

Asheville City Council
Planning and Economic Development Committee

3:30 p.m., July 19, 2011
City Hall, First Floor Conference Room

Minutes

Present: Councilman Jan Davis, Chair; Councilwoman Esther Manheimer;
Councilman Gordon Smith

Staff: Gary Jackson, Judy Daniel, Shannon Tuch

The Planning and Economic Development Committee met on July 19, 2011, in the First Floor Conference Room, City Hall. Chair Davis called the meeting to order at 3:35 p.m.

1. Approval of Minutes

The Minutes from the June 21, 2011, meeting were approved as amended.

2. New Business

Urban Agriculture

Judy Daniel, Planning Director, reported to the committee, at Councilman Smith's request, on the "Congress for the New Urbanism" conference, held in Madison, Wisconsin, that had Urban Agriculture as a major theme. She stated that Asheville is actually pretty progressive already on what we allow since we do allow chickens, although we do not allow roosters because of noise related issues.

The concept of farming in the city and raising food very close at hand is becoming ever more prevalent. Lots of people have been growing food in their yards for years, but we are just starting in on the community garden aspect. An example is Grace Covenant Church, which grows food on their property and donates it to Manna food bank. These community gardens have been expanding in recent years. She stated that Asheville is actually pretty progressive already on what we allow since we do allow chickens, although we do not allow roosters because of noise related issues.

Ms. Daniel reported that the most progressive cities at this point are Detroit, Michigan, Chicago, Illinois and Madison, Wisconsin. Year round local farming has been an outgrowth of their farmers markets, and the whole push is to expand the growing season and to use the whole cycle of life concept. Cities where this has really taken off have been those with a great deal of urban decay. From a regulatory aspect, many cities block urban agriculture, although Asheville does not; only noise or health hazards regulate urban agriculture in our area.

Councilman Smith commented that he became very interested in this subject several months ago, and has starting talking to a large number of people to get their perspectives on rural agriculture, production, distribution, and education. He has been trying to get a global picture of how we are doing here ever since food insecurity report

came out. He hopes to be able to show to the other council members soon what he has learned about this issue. Councilman Smith suggested that what most likely needs to happen is stronger coordination among entities that produce and distribute these foods right now.

Councilman Smith brought up two other related concerns:

- Area commerce and sustainability to make sure that our local farmers are able to continue to see the present success that they've experienced.
- Emergency issues: we have set asides (fuels) for emergency services, but we do not set asides for food distribution.

Councilman Smith noted that he has brought in some interns to do research around this issue in other cities, and, together with the information Judy has gathered, hopes to create a report to see what we can do by the end of the month.

Review of Cottage Development

Ms. Daniel introduced Review of Cottage Development by referring the Committee to her staff report dated July 14, 2011 (please see attached). Staff was asking for the consideration of a recommendation to remove the use of "Cottage Developments" from the USSR for further study.

Councilman Smith expressed his concern that there might be loss of construction of affordable housing by taking the recommended action.

After much discussion, the Committee recommended inserting a purpose clause to the "cottage development" use in the USSR. The purpose clause will be presented to the Planning & Zoning Commission on August 3. If acted upon, it would then be presented to full Council.

3. Updates

Mobile Food Vending Ordinance

The City Manager updated the committee on the time table for the mobile food vending ordinance. It has already gone to the Downtown Commission, and will go to the Planning & Zoning Commission on August 3rd. If they act upon it, it will be then be reviewed by the Public Safety Commission on August 16th. It could then come before full Council on August 23rd.

Councilman Davis asked to go on record stating that staff, especially Alan Glines, Judy Daniel, Shannon Tuch and Jessica Bernstein, had done a great job of getting everyone to the table during this very interesting process based on the intense emotion on both sides of the issue. He did share two concerns, which he plans to bring up at the Public Safety meeting: the number (ten) of food truck permits (too many for 50 block area); and the enforcement issue, because of the potential for late hours, both for the protection of the tourists and the food vendors themselves. Ms. Tuch shared that staff had recently had a very productive meeting with APD to address Councilman's enforcement concern, which would be shared at the Public Safety Commission meeting.

Councilman Smith commented that he felt the process had gone as well as it possibly could.

Because of the conflict with the Public Safety Commission meeting in August, staff recommended that the PED Committee meeting scheduled for August 16th be cancelled; the Committee so moved. The next meeting of the PED Committee will be September 20, 2011.

3. Presentations and Public Comment

There were no presentations or public comment.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:30 p.m.