

Minutes
July 20, 2017
Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee

Present

Brad Fox, Acting Chairperson
Robert Foster
Tom Falby
Marilyn Reilly
Barry Lucier
Peter Stanton
Quang Nguyen

Staff and Guests

Stephanie Carver
Tex Haeuser
Marisa Turesky
Jessa Burna
Deqa Dhalac

1. Welcome

The following documents were provided:

- The agenda and minutes from the June 15, 2017, meeting
- Draft West End Zoning
- West End Neighborhood Master Plan

Acting Chairperson Brad Fox welcomed everyone to the meeting. Members of the Committee introduced themselves.

2. Adoption of the Minutes

Bob Foster motioned to adopt the June 15, 2017, minutes. Brad Fox seconded. Unanimous approval.

3. Review of Draft Master Plan

Stephanie reviewed the draft Master Plan, noting that the online version is automatically updated and will have a more finished layout than the printed copies.

The plan begins with an introduction comprised of background and overview information. Next is the Planning Process section, which includes details on community engagement, stakeholder input, community meetings, workshops, and the survey information. Vision and Objectives is the next portion, and the last pieces are Appendices that outline existing conditions, survey results, and zoning.

Jessa reviewed the Vision and Objectives, explaining that the overarching vision is aspirational and based off of public engagement feedback. There are five objectives and within each are more detailed recommendations. There is an Action Plan and each objective has actions categorized as municipal, partnership, and development driven. She then reviewed each objective.

Objective #1, Neighborhood Connectivity, gives a background of conditions, lists the actions, and then shows photos and map connecting actions by letter. Objective #2, Regional Access, has the same structure.

The Committee agreed that everything so far is good.

Objective #3, Sustainable Community, has less information because it's more about housing and zoning. Objective #4, Recreation and Open Space, has many general actions. She noted that there are a number of proposed trails in the area, along with recommendations for the public dock and increasing accessibility and safety.

Objective #5, Neighborhood Center, focuses on redevelopment of the triangle parcel. Recommendations include creating the new zoning and addressing parking standards and streetscape design. There are also recommendations for a multimodal transit hub and indoor and outdoor community space. This section includes renderings.

Tex likes the transit facility but it's less than the hub next to City Hall. He thinks that's a good model and suggested replicating it. **Steph** and **Jessa** agreed to include something more robust.

4. Zoning Discussion

Jessa reviewed the draft West End Zoning. She showed a map of proposed zoning lines explaining that it creates a number of new districts. She reviewed the zones.

Tex asked to talk about how this has changed since March. They discussed how the WACC district had another zone on one side of Western Ave. and another zone on the other. **Stephanie** explained that looking again and with its uses, it didn't make sense to treat it in the same way or have one side different than the other along a major corridor.

The CS zone was also discussed; they are not touching it.

Peter asked about carving out the National Guard property from Commercial. It's waterfront and in the event it becomes available to the City, it would be nice to have preservation as open space in place. **Stephanie** said there could be some requirements to do that; leaving it undeveloped open space along a major corridor would be up to the City how to treat it. She would go back to the cohesive nature of creating a corridor with services and housing that's more neighborhood-center focused. **Jessa** said one recommendation is to require open space for developments of a certain size. They didn't add that provision but it can be incorporated into the WACC. That area along the water is a recommendation for a trail which would help facilitate this. **Peter** mentioned including a setback and **Tex** recommended they do so.

Barry asked if the plan and zoning were in the format needed so that it could go forward. **Tex** said the plan is and the zoning is close. **Barry** said this is very impressive for a three week turnaround; he likes the action plan and how it breaks out the types of actions. He also doesn't see anything that's unrealistic.

The Committee agreed it's a good number of recommendations and grabbed the essence of what came out of the meetings. **Stephanie** said one thing they wanted to achieve was to make it approachable for everyone so anyone could understand it. The process took on its own timetable.

Peter asked about the plan to revitalize the community center and if they have opinions for the best use of this property as planners having looked at the neighborhood.

Stephanie said that's complicated and she's not sure she can answer as well as she'd like. They mention the improvement of the community center in one recommendation. This was one thing she took from the open house one-on-ones. Although it's a valuable resource, there aren't a lot of adult programs. It is underutilized and she thinks a study of what could happen here would create a situation where the facility may not work enough for that—they would need upgrades. She heard that the areas adjacent cannot be used to their fullest—too much sun, dogs using the area—and it's not usable for families. If there were renovations, the exterior spaces should be part of the plan. **Jessa** said Objective #3 has an action that emphasizes improving community outreach in improvements. It should be a process that involves the community.

