

Development Regulations Assessment Steering Committee Meeting
March 29, 2017 from 11:30 to 12:30 pm
Ilchester Room, 2nd Floor

Meeting Minutes

Note: These minutes must be approved by the committee to be the official approved minutes

Attendance: Steering Committee Members

- Jane Dembner
- Susan Garber
- Steve Hunt
- Grace Kubofcik *
- Joan Lancos
- Jun Lee
- Dick Lombardo
- Ted Mariani
- Lisa Markovitz
- Lynn Moore
- Drew Roth
- Cole Schnorf
- Paul Skalny

*Absent

DPZ Staff: Valdis Lazdins, Amy Gowan, Julia Boone, Karitsa Norman

Presentation: Don Elliott, the project coordinator from Clarion Associates, gave an overview of the project and explained the role of the steering committee. Howard County Planning and Zoning (DPZ) has begun a Development Regulation Assessment, to include review of the zoning code, as well as regulations, policies and manuals related to land development. The project will occur in two phases: phase I is an assessment of the development regulations and phase II is the drafting of a new unified development code or sets of codes. Clarion Associates has been retained as the county's consultant for phase I of this project. The end result will be a Diagnosis and Annotated Outline, which will serve as a general "roadmap" for phase II- the redrafting the zoning and subdivision controls. Phase II will be bid out through a Request for Proposal solicitation.

Over the next year or so, the Steering Committee will meet approximately four times, or more if further consultation is needed. The project Steering Committee will provide guidance on key issues and proposed resolutions during the Development Regulations Assessment.

The Steering Committee will *not*:

- Vote on issues, documents, or questions relating to the project
- Review documents not available to the public
- Approve or deny any documents produced for the assessment, including the code assessment and the diagnosis and annotated outline

Don Elliott asked the group if there were any questions about the process or the role of the Steering Committee. A question about the scope of the project was raised, regarding whether the outcome is

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bound to what zoning currently covers or whether adequate public facilities would be included? Mr. Elliott answered that, the project will not modify the Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance (APFO), rather the project can work on a bridge between APFO and zoning. Further, planning on public facilities is based on the budget and Clarion was not hired to reevaluate APFO.

Mr. Elliott also clarified what would happen in the interim between the four meetings and explained that updates will be sent out and emails will be used to poll the committee on various issues.

Input and Discussion: Mr. Elliott asked the group to describe what they would like to see as part of the Development Regulations Assessment and identify any particular areas of the current regulations that are working well or need improvement. The Steering Committee provided the following comments:

- It should be possible to address APFO through this project.
- Code should keep planning for public facilities as criteria for redevelopment. Make sure residential development doesn't outpace adequate public facilities.
- The Downtown and Village Center development process in Columbia is onerous: there are too many steps. Address the imbalance between complex processes in New Town vs. out parcels that don't have as many hoops or as much opportunity for input. The process to develop in NT is substantially longer and different from other zoning districts.
- Conditional use permits: citizenry feels their voices haven't been heard.
- Different tools needed for city building vs. city managing. Redevelopment regulations should differ from greenfield development.
- Concerns about lack of uniform enforcement. Contradictory areas should be firmed up and subjective areas cleared up.
- Infill in established neighborhoods is a serious concern. There is currently no emphasis on green space preservation.
- We have zones where the intent of the zone does not match up with what is there.
- Continuing and growing conflict between residents and farmers. The small farming population is being overridden. Better protection of farmland and farm rights.
- Streamlined and concise historic preservation guidelines that have teeth. Stream buffers, storm water management and affordable housing.
- Dissatisfaction with flag lots.
- Recognizing the comprehensive plan sets the framework, zoning is the implementation tool. We need a mechanism to get design quality in cluster developments. How do we build better? Remember that the underlying basis of zoning is residential. The protection of residential should not be forgotten. Not every interest should have equal weight.
- Redevelopment should be encouraged but with actual regulation. It should be acknowledged that redevelopment is green – you are getting something better (i.e. improved stormwater management).
- It is hard to achieve simplicity and be flexible. Defined boundaries for code.

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- The assessment should consider 1) redevelopment, 2) predictability – what is and what isn't allowed, and 3) conditional uses are overused. A greater number of zones or overlays would be better. There should be more limited use of conditional use as it undermines predictability.
- There are areas where fitting in and redevelopment is discouraged because the process is so difficult.
- Make sense of zoning regulations: simple is good. In the southeast, regulations are not rigid enough.

Jane Dembner requested that the Steering Committee be provided with a set of ground rules, a roster of names and association, and a summary of the committee's role.

Amy Gowan explained an Executive Order will be issued to establish the Steering Committee and the Committee is subject to the Open Meeting Act.

Adjourn: Don Elliott closed the meeting at 12:30 pm by thanking the Committee members for their involvement and adding that any additional comments could be submitted through the project website.