



**PLANNING COMMISSION
Meeting Notes of May 4, 2022**

Commissioners present: Gary Walvatne, Charles Mathews, Scott Erwin, John Carr, Joel Metlen, Carrie Pellett, and Bayley Boggess.
Councilor present: William Relyea
Public present: None.
Consultant: Sou Gardner and Alex Dupey, MIG Consultants
Staff present: Planning Manager Darren Wyss and Lynn Schroder, Administrative Assistant

The meeting video is available on the [City website](#).

1. Call To Order and Roll Call

Chair Walvatne called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

2. Public Comment Related To Land Use Items Not On The Agenda

None.

3. Work Session – HB2001 Code Amendment Package as Recommended by City Council Appointed Working Group

Chair Walvatne reviewed the schedule for adoption.

Planning Manager Wyss introduced the HB2001 Proposed Code Amendment Package. He discussed the process of developing the proposed amendments. The 2022 CDC Working Group developed the proposed amendments after four meetings. The group discussed nine policy questions that were part of the public outreach phase in the fall of 2021. The proposed code amendments are the "de minimus" package, with three proposals where the code goes above minimum requirements. Based on community feedback from multiple meetings and a community survey, the Working Group found consensus on recommendations to allow detached duplexes, increase floor-to-area (FAR) maximums for middle housing types, and increase lot coverage maximums for middle housing types.

Alex Dupey from MIG Consultants presented the background on the Working Group recommendations.

Vice Chair Mathews did not support the Working Group recommendations. He preferred the "de minimus" amendment packet because he thought the existing residents would not want the character of their neighborhood to be altered by middle housing. He stated that it would not be fair to current residents to encourage middle housing and would damage the existing neighborhoods. He stated that the FAR is useful to limit the building size, add to privacy, promote noise reduction, encourage tree canopy, reduce traffic, contribute to street parking availability, and facilitate emergency response. He noted that increasing the FAR is not required by the state mandate.

Alex Dupey clarified that the FAR relates to the building mass but does not affect the lot coverage, setbacks, landscaping, traffic or street parking, or emergency response.

Commissioner Erwin supported the Working Group recommendations. He stated West Linn does not have good options for incoming families to purchase a home. The Working Group recommendations would encourage housing alternatives for families seeking to locate in West Linn. Increasing the FAR would allow middle housing units additional square footage allowing families to live comfortably.

Commissioner Pellett recommended only changing lot coverage on R-5 and smaller to preserve yards on larger lots. She stated that there is currently no demand for duplexes. Builders make money on single-family houses and would not build small duplexes. The units could have more square footage by allowing larger lot coverage in R-5 and smaller lots. She stated that residents do not want increased traffic from increased density.

Commissioner Erwin responded that 70% of lots in West Linn are R10 and R7. He said that limiting the FAR increase to R5 and smaller does not meet the intent of the state legislature to facilitate middle housing.

Commissioner Boggess supported removing FAR requirements for all zones to increase the habitable square footage for middle housing without increasing lot coverage. Removing the FAR requirement is a more equitable, inclusive, and restorative housing policy. She supported creating as much housing inventory as possible.

Commissioner Pellett responded that the West Linn Middle Housing Community Survey indicated that residents were resistant to middle housing.

Commissioner Erwin pointed out that only 3% of the West Linn community responded to the survey. He also noted that the Working Group considered the survey feedback when crafting the proposed FAR requirements. He supported Option 4 comprise of the Working Group.

Commissioner Mathews commented that the proposed amendments should be considerate and responsive primarily to the existing West Linn residents and not be detrimental to neighborhoods. He did not support any code amendment beyond the minimum state requirements.

Commissioner Metlen noted the actual outcome of the proposed amendments is challenging to gauge. Alex Dupey, MIG, responded that vacant lots would likely be the first to develop middle housing. The redevelopment of existing houses into middle housing units is difficult to predict. Redeveloped single-family houses would need to sell at a price point above the single-family house value plus construction cost. Metlen replied that there are not many vacant lots in existing neighborhoods.

Planning Manager Wyss noted that the City had received inquiries about the middle housing rules from residents who want to create units for aging-in-place or adult children coming home from college.

Chair Walvatne noted that many neighborhoods have CC&Rs and covenants that prohibit plexes. Additionally, system development charges may increase the cost of plexes beyond affordable construction costs.

Commissioners discussed middle housing in R-15 and larger. The City has very few R-15s and larger lots.

Chair Walvatne asked what the ramifications of not building plexes in the City. Wyss responded that the State has mandated that the City prepare a housing needs analysis by 2023 and a housing production strategy by 2024.

Chair Walvatne asked clarifying questions about the proposed definitions, decision making and design review, residential zone differences, side wall transition, and parking.

Commissioner Pellett suggested adding a voluntary process for developers to submit their plex design to neighborhood associations for review and comment.

Commissioner Carr asked follow-up questions about parking and DLCD notification.

3. Planning Commission Announcements

None.

4. Staff Announcements

Planning Manager Wyss noted that the packet for the upcoming legislative hearing would be emailed to Commissioners.

5. Adjourn

Chair Walvatne adjourned the meeting at approximately 8:45 pm.