
January 9, 2013 Meeting Summary: A meeting with the Form Based Code Advisory Working Group, Zoning (ZOCO) and Long Range Planning (LRPC) Committees of the Planning Commission

PC Members in Attendance: Inta Malis (FBC AWG Chair, LRPC Chair), Steve Cole (ZOCO Chair), Nancy Iacomini, Brian Harner, and Chris Forinash. **FBC AWG Members in Attendance:** Mark Cole, Gene Hubbard, Randy Swart, Kay Langenbeck (alt), Linda Dye, James Smith, Stef Pryor, George Dove, Takis Karantonis, Alice Hogan, Chris Slatt, Steve Campbell, Peter Hage, Brad Mowbray, Chris Gordon. **Other Attendees:** Courtney Mack, Ji-Yong Kim, Joan Lawrence, John Snyder, Elizabeth McKeeby, Brenda Cox, Kara Grace, Thomas Barlow, Holly Bray. **Staff and Consultants in Attendance:** Jennifer Smith, Matt Mattauszek, Deborah Albert, Cynthia Liccese-Torres, Rebecca Ballo, Bethany Heim, Richard Hartman.

Columbia Pike Neighborhoods Area Plan Implementation Process

Agenda Item 2 | Neighborhood Transitions (Corridor-Wide Neighborhood Manners): Consultant, Geoff Ferrell, gave an overview of how the Form Based Code emphasizes the importance of similar building forms facing one another across streets (i.e. concept of “like” facing “like”) as a primer before discussing where and how particular regulations would require transitions in heights. The three areas for height transitions would include those areas:

- 1) adjacent to single-family detached dwellings: new buildings up to 6 stories would step down to a maximum height of 32’ for any portion of the building within 40’ of the single-family detached property line (this regulation exists in the existing FBC today applicable in the commercial centers);
- 2) adjacent to single-family detached dwellings: new buildings taller than 6 stories (up to potentially 10 stories) would be required to provide an additional transition, beyond what is outlined in 1) above;
- 3) in mid-block locations: new buildings would step down in the middle of the block to create more light and air. This provision exists in the existing FBC whereby maximum building heights of 4 stories are set. Staff indicated that this regulation would likely be carried into the new FBC; however, further assessment was underway to determine whether this provision would apply when heights taller than 6 stories are permitted, or whether an alternative height transition would be needed.

Staff commented that additional transitions related to “conservation areas” would be discussed as part of the next Agenda item.

Comments/Suggestions:

- Consider reducing the overall height of new buildings as a way to provide an appropriate setback for the anticipated taller heights, especially when the alternative might result in a less superior or inefficient building design for the top floors. For example, a site designated for a maximum height of up to 10 stories, could result with 8 or 9 stories following this approach.
- Has staff obtained feedback from residents of the Penrose Square project to understand their perspective on the built condition and whether there is sufficient light and air in the mid-block location and to assess whether this height transition is beneficial, suitable?
- Consider developing specific “neighborhood manners” that would treat sites on the south edge of a street versus the north edge differently since each side of an east-west oriented street experiences sunlight in different ways.

Agenda Item 3 | Architectural Standards & Transitions at Edges of Conservation Areas, within Conservation Areas and other areas: Consultant, Bill Spack, provided an overview of the Best Practices memo highlighting elements of Bluffton and Conway South Carolina approach to historic preservation standards within zoning regulations. He also outlined three main organizing questions to frame the discussion including “Where” standards would apply, “What” is the nature of the standards, and “How” standards would be administered. The committee was informed of this information and was asked to give perspective on the “Where” component, giving feedback on the extent particular standards for compatibility to Conservation areas would apply. Future discussions would occur on the particular standards and the administration.

Comments/Suggestions:

- First decide how far the standards will apply and then figure out if they are hard regulations or softer guidelines. A preference was expressed to include Pike frontage in front of Barcroft as it should respect the

historic property located immediately behind it. This perspective had mixed support and some neighborhood AWG members disagreed with that assessment. Neighborhood perspective suggested that the 4-story transitional areas were specifically created for this purpose and the standards should not reach further.

- Most attendees noted it would be easier to make this determination if an actual set of standards were available for review along with the administration/process piece for those standards.
- Is there a conflict with Virginia State Law and can particular architectural standards be established for the Conservation areas? What would be the review body?
- Would the architectural standards be tailored to a specific district/Conservation Area? Or would all three be treated the same?
- Many of these standards are directly associated with the administration part of this Code. Determining what standards are appropriate can only be answered in the context of understanding who or what body will be responsible for the review process/implementation (i.e. HALRB? CB?). Who is tasked with determining “what is appropriate”?
- Would the rehabilitation standards (and what happens inside the actual Conservation Areas) become part of the FBC or would they be provided somewhere else? Would there also be a separate set of standards for sites outside of the Conservation Areas that might include rehab along new construction?
- Several people emphasized that involvement of HARLB in any review of what happens in Conservation Areas was necessary.

Agenda Item 4 | Development Review Process Options: Staff presented preliminary ideas for how projects would be reviewed and which type of projects would elevate to Use Permit review. It was noted for projects that request Bonus Stories (using Transfer of Development Rights or other methods outlined in the Neighborhoods Area Plan) or projects that would involve Conservation Areas (i.e. renovations/rehab, TDR, or new construction which would likely involve HALRB review) would be targeted for Use Permit Review. Presently, staff contemplates whether to include the size of a development site as one additional criterion for Use Permit review, noting that Use Permit process allows for an additional layer or review, however there is interest in retaining a streamlined administration review option for some sites.

- What open spaces would be eligible for designation as a TDR Sending Site? Staff noted that “large open spaces” referred to those greater than 1 acre and would be eligible for TDR to help incentivize implementation, per the Neighborhoods Area Plan.
- To what extent is there room for negotiation with the Tier 2 bonus sites?
- With regards to site size as a trigger for Use Permit review, some consideration should be given that larger sites may involve transportation issues which may require additional community notification and review.

Agenda Item 5 | Open Space Character: Staff and Consultant, Geoff Ferrell, presented background information on: 1) the type of Public Space Standards within Codes; 2) the open spaces recommendations within the Neighborhoods Area Plan; 3) existing recreation resources along Columbia Pike corridor, and 4) a preliminary categorization of either “Plazas” or “Civic Greens” for a portion of the new spaces included in the Neighborhoods Area Plan.

- The Consultant noted that up to a certain size of the park, the development costs to construct the open space would be minimal and would be feasible based on the increased density afforded by using the FBC.
- AWG members suggested character categories for pervious/impervious and active/passive open spaces
- Commissioners asked staff to formulate specific questions they’d like answered as part of this exercise (and prior to seeing the Initial Draft of the FBC).
- Could developers pay into an “open space fund” that could then be managed by the County and applied to the new network of spaces currently being planned?
- The Consultant suggested writing the regulations simply in order to allow the space to evolve over time with usage.

Staff agreed to evaluate this subject after this meeting and to assess how additional clarity could be provided and/or to reframe the questions for the AWG members review.