



PLANNING COMMISSION/RESIDENTIAL INFILL-PUD TASK FORCE
JOINT WORK SESSION
Minutes of October 6, 2010

Planning Commission Members present: Chair Robert Martin and Commissioners Michael Babbitt, Laura Horsey, Christine Steel and Dean Wood

Task Force Members present: John Carr, Kevin Bryck, Christine Steel and Michael Babbitt

Staff present: John Sonnen, Planning Director; and Chris Kerr, Senior Planner

Chair Martin called the joint work session to order in the Bolton Room of City Hall at 9:10 p.m.

Update: Residential Infill/PUD Task Force

Chris Kerr distributed the September 24, 2010 Staff Memorandum. The purpose of the meeting was to give the Planning Commission an opportunity to give the Task Force feedback about its strategic approach and action plan. Steel cautioned that the Action List was a compilation of various members' ideas and the Task Force had not formally discussed and prioritized them yet. Kerr reported the Task Force had held six meetings so far. Four or five members had attended each meeting except the last one, when there were not enough members present. In those meetings the Task Force had learned about the land use process, City policies and plans and the CDC. They had spent time learning about how the current code addressed PUDS. They had examined the Metro model code and learned how other cities addressed infill. They had talked about taking a field trip. Kerr anticipated that the Task Force would be able to follow the timeline and finish its work on time.

The Action List featured 8 Topic Areas. The group examined and discussed each of them. When they examined Topic Area: Planned Unit Development (PUD), Kerr reported there had been general agreement to remove the requirement that every little partition or subdivision on constrained lands had to be a PUD. The Task Force had talked about offering a menu of concessions to a developer who proposed a superior design that went above and beyond the result that could be built under the code. One issue for the Task Force to try to resolve was whether the City should be able to choose to reject an applicant's offer to give the City land to be dedicated to the public benefit. The City Manager preferred to have that option. A "Parking Lot" column under every Topic Area listed ideas and initiatives that did not fit the scope of the Task Force work, but that should be considered in some other venue. The PUD "Parking Lot" suggested creating separate planned development regulations for commercial, industrial and large residential developments.

The staff confirmed that the City was meeting its overall density requirement of an average of 8 units per acre through current zoning, but it would likely have to develop to higher density in some appropriate areas to satisfy Metro as the population grew. However, the scope of work that had been established by the City Council did not allow the Task Force to recommend rezoning. Chair Martin suggested that the community might find higher density more acceptable if it was accomplished by allowing alternative housing types, such as clustered housing, instead of just narrowing PUD setbacks. The group considered whether allowing alternative housing types was actually a form of rezoning. Kerr advised that clustered housing could comply with a residential zone's density limits, but the current code did not allow it. Chair Martin recalled a past zone change to R-4.5 that had resulted in a project with houses with hardly any lawn area. He wondered if that project might have been more acceptable design if the code had allowed an alternative housing type that would still comply with original zone's density limit. Horsey agreed the density transfer table needed to be clarified and updated. She recalled the PUD chapter started out with a Purpose Statement that called for using the PUD code to allow a development that was as good as or better than what could be built under the regular code, but the criteria in that chapter had no "teeth" to make that happen. She advised that it was the automatically-allowed reduced setbacks in a PUD, not just the number of houses per acre, that helped create the perception that a project was too dense. When asked, the staff clarified that land that was to be dedicated to the City was not excluded from the density calculation.

The group then considered Topic Area: Compatibility Issues with surrounding development. Kerr advised that the City Council had specified that the Task Force could not recommend design review for single family houses. The list of amendments to be considered reflected what some other cities did. One of the questions to be considered was whether a developer could and should have to bring final building design renderings to the neighborhood association meeting in the pre-application stage of the process. Another question had to do with whether the City should consider the locational context when it required street improvements, so it did not end up with a "sidewalk to nowhere." Kerr reported that Lake Oswego allowed a lower, one-story, house to cover more of the lot than a higher house could.

The group examined Topic Area: Alternative Housing Types. Portland's approach was to formulate special guidelines and criteria for each housing type. Specified design types could be required in specified neighborhoods. That might be too large an undertaking for West Linn unless it borrowed from what other cities were doing. Horsey and Steel wanted to be sure that the allowed housing types fit the City's hilly nature and the constrained lands that were what the City had left to develop. Steel questioned whether the City should dictate what houses looked like. Wood observed having design guidelines would show builders what the City wanted to see in housing types, but he asked if it should be up to the developer to propose a plan. Chair Martin suggested having some "preset solutions" might make it easier for a developer to build a project, but he cautioned that oversight was still crucial. Babbitt was not opposed to the idea, but he was concerned that if someone's ranch style house burned down he might be required to rebuild a cottage style house. Horsey suggested vetting the concept in the citizen involvement process. Kerr clarified that under the current code, clustered housing

would not be allowed except via the PUD process. Sonnen advised that cottage houses were on the margins of cost effectiveness and the developer could likely not afford to go through design review. The Community could decide what acceptable housing types were so builders could avoid the design review process. A developer could pull a housing type "off the shelf" as an alternative to a PUD. The City would need to fashion criteria that applied to each housing type. Kerr advised that other jurisdictions had done that. Wood recalled that Portland offered tradeoffs for sustainable features. Kerr advised if the City did that it would need to fashion a menu of sustainable features and determine what the developer was to get in return for using them. Wood suggested the City look at the sustainable features listed in the LEED certification process.

ADJOURNMENT

The group agreed to hold another joint work session the following Monday, October 11, 2010. Chair Martin adjourned the joint work session at 10:35 p.m.

APPROVED:



Robert Martin, Chair

11/19/2011

Date