

ACTION MINUTES

Group 1 Stakeholder Interview Minutes

Friday, September 19, 2014

1. **Introductions** Senior Planner Cattan provided overview of the Zoning Code update process and stakeholder meetings.
Stakeholders present: Matthew Thompson, Charlie Eadie, Frank Phanton, Daniel Townsend, and Linda Smith (Planning Commissioner)
Staff present: Community Development Director Rich Grunow and Senior Planner Katie Cattan
2. **Ease of Use.** Are there specific aspects of the existing Zoning Code that are unclear or difficult to understand? How could we make the code more user-friendly?
 - a. Coastal section is difficult to read
 - b. Diagrams of residential development standards would be helpful but overall residential zoning requirements are easy to understand.
 - c. Maximum Floor Area Ratio (FAR) should be viewed as an entitlement and is not a negotiation tool during review by Planning Commission.
 - d. Commercial District
 - i. Overly thought out. Let the market place figure out what uses will work within the community and regulated those things you do not want in the community. Allow flexibility in land use.
 - e. Historic Regulations lack standards and process for reviewing modifications to historic resources.
 - f. Non-conforming regulations have major loop-holes and are open to interpretation.
3. **Development Standards and Regulations.** Are there specific development standards or land use regulations in existing code that have caused problems that should be revised? How do you suggest addressing these issues?
 - a. Principle Permitted Uses is a farce.
 - i. All principle permitted uses require architectural and site review in Community Commercial zoning district. New zoning code should remove required review for those types of commercial uses the City would like to encourage.
 - ii. Requirement to review all new commercial development politicizes all applications. Some permits should be allowed with approval over the counter.
 - iii. Analogy "if you're a hammer, everything looks like nails" Capitola is very focused on regulating land use. A new approach was suggested to allow everything and prohibit those things that are not healthy to the community. Example: Pacific Avenue, Santa Cruz. The City identifies the types of businesses they do not want to see within identified block. (Thrift stores)
 - b. Allow housing within commercial areas. Sustainable practice.

- c. Healthy neighborhoods: zone for what the City would like to see within the neighborhoods – pedestrian/bicycle connectivity – interactive yards – less emphasis on the car.
- d. Parking Standards
 - i. Allow applicants to utilize best available information to comply with parking. (Example: Urban Land Institute parking methods). The zoning code often demands too much parking and is an approximation. There are more accurate tools out there that incorporate other factors such as multi-family, mixed use, proximity to public transit, etc.
 - ii. Build into the process an option that an applicant can provide a solution to parking other than onsite. (Bicycle off-sets, multi-modal options in proximity to development, in-lieu fees toward public parking, etc.)
 - iii. Parking should not be utilized as a zoning tool to limit development.
 - iv. Treat parking as a public utility with a parking district. Capitola should invest money into this approach. The parking could pay for itself with higher priced parking in the premium locations. Most likely the coastal commission will challenge, but with good information the City can challenge the coastal commission. Similar to San Francisco’s approach.
- e. Development standards must be clear to ensure quality and compatibility.
- f. Historic Preservation.
 - i. The City must have the policy discussion “Does the city want to be historic or look historic”
 - ii. Set policy for integrity of original material.
 - iii. Need to define historic and why it is historic.
 - iv. Identify the benefits to property owners/community to have an adopted list.

4. **New Provisions.** Is the existing Zoning Code silent on any issues or uses that should be addressed in the Zoning Code? Examples from other jurisdictions that would improve the code and the built environment.

- a. Create certainty in the process and plan ahead. This formula leads to investment.
 - i. Example given of Santa Cruz redevelopment plan after Earthquake.
 - ii. Create an area plan for the areas of Capitola that will be redeveloped. Create public/private partnerships toward redevelopment and have both parties involved in development of the area plan. Define what future development looks like (sunlight, windows, building frontage, streetscapes, public realm etc.) Then create the standards that reflect the vision.
 - iii. Suggested area: 41st avenue and focused properties that expect redevelopment.
- b. Examples from other jurisdictions:
 - i. Santa Cruz County Pleasure Point Community Plan
<http://www.sccoplanning.com/PlanningHome/SustainabilityPlanning/TownVillageSpecificPlans/PleasurePointCommunityPlan.aspx>

