

**These minutes are a summary of the discussion. The audible recording is available at the following website: <http://bit.ly/T3S7CB>**

Planning & Zoning Commission Mid-Meeting  
Minutes of April 16, 2015  
1st Floor North Conference Room - City Hall

**Present:** Chairman Jeremy Goldstein (left meeting at 5:18 p.m.), Vice-Chair Holly P. Shriner, Kristy Carter, Jim Edmonds and Karl Koon

**Absent:** Laura Berner Hudson and Mr. Joe Minicozzi

**Regular Meeting - 4:00 p.m.**

Chairman Goldstein called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. and informed the audience of the public hearing process.

**Administrative**

- City Clerk Maggie Burlison administered the oath of office to each Commission member present.

**Agenda Items**

**1. Discussion of Long-Range Planning Concepts for the Area of Patton Avenue and Louisiana Avenue**

Interim Planning Director Alan Glines reviewed with the Commission the purpose of this mid-month meeting, which was to create an outline for a small area study for an underutilized portion of Patton Avenue in west Asheville. The outcome at the end of the study may be specific changes for zoning, infrastructure and services in this area. Staff will then take the proposal/scope of work/implementation to the City Council Planning & Economic Development Committee for their agreement, prior to moving forward with the small area study.

Mr. Glines reviewed goals that relate to transportation and land use from the Comprehensive Plan. Using maps and pictures, Mr. Glines then reviewed in detail the following suggested components of the study, while Commission members asked various questions throughout the review: (1) understanding parcels, ownership and lot sizes; (2) tax value and level of investment on a parcel by parcel basis; (3) consideration of existing zoning, positive and negative components; (4) consideration of traffic numbers, average daily traffic counts, speed, accident counts; (5) pedestrian infrastructure; (6) signalization throughout area; (7) consideration of other travel modes and infrastructure; (8) understanding potential space for new streets or connections; (9) map utilities; and (10) compilation of other survey data.

Using a map showing the floodplain and floodway along the corridor, Stormwater Services Supervisor Marcus Barksdale explained the 100 year floodplain area, the 500 year floodplain area, and the area within the 100 year floodplain called the floodway. He said that Smith Mill Creek runs along the edge and a combination of development that encroached into the drainage way, amount of impervious surface that creates more run-off, and undersized culverts basically creates flooding conditions so the entire corridor backs up. The flood depths range from roughly 1-2 feet deep to roughly 5 feet deep. In the floodway you can almost do nothing as far as development or redevelopment. In the flood fringe you can do almost anything as long as you comply with the flood ordinance. Compliance with the flood ordinance includes basically flood proofing the structures - by either elevating above the floodplain elevation or putting in flood barriers, or wet flood proofing. The City has hired Brown and Caldwell consultants to perform a study of Smith Mill Creek to determine how to mitigate the flooding problems and improve the

flow of water along this area, but he anticipated three years before meaningful recommendations. Again, he said you can redevelop the portions that are in the flood fringe (add fill and raise the floor of the building and get it out of the floodplain). But to do anything in the floodway, you would have to go through extensive flood studies and demonstrate that there is no rise in the flood levels, which is almost impossible. The City regulates to the 100 year floodplain, not the 500 year floodplain.

There were numerous questions raised by the Commission and responded to by Mr. Glines, Urban Planner Vaidila Satvika, or Stormwater Services Supervisor Marcus Barksdale, include, but are not limited to: can the businesses in the old Sky City Plaza be redeveloped; how did the McDonalds tear down and rebuild; what if a building burns down; do aquatic buffer rules apply to Smith Mill Creek; and can roads be constructed through the floodway; can a divided highway with landscaping be placed in the medium.

After extensive discussion, Vice-Chair Shriner said that the flood issues for the buildings along that corridor in the floodway creates a disincentive to do anything to their property.

At the request of Chairman Goldstein, Mr. Glines said that he would provide a link of the maps for the Commissioner's further review.

Mr. Glines said that during the small area study, that will really have to understand the floodway and the issues surrounding that.

In response to Ms. Carter, Mr. Glines said that once the Brown and Caldwell study is complete, the City will prioritize improvements to this area against other areas through a grant or other funding. He felt that having a small area plan in place will be beneficial when applying for grants.

After discussion, the project boundary was determined to be from Regent Park Boulevard to Druid Drive, which is 1.1 miles and picks up where there the Haywood Road Form Based Code ends.

Mr. Glines said that the list of key stakeholders will grow as the small area study progresses, including property and business owners, neighborhood residents, FEMA, N.C. Dept. of Transportation, N.C. Dept. of Environment and Natural Resources, N.C. Dept. of Public Safety, motorists, etc.

When Mr. Edmonds wondered how realistically are our goals for this area in alignment with City Council goals, Mr. Glines said this is a high priority as it is underdeveloped property. He reiterated that once the proposal for the small area study is supported by the Commission, he would present the proposal to the City Council Planning & Development Committee for their agreement, to make sure that this study is not stepping too far out ahead of Council's interest.

Ms. Carter noted that this is a big project with many decisions surrounding the flooding issues, and wondered if the Commission should scale back the project and work with the Multimodal Transportation Commission on the pedestrian safety aspect of the corridor. Mr. Glines said that the Multimodal Transportation Commission has an ongoing plan called Asheville in Motion which is looking at Patton Avenue from a pedestrian standpoint. Knowing what the Commission knows now about all the flood issues and their complications, this small area study may not be at the top of the list anymore of corridors the Commission would like to study.

Vice-Chair Shriner noted that nothing will be able to be implemented from the small area plan until the flooding issues are resolved, which recommendations are at least three years out.

In response to Ms. Carter, Mr. Barksdale felt that from the current redevelopment pattern along the corridor, the corridor will virtually look the same as it does now in the next three years.

Mr. Glines said that the City is in the process of the new Comprehensive Plan and there will be a lot of opportunity to participate with the community and the consultant. Urban Planner Sasha Vrtunski suggested the Commission spend a few hours reviewing each major corridor they identified earlier and request those results be included in the overall Comprehensive Plan.

Ms. Carter suggested the Commission not proceed with the small area study for this area due to the flooding constraints in this area.

Mr. Glines suggested the Commission revisit the list of corridors they wanted to review, with Ms. Hudson and Mr. Koon's input since they were not on the Commission during the listing process, and perhaps come up with a smaller study-type project moving parallel with the comprehensive plan process. The list could be open to other areas not on the list, noting that a smaller section of Merrimon Avenue might be a suitable study project.

Mr. Edmonds suggested the Commission re-rate the corridors with a standard level to see where they can do the best.

Vice-Chair Shriner felt that the flooding issues along this corridor needs to be addressed. Mr. Barksdale said that this could be a multi-level partnership with the city, state and federal governments.

It was the consensus of the Commission to revisit the corridor list (including Ms. Hudson's and Mr. Koon's input) with a standard level to rate the corridors at the May mid-month meeting. He will provide the Commission with maps and other suggestions for smaller section corridor review. Even though it took Planning staff at least 40 hours to prepare for the Patton Avenue corridor program components, the outline will be helpful for use in other project.

When Vice-Chair Shriner asked if there was any update on the hiring of the new Planning Director, Mr. Glines said that he had no update.

### **Other Business**

Vice-Chair Shriner announced the next meeting on May 6, 2015, at 5:00 p.m. in the First Floor Conference Room in the City Hall Building, noting that she will be unable to attend that meeting.

### **Adjournment**

At 5:31 p.m., Mr. Koon moved to adjourn the meeting. This motion was seconded by Mr. Edmonds and carried unanimously on a 4-0 vote.