



Planning Commission Infill Subcommittee

City of Tucson Planning Commission Infill Planning Subcommittee Minutes

Wednesday, July 26, 2006 at 5:30 – 7:30 P.M.
Pennington Street Garage Conference Room
110 E. Pennington Street
Tucson, AZ

Attending:

Commissioners

Shannon McBride-Olson, Catherine Applegate Rex, Frank Thomson, Daniel Williams

Staff

Urban Planning & Design: Jim Mazzocco, Planning Administrator; Rebecca Ruopp, Principal Planner; Judith Imhoff, Lead Planner; Jennifer Burdick, Management Analyst.
Attorney's Office: Michael McCrory, Attorney; Viola Romero, Attorney

Absent: Commissioner Sami Hamed

Meeting Summary

The focus of the Subcommittee meeting was to discuss the comments received as part of the April 2006 public comment period for proposed Land Use Code changes, including the Residential Cluster Project (RCP), Neighborhood Overlay Zone (NOZ), the Mixed Use Infill Zone and the Design Review Board.

Jim Mazzocco described the process that has occurred since the last Infill Subcommittee meeting in March 2006. In April 2006, a public comment period resulted in comments gathered from the Neighborhood Infill Coalition (NIC) and the Southern Arizona Home Builders Association (SAHBA). Mr. Mazzocco also asked a consultant firm specializing in zoning code and land use policy, Clarion Associates, to comment on the proposed changes.

Materials provided to the Infill Subcommittee consisted of a report of the comments received, along with staff recommendations, copies of the comments received and the draft ordinances that take into consideration the comments received and staff recommendations.

A progress report was presented to the Mayor and Council Subcommittee on Environment, Planning and Resource Management – Intelligent Growth on June 22, 2006. The Mayor and Council Subcommittee members expect staff to return to the Subcommittee with final draft ordinances for the neighborhood overlay zone and mixed-use zones in November/December 2006.

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Due to significant changes needed on the residential cluster project (RCP) ordinance, as a result of the issues raised in the comments collected in April, the RCP will need to be re-tooled and is expected to come to the Subcommittee for review in March/April 2007.

In order to meet the timeframe set by the Mayor and Council Subcommittee, Mr. Mazzocco requested that the Infill Subcommittee allow staff time to work on the ordinances, with the goal of presenting a progress report on the Neighborhood Overlay Zone and the Mixed Use Infill Zone ordinances, at a minimum, to the full Planning Commission at the September 7, 2006 meeting and then again, at a public hearing to approve the ordinances at the October 4, 2006 meeting.

Discussion of the items ensued (see ‘General Issues/Comments’ section for a summary of issues discussed).

The Subcommittee members present were in favor of allowing staff time to produce ordinances for the Residential Cluster Project (RCP), Neighborhood Overlay Zone (NOZ), the Mixed Use Infill Zone and the Design Review Board. The Infill Subcommittee members requested that draft ordinances be provided to them at a meeting prior to presentation to the full Planning Commission.

Two people spoke during the Call to the Audience. Ms. Bonnie Poulos stated her belief that bundling all of the ordinances together is a mistake. The RCP is currently being misused and something needs to be done about it quickly. She asked that, if the RCP wasn't ready to go forward right now, that a band-aid be considered for how to address the problems it is creating in the neighborhoods. She also mentioned that she would like the Neighborhood Overlay Zone to move forward and hopes that the boundaries for the zones not be linked necessarily to neighborhood association boundaries, but that they are more flexible.

Michael Toney spoke about his belief that the Zoning Examiner needs tools in order to enforce issues. The Zoning Examiner is limited by what is in the Land Use Code and the ordinances discussed today are the kind of tools he needs.

General Issues/Comments

The following is a summary of questions, thoughts, suggestions and comments as documented by city staff over the course of the meeting.

- Concern was stated about how convoluted the Land Use Code is; during the process undertaken that evolved into the ordinances, it became apparent that there were many people who did not know what the Land Use Code was and didn't understand what they read.
Comment: The Land Use Code review is a priority project for Urban Planning & Design staff [and is a City-wide strategic priority project].
- Pima County has some standards that appear to work well and have been generally accepted by the community. For example, the County has an ordinance requiring a buffer between new two story developments located next to existing single story. Some other examples

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include the County's cluster option, conservation subdivision and landscape buffer ordinance.

Comment: A review of other jurisdictions' approaches is going to be done, including Pima County's, for examples of best practices.

- A definition of open space would be helpful and create less confusion.
Comment: Clarification of the open space requirements will be addressed as part of the RCP update project.
- The Neighborhood Overlay Zone (