- ii. Saratoga design guidelines
(<http://saratoga.ca.us/civicax/filebank/blobdload.aspx?blobid=8126>)
- c. Planned Developments should be kept as a way to get the best design.
 - i. Decrease 4 acre minimum.
 - ii. Infill requires flexibility to result in the best design within an established area.
 - iii. Let architect fix issues through design rather than zoning creating additional hurdles to development.
 - iv. Remove public benefit requirements – the public benefit is the redevelopment
 - v. Reminder that the buildings that are most loved in Capitola could not be built within today's zoning code. Allow for creativity.
- d. Update Design Guidelines
 - i. Identify neighborhood priorities specified in the general plan.
 - ii. Guide design elements including placement of buildings, form, and massing.
 - iii. Define the public realm – streets, sidewalks, bike lanes, crosswalks, curb and gutter, trees/landscape, bus stops, benches, and trails.
 - iv. Work with individual neighborhoods to define the future. Example of pleasure point (3 workshops and guidelines based on community input)
 - v. Guidelines should be neighborhood specific and include how we manage the automobile (width of streets, on street parking, off street parking)
 - vi. Acknowledge that within the definition of Capitola exists an eclectic mix of design.
- e. Incentivize what the City would like to see in the future.
 - i. Example of Portland and tiny homes. Secondary units no permits and no fees.
 - ii. Accept that property owners will not redevelop unless it makes economic sense. If the City wants to see areas redeveloped, incentives will help property owners participate.
- f. Density and mixed use.
 - i. Density works with good architecture and designing the public realm. Allow increased density by requiring great architecture and improved public realm.
 - ii. Allow more height in mixed use commercial. Limit with # of stories rather than maximum height. Define stories.
 - iii. 41st Avenue and Capitola Road could be a new Urban Village with mixed use and housing.
 - iv. Sustainability is not stopping development. Shift mindset to allow housing through density with multi-modal transportation. Density and multi-modal transportation have a mutually beneficial relationship and are sustainable.
- g. Inform applicants of requirements to obtain approvals/permits from other agencies (Water District, Fire, etc.)

5. **Zoning Map.** Do you know of any needed revisions to the existing zoning map? Are there any errors that need to be corrected or needed rezoning to better promote community goals?

6. **Permit Decision-Making Process.** Depending on the type of application, land use permits require approval by City staff, the Planning Commission, or City Council. Does the current code provide a fair and appropriate level of review of permit applications (i.e., should the Planning Commission review more or less project types)?
 - a. Reduce risk for property owners.
 - i. Identify allowed square footage
 - ii. Allow redevelopment without additional parking requirements
 - iii. ADU without fees
 - iv. Create clear, specific conditions for approval
 - v. Less public process in design review permit.
 - b. Train Chair of Planning Commission to remind Commissioners and Public of what review criteria applies to an application and keep the PC discussion and public comment limited to those criteria under review.

7. **Architecture and Site Review.** Applicants are required to attend an Architecture and Site Review Committee meeting prior to Planning Commission. Do you find this required step effective? Would you suggest any improvements to the Arch and Site Review process?
 - a. Sign permits should not go to Arch and Site.
 - b. Currently, this step is necessary because the code does not have clear design guidelines.
 - c. Rethink timing of arch and site. Might be more helpful as a pre-design review to know what development requirements and contextual elements should be considered within design.
 - d. Residential additions under a certain square footage should be reviewed administratively.
 - e. Arch and Site needs to be redefined and repurposed. Time is costly and this step is not always necessary.
 - f. A City Architect or contract Architect should be considered to replace the need for Arch and Site committee.
 - i. Improve design/compatibility
 - ii. Ability to assist applicant through sketching how to fix identified design issues.
 - g. Suggestion to replace Arch and Site with Architectural Peer review.

8. **Economic Development.** Are there changes we could make to the zoning code to promote economic development? Are there obstacles we could remove or incentives we could add to encourage positive redevelopment?
 - a. City needs to lighten restrictions on use. Reverse the approach of listing what is allowed to prohibit what City does not want in certain areas.
 - b. City needs to encourage development where it wants development to occur. Identify those areas that it would like to see (re)developed and encourage development through code allowances or other economic incentives. Identify what, where, when, how, and goals. Projects must be economically feasible.
 - c. Important to maintain quality within economic development.

- d. The City should invite the conversations to work toward an outcome rather than being reactive. Keep conceptual review process open.
9. **Sustainability.** The new code will place an increased emphasis on sustainability. Do you have any ideas for how can we promote sustainability principles, such as alternative transportation (bicycling and walking), reducing energy and water consumption, encouraging green energy sources, compact development patterns, etc.?
- a. Documentation of Green Standards
 - i. CAL Green covers mandatory requirements. Eliminate the duplication in the process.
 - ii. Points should be granted for reutilizing existing buildings and longevity.
 - iii. Create a check list with boxes rather than quantifying everything.
 - iv. Include alternative transportation credits, impervious surfaces, walk/bike
 - b. Parking is a victimless crime. Unnecessary asphalt should be reclaimed.
 - c. Create achievement awards. Award best landscape improvements for water wise, green buildings, etc.
10. **Other Issues:** Are there any other issues with the zoning code you would like to tell us about?
- The role of staff is to represent the public interest. Staff should focus on purpose of the zoning code and assess projects with purpose statements in mind.
 - The City needs to ask “What are we trying to accomplish? What is the vision?” and make sure the new zoning code functions to allow the city to evolve into the vision.
 - The City should keep an eye on the trends and plan accordingly.
 - Suggestion to put focus on small projects. Identify the areas to focus on and figure out how to nurture those types of projects to be the best they can be. Small projects are attractive: fun, easy, low-risk.
11. **Close. Community Development Director Rich Grunow thanks the stakeholder participants and talks about next steps.**