

City of Hood River
Planning Commission
Work Session
Monday, December 3rd, 2012

City Council Chambers
211 Second Street
Hood River, OR 97031
5:30 p.m.

PRESENT: Chair Laurie Stephens, Commissioners Steve Winkle, Jennifer Gulizia, Bill Irving, Casey Weeks, Nate DeVol, Nikki Hollatz

ABSENT:

STAFF: Planning Director Cindy Walbridge, Senior Planner Kevin Liburdy, City Manager Bob Francis

GUEST: Mayor Arthur Babitz

MINUTES

I. CALL TO ORDER: Chair Stephens at 5:32 p.m.

Stephens explains that what the commission will do tonight is take a look at the issues raised by EOA where there is a concern that the City has limited light industrial/C-1 lands and an erosion of employment opportunities because of those limitations. The City Council has asked the Commission to focus on the Waterfront particularly the C-2 properties down there. The Commission rejected the staff's recommendation to eliminate residential at the Waterfront and is looking at mixed-use.

II: PLANNING DIRECTOR UPDATE: Cindy Walbridge reported that the signs and the accessory building issue will be assigned a different ordinance number and move that to the City Council. Ordinance 2004 will just be the commercial. Staff and City Manager Bob Francis met about the staff's work plan. A deadline of January 21st, 2013 has been set to finish the recommendation to the City Council about the Waterfront. Walbridge talked to the Michael McElwee, from the Port, and they are going to try to finish up their preliminary vision plan for port by January or February. He wants to sit down with the commission to talk about the Waterfront. *(Note: The separate ordinance was not created and Ordinance 2004 remains with the sign code, accessory buildings and C-2/Waterfront).*

III: WORK SESSION

Chair Stephens wants to look at mixed-use language that would be flexible enough for both locations that are open at the Waterfront.

Irving wants to know why the Commission has been asked to look at the Waterfront instead of other parts of the city.

Mayor Babitz says that he identified it as an easy thing to do, had a clear negative value, would be noticeable to the public. Feels that the port will not get around to actualizing plan for ten to fifteen years because the Port does not have plausible means of funding any changes at the Waterfront.

There is a consensus from the Commissioners that the Waterfront should be mixed use with the priority being commercial; do not eliminate all residential but no single-family dwellings and use the EOA as a guide.

Discussion about the boundaries of the Waterfront. There is a consensus to expand to the east of the bridge. The Commissioners feel it is important to develop a comprehensive plan for the entire Waterfront. There is also consensus to exclude solely residential use and have it zoned for mixed-use.

DeVol refers to the EOA, it is important to mix residential use, when appropriate, but C-2 should be primarily for commerce. Feels it is important to say what type of development; concerned about houses dark for nine months out of the year. It is a good looking industrial area and we should stick to it. Feels Commission should develop a mixed use ordinance but still protect commerce lands. Wants to give developers flexibility as long as commercial is primary.

No zoning or code for disallowing “dark houses”.

Discussion about traffic and frontage on main streets and not primary streets.

Kate McBride: Wonders if the Commission has talked about the mixed use zone as a conditional use. C-2 city wide has tight parameters.

Winkle thinks that mixed use should give developers flexibility to put some residential there and up high.

Commissioners reaffirm that job development is crucial.

Pasquale Barone: the residential component will add livability to the Waterfront, if you prescribe a percentage of residential that you're comfortable with, you are voting for life down at the waterfront.

Irving: the waterfront is the best piece of land left in the city. Feels that residential at the Waterfront would add to the vitality of Hood River and that warehouses would be a disaster down there.

Discussion about what or even if a percentage of utilization of parcel would have to be met as far as X amount of residential per X amount of commercial.

Irving sees three options: 1) require commercial on the ground floor in C-2 zoning, 2) focusing on frontage, 3) to try to figure out the commercial activities on a percentage basis based on size of parcel.

Walbridge says that option three is code enforceable.

Discussion about minimum density per parcel and it was suggested that the Planning Commission could recommend percentage of residential/commercial. Talk about maximizing the use of parcels.

Linda Maddox: concerned about parking, encourage Commission to look at C-2 in a broader sense.

Concern about height requirement for development.

Language can be adapted from 1851 for setbacks and height in commercial zone at the waterfront. It could be an overlay or a text amendment to the commercial zone. Concerns about development rights near the water.

City attorney uncomfortable with conditional zoning map changes so Walbridge suggests that the Commission needs to amend the general commercial zone now in anticipation of what might happen.

Stephens asks if staff can come up with some examples of percentages with some language from 1851 which could help craft language for Waterfront and gather information for setbacks and height limitations.

Walbridge agrees but acknowledges there might be challenges to changing setbacks.

Commission also concerned about minimum density for commercial.

Staff says they have enough direction to come back with a framework on December 17th, 2012. City Manager Bob Francis thinks it will help the Commission to see staff work plans and deadlines.

The Planning Commercial requests a representative from the Port of Hood River to attend the next meeting.

Chair Stephens adjourns meeting 8:00 p.m.

ATTEST:


Laurie Stephens, Chair

4/29/13
Date


Cindy Walbridge, Planning Director

4/29/13
Date (Approved)