Planning Commission
Infill Subcommittee

Minutes
Monday, June 27, 2005 at 5:30PM
Copper Room – 600 S. Alvernon Way
Tucson, AZ

Members Present: Thomas Sayler-Brown (Chair), Shannon McBride-Olson (Vice-Chair, and Frank Thompson.

Members Absent: Dan Williams and Lawrence, Sami Hamed.

Staff Present: Andrew Singelakis, Sarah More, Craig Gross, Wayne Bogdan, Roger Howlett, Trish Gehlen, John Beall, Mike McCrory, and Jaret Barr.

Invited Guests Present: Bonnie Poulos and Mike Grassinger.

Guests Present: Tracy Williams, Ron Peetz, Warren D. Thompson, Les Pierce, Ruth Beeker, Tom Doucette, Paula Meade, Chris Villela, Marilyn Robinson, Bill DuPont, Marti Lavaty, Rick Lavaty, David, Magoon, Jay McCall, Carol Clark, and Collete Altaffer.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Thomas Sayler-Brown called the meeting to order at 5:36PM.

II. INTRODUCTIONS

Sayler-Brown announced that Frank Thompson would be replacing Anne Lawrence on the Subcommittee. Others introduced themselves.

III. APPROVAL OF MAY MINUTES

Motion was made by McBride-Olson, seconded by Sayler-Brown to approve the minutes of the May meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

IV. UPDATE OF NOTICE REVISIONS FROM DEVELOPMENT SERVICE DEPARTMENT

Wayne Bogdan stated that DSD would be modifying the zoning variance and Board of Adjustment appeal forms. Comments will be accepted through mid-July 2005.

V. DISCUSSION OF RESIDENTIAL CLUSTER PROJECT (RCP)

a. Review of Previous Meeting

Singelakis summarized the issues presented at the May meeting regarding the RCP. The main issues that emerged from that discussion were: 1) density/number of units; 2) compatibility; 3) Amenities/Open Space; 4) Notice/Timing and Process; and 5) Infill vs. Edge.

b. Perspectives from SAHBA and Neighborhood Infill Coalition (NIC)

Singelakis stated that he invited Mike Grassinger of the Planning Center (representing SAHBA) and Bonnie Poulos representing the Neighborhood Infill Coalition (NIC). They were asked to identify four things that they would either like to see changed or kept from the current RCP regulations.

Grassinger expressed the following four major issues: 1) The RCP should be retained and time frames for the approval of projects should not be extended; 2) the ordinance should be predictable, so that applicants know what is expected of them going into the process; 3) no third party veto – the RCP is a development right and projects should not be vetoed through any future review process; and 4) different standards are needed for infill verses edge projects. He said that he feels that design review extends the time for the process. But if there were design review, it would need to consist of appointed professional people, with specific parameters for review, and be part of the LUC. Design review might be acceptable if it were coupled with guaranteed review time parameters.

Poulos expressed the following four major issues: 1) Neighborhood associations, as well as adjacent property owners, should be notified and allowed a voice early in the process of applying for an RCP option; 2) The intent of the RPC option, as spelled out in the "Purpose" statement in the LUC, must be honored; 3) The applicant should be required to present to the neighborhood a conceptual layout of what could be built on the property without using the RCP option. This should be done early in the RPC process, and this conceptual layout should be a realistic rendering of what would be allowed on that parcel using the existing zoning without the RCP option; and 4) Neighborhood associations and adjacent property owners should have the right to appeal decisions granting an RCP option. She mentioned that neighbors are not against increased density if the project is designed properly. She pointed to Sonoran Co-Housing on Stone Avenue as a good example.

The following issues were raised by members of the subcommittee and panelists:

- The purpose section of the RPC ordinance is muddled and misses the point.
- The current RCP seems to be problematic in the core of the city not the edge.
- Pima County and Oro Valley both have design review committees for RCP development.
- A simple set of design criteria would go along way toward making the RCP workable.
- How is central city defined? West of Kolb?

- Open space compatibility might be difficult when most of the existing city core was built without it.
- Grading ordinance is problematic and needs to be looked at.
- Good design can be legislated, but good taste cannot.
- Goal of providing affordable housing in RCPs may be in conflict with goal of providing open space.
- Current review process has no set time frames.

VI. CALL TO THE AUDIENCE

Members of the audience raised the following issues:

- RCP constitutes a density increase over current zoning.
- Street compatibility should be considered.
- Neighborhoods have expressed what they do not want but need to understand what they do want.
- As the city grows, there will be a need for infill development, which prevents sprawl.
- Need for different standards for infill vs. edge development.
- Consider county's design review process.
- The grading loophole in the RCP ordinance needs to be fixed.
- Good developers will want to meet with neighbors.
- Early input by neighbors important.
- Existing ordinances and rules need to be enforced.
- Change is needed with the development review process.
- RCPs need to be fixed both in infill and edge situations.
- Current standards ensure that washes and other environmental features are protected.
- If you have more open space, there will be fewer homes.
- Affordable housing requires higher densities.
- Exact compatibility with existing neighborhoods is not always possible.
- Nothing should be added to the current process.
- Key is flexibility.
- Issue seems to be with smaller projects, less than 20 acres in size.
- Land costs are very high in central city.
- Meeting with neighbors is OK as long as no veto authority.

VII. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be on July 25, 2005 at 5:30 at the Copper Room of the Randolph ClubHouse, 600 S. Alvernon.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30PM.