Marilyn said the changes were to make it more handicapped accessible and bring the Hub here; the plan she heard didn't have anything to do with the outside. **Peter** said this is the biggest piece of property in the area. It seems like it's central and there should be recommendations specific to it. Brad mentioned plans for a community garden.

Peter mentioned the possibility of a pool since the City doesn't have an outdoor pool. An alternative could be a municipal swimming hole with a lifeguard.

The Committee discussed the idea of a swimming pool; **Tex** agreed it would be good if the plan was more direct and clear about a big-ticket community center amenity or improvement. **Brad** spoke about the possible skate park on the other side of the City and keeping things equal. He also mentioned the police having problems with kids crashing the small pool at Olde English Village. **Stephanie** confirmed that comments about a pool are in the plan and **Jessa** said she can dedicate space to something more.

Marilyn mentioned the shortness of meeting rooms. She also mentioned how Wilkinson Park could be a modest example of the type of space they're looking to create. **Peter** mentioned sail shades with smaller landscaping.

Stephanie said they have a CDBG grant for an inventory of rec equipment in areas for this neighborhood that will start in October.

Tex said the next step is Council Workshop and asked Stephanie to go through the highlights of the zoning.

Stephanie reviewed this. WCC hasn't had many changes to bulk and space standards except in the newest created zone. She explained their process and how they accepted uses as conforming, which was discussed with the City as they did not want any nonconformance. There are allowed uses: straightforward, aligned with what's used in other districts. Uses envisioned as having complications they looked at as special exceptions.

Tex explained what nonconformance means; these need Planning Board approval whereas an allowed use that comes forward with a permit and meet setbacks don't need anything else. The presumption is that it's allowed and the Planning Board can deny it if they application is for a use that would create greater negative impacts than an average use of that type.

Tom pointed out an inconsistency in WNC. **Stephanie** mentioned that Tex will need to read through this as well.

Jessa said front yard setback is still a 30' minimum. There is a provision in off street parking. The Committee discussed setbacks. **Peter** asked if there should be performance standards for things like not having the sidewalk next to the road. In terms of making something walkable or

bikable against a fast street, it could be where you put the sidewalk and how you separate from the road that makes the difference. **Jessa** said they can add something to that effect. Also, adding a performance standard about the National Guard is on page 6.

The WR is mostly Redbank. They added uses so it's not just residential: farmers markets, home occupations. **Peter** asked if there are sidewalks on both sides. **Stephanie** said there aren't any. **Jessa** said it's not a particular goal. Within the neighborhood there was low traffic and that wasn't a top priority.

Deqa asked about a library in the area. **Jessa** said it is in the recommendations, objective 3, and asked if this would be a good location. **Deqa** said anywhere, as long as they have access. **Jessa** said they will link more closely.

WNC is a totally new district and addresses the parcels along Westbrook St. There is the potential for redevelopment on the other side of the street as well. She reviewed the maximum front yard setback and **Peter** asked if it should say that space should be landscaped in a particular way. **Quang** said it's easier to leave it open. **Tex** mentioned the picture of the possible use; the flexible plaza space looks more than 30'. They could increase the maximum or exempt plaza space.

Stephanie said b) on page 10 is a restatement allowing them to utilize shared parking. **Jessa** said they were concerned with parking because it's key. **Stephanie** said parking can be a major obstacle. **Tex** said it's a very limited, specific zone and if it doesn't work as they wanted, it won't affect much.

Tex asked if Avesta puts a project in, if it's taxable. The Committee said yes. He suggested a recommendation that this parcel goes into the transit TIF. He explained that the transit TIF consists of 15 lots in the City that if developed, one quarter of the incremental new revenue goes into the TIF fund to use for capital or operating expenses.

Peter asked if it can be Safe Routes to School. **Tex** said yes.

The Committee discussed the off street parking standards and **Tex** said there may need to be a maximum—C and D together are too much. He explained that the low impact standards could be removed.

Stephanie asked everyone to look at it and send comments within the next week.

5. Next Steps in Review & Approval Process

The Committee discussed the schedule. The plan and zoning and on the Council Workshop agenda for August 14th. September 6th is the potential first reading if it's done before Planning Board. He thinks it could be on the Planning Board agenda for September 12th. He asked everyone to come to the Council Workshop in August for support.

6. Comments from the Public

None

7. Round Robin

Quang sent email to landowner of tip of triangle.

Deqa said she was here in place of Merrie. She thinks this is great.

Peter asked for updated on Cacoulidis property. **Tex** hasn't heard anything.

Stephanie thanked Quang for his help

Barry commended the tremendous amount of effort in only nine months to get to this point.

Brad said it's very impressive.

Tex thanked everyone

8. Adjournment

7:30 pm Robert Foster motioned to adjourn. Barry Lucier seconded; unanimous approval.