



Planning Commission Work Session

MINUTES

AUGUST 17, 2010

6:15 PM – 7:29 PM

COUNCIL CHAMBERS

FACILITATOR	Pro-Tem Chairman Kenneth Hellewell
NOTE TAKER	Judy Merrill
ATTENDEES	Kenneth Hellewell, Eric Hazen, Gary Pratt, Tyler Bodrero, Braxton Schenk, and Troy Moyes

ITEM 1: DISCUSSION OF PROPOSED GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT

Troy advised commissioners that Chris Heartel was unable to attend, and staff would place his request on a future agenda. He explained that Mr. Heartel owned property around the Jensen Nature Park and wanted the Commission to consider amending the General Plan to allow higher-density residential housing, such as R-4, in that area. The current zone was R-1, and the General Plan kept it R-1. He hoped to build town homes there, so Planner Moyes directed him to the Commission with the advice that he prepare details for such a discussion with actual drawings. Kenneth asked how many acres it would involve. Troy estimated around 20. He recommended consideration of only a portion, though, if they were willing to consider the request at all. Kenneth pointed out that anything over 5 acres required the Commission to open up the General Plan for public hearings. He reminded them of the huge public outcry against every request for higher density in the past and to prepare for the possibility of it happening again. The result had always been an enormous amount of public comment, which took a long time. Troy asked that they reserve their speculations, in all fairness, until Mr. Heartel could be present, since he could end up presenting something very different.

Kenneth welcomed Braxton as the newest commissioner and asked him to give some background. Braxton said he was from Washington state, moved to Syracuse 8 years ago, lived right behind City Hall for about 5 years, and currently owned a home across the street from City Hall with his wife and 4 children.

Kenneth reminded commissioners of the upcoming ULC&T Planners Day on September 16. Troy advised them that he would verify whether the City could pay for their full registration fees this year or just a portion again. Judy agreed to send them that information later in the week.

Commissioners then discussed the resignation of Gordon Williams from the Architectural Review Committee. Tyler shared his conversation with Robert about stepping down now that Braxton was a Commission member, since there were now currently three commissioners serving on that Committee, which would constitute a public Planning Commission meeting. Eric offered to step down instead and allow Tyler and Braxton to stay on as Committee members.

Troy informed commissioners of three new businesses coming in to Syracuse: Exell Audio, Winh Wah, and Jasmine. Jasmine was a Thai restaurant that would take over the Quiznos and T-Mobile spaces. Winh Wah would take up the next three suites in the Shadow Point Shopping Center adjacent to The Door Stop.

Kenneth advised commissioners that UDOT was still taking input for the West-Davis Corridor and would have a booth at the Fair that week with maps. Troy asked if everyone had a chance to go to the open house. Kenneth visited their website. Tyler attended on Thursday and voiced concern with the maps showing alternate routes. Kenneth referred to the purchases of land throughout the corridor and the City's preservation efforts and asked about the other alternatives. Troy explained that the proposed routes were the result of feasibility studies. Tyler added that UDOT was being very thorough in order to make sure their processes were sufficient to meet all requirements of the State. They wanted to avoid issues that stalled the Legacy Corridor by being very careful, following all procedures, and weighing every option. Troy went over the process and estimated a final selection of the corridor location by January or February.

Eric provided a report on the last City Council meeting. Braxton agreed to attend the next Council meeting, September 14, and provide a report to the Commission.

Kenneth shared some written comments from Robert, based on Troy's weekly updates. Highlands at Glen Eagle Subdivision Phase 9, approved back in 2007, would be starting construction soon and take about six months to complete. The RDA for the Town Center would be holding a public hearing on September 14 to discuss amendments to the plan to allow the expenditure of tax increments outside its boundaries. Its purpose would be to help some of the businesses lower their lease payments and attract more quality businesses. Its original intent was for utility improvements, but they hoped to use those funds for other more current needs.

Troy told commissioners that staff would have their binders updated with the current Title X, maps, etc. Kenneth then stated that Robert also mentioned the City's filling of the Community Development Director position. Troy said they offered it to Michael Eggett, who should be starting on September 13.

Item 2: COMMITTEE REPORTS

Gary referred to the new members Troy forwarded to him for his 1700 South Committee. These were applicants for the Planning Commission position. He made contact and would be meeting with them to work on their purpose and needs summary. He had some ideas but needed to present them to the Committee. He expected more pressure for development along Antelope Drive now that the road improvements were almost complete, especially with the new businesses and the lessening of available space, which he believed was encouraging.

Kenneth and Tyler drafted their purpose and needs for the 700 South Committee and forwarded it to Troy. They invited Pat Zaugg to be a part of the Committee to represent the Syracuse High School Community Council, Ray Zaugg, Lurlen Knight, and a member of the Cook family. He asked Troy to send him a list of all those who attended the citizens planning meeting, but Troy reminded him that they might want to do another open house and let them choose a representative then. Kenneth hoped to hold the first meeting during the first part of September. His goal was to have a majority of the area laid out and rendering done by December, with recommendations for amendments to the General Plan in January to give them the full year to review and amend it. Troy asked him what steps he would be taking after the purpose and needs. Kenneth explained how he would sit down with the Committee to look at existing uses, come to a consensus on future uses, and create recommendations for new zones, such as a business park that specified various types of uses and a design theme.

Troy asked Gary the same question. Gary explained that his area was more commercial-oriented, which needed about three strong developers to create an appropriate vision. He was certain it would require some amendments to the General Plan in cooperation with the multiple landowners. He requested a property owner list so they could approach and invite them to become somewhat involved in the process.

Troy asked for the committees to take their planning to a different level. He wanted them to focus on their areas with planning exercises where they drew buildings in desired locations rather than just zones. He asked them to begin with conceptual ideas and use paper to put them down on a map to come up with different ideas. Kenneth offered to start with zones until they all agreed on the overall zoning before taking it to the specific uses to make sure it fit in with the rest of the City. Troy cautioned him about getting stuck on logistics of uses in zones and asked him to create alternate zones. He also suggested simply adding a sentence to an existing zone, rather than creating a new one, or overlaying a zone. Gary suggested recommending three options that would naturally morph into new ideas.

Braxton explained that he still needed to get with Nathan and Robert but also offered to help with other committees. He asked if there was a vision as to how big to make these committees. Kenneth suggested 6-10 members, since starting out with 20 would make it too difficult. Troy asked them to focus on all aspects of transportation, walkability, bike lanes and applicable striping, and expansion of the trail system to connect to certain areas of the Town Center or 200 South. Master the transportation plan to be in line with UDOT's. Hopefully, come January or February, Syracuse would know the final selection for the West-Davis Corridor and be able to look at expanding some of the trail systems, streets, and frontage roads. Gary added that interlocal bus routes connecting mass transit to the Town Center shopping would increase the downtown commerce, like it did in Boise, Idaho.
