so that the City will likely not get “profit” from the sales.
- The City believes that buildings can be used to mitigate the sound, although possibly not as well as the wall.
- The City maintains this is not a part of Myers Park.

We did not get satisfactory answers to these questions.

- Mr. Tedder told us developers had contacted the City about the development idea. This is in direct conflict with what Mr. Wilcox told the commissioners.
- The drainage feature on the parcel may preclude residential development exactly where the wall is needed.
- Why could the City not focus on the nearby private land already appropriately zoned to develop and grow the tax base?

- We have learned that we cannot trust what the City says, so we are reluctant to try to negotiate a compromise.
- Did not 75% of voters just vote to buy more park land and does that not likely mean that they would also prefer not to sell park land?

WFSU recorded the proceeding and a portion of the follow-up discussion. We recorded the entire meeting (but not the follow-up discussion) using a cell phone in case we need a transcript for any future legal proceedings. We have obtained a copy of the recording from WFSU.

Reported by:
Linc Clay