

Denton Planning Commission

Minutes

Town of Denton

February 25, 2020

Planning Commission Members:

Doris Walls, Chairperson*

William Quick*

Sue Cruickshank*

Joseph Mayer, Jr.*

Lauren Shilling*

Stephen Mead**

* Those Present

** Excused

*** Absent

Visitors:

Walter Keith Johnson

David Renshaw

Recording:

Donald H. Mulrine, Jr., Town Administrator

Peter Johnston, Town Planner Consultant

PROCEEDINGS

Call to Order:

The Planning Commission Meeting was called to order by Chairperson Walls at 6:00 p.m., on February 25, 2020, at the Denton Town Office and followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Minutes:

The January 28, 2020, Planning Commission Meeting minutes were reviewed and approved unanimously as submitted.

Old Business #1 – 2010 Comprehensive Plan Update:

Peter Johnston provided the Planning Commission with a PowerPoint presentation to discuss the Denton Comprehensive Plan Land Use Element. This is the most important element of the Comprehensive Plan and establishes the framework of the land in the community. It is also the linkage between the strategies, objectives, and goals of the Zoning Code, Subdivision Regulations, and Zoning Map. The Land Use Article requires there be consistency between the Comprehensive Plan's objectives, statements, and goals with the implementation of the Zoning Code, Zoning Map, Subdivision Regulations, programs, and policies.

Mr. Johnston's presentation included a different approach in determining the Land Use Element. Financial stability and property values were not addressed in the previous Comprehensive Plan and are important to the community. This can be accomplished by decoupling the land use plan from the underlying zoning districts and support infill and redevelopment projects.

Coordinating the Land Use Plan to the Denton Pattern Book's Transect and design concepts allows the changes that continue to affect investment and settlement patterns in Denton.

Transects are a hierarchy of development patterns based on the characteristics of Denton.

A Land Use Plan Map was distributed for discussion of the Transect Zones in relation to the infill capacity in that neighborhood for residential and commercial properties.

The Municipal Growth Element will be limited by the water and sewer capacity and areas planned for public water and sewer. At the current population growth estimates for the next twenty years, the Rural Reserve (T-5) areas will remain undeveloped.

Based on the results of the Development Capacity Analysis, the following recommendations were made for the next Comprehensive Plan:

- Increase extent of the redevelopment district
- Allow more flexibility to vary standards for context appropriate projects including mixed-use
- Allow more residential unit types as infill and redevelopment
- Embrace some mixed-use in residential neighborhoods. Allow context appropriate nonresidential infill and redevelopment
- Allow for a broader range of home occupations
- Facilitate the next increment of change/intensification
- Require a minimum of mixed residential unit types in PN Planned Development

The Infill and Redevelopment Overlay Districts will allow the Planning Commission to approve development based on the Pattern Book applying Denton's characteristics to the redevelopment. This will allow more flexibility with the land use and maximize the land density. Some potential residential unit types are the Fourplex, Side-by-Side Duplex, Stacked Duplex, Cottage Development, and Carriage House.

These development options are a way to increase housing and population within walking distance of the Town center and will support the downtown market area.

Vice Chairperson Quick requested the reason for requiring mixed development in neighborhoods.

Mr. Johnston responded that the socioeconomic profile is the same in Suburban Residential neighborhoods. There is no diversity in these neighborhoods because it caters to the same needs at the same price point. The diversity of housing will allow homeowners to age in place.

Zoning is a tool to accomplish long range community wide goals and objectives.

Zoning has become a wealth protection device where the neighborhood groups are driving the land use and not allowing the market and the Town to capture the highest value on the return on investment for the infrastructure for the roads, water, and sewer.

The Pattern Book is a tool for development for the infill and redevelopment areas.

Commissioner Cruickshank is concerned about the small businesses in the downtown area and the effect that Amazon has on the small businesses.

Amazon provides an opportunity for small businesses to sell their products to a larger market.

Expanding the scope for home occupations will increase the opportunities for small businesses. The potential evolution for a small business is expanding from a room in your home or garage and as the business grows it will move to a larger space that could be in the downtown area or underutilized space in the business park.

Commissioner Mayer would like the site plan approval process to be streamlined to encourage developers to invest in Denton.

Changing the redevelopment zone from a floating zone to an overlay zone and providing the Planning Commission with the flexibility to approve an infill and redevelopment project will encourage developers to invest in Denton. This will reduce the approval time for developers.

Old Business #2 – Other: None.

New Business #1 – 2019 Annual Report –

Staff prepared the 2019 Annual Report as required by the Maryland Department of Planning for review and approval by the Planning Commission.

Vice Chairperson Quick motioned to approve the 2019 Annual Report.

Commissioner Shilling seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. (5:0)

New Business #2 – Other:

The 2019 Ethics statements were provided to the Planning Commission for completion.

Staff Item #1 – Other: None.

Adjournment:

The meeting adjourned at 7:09 p.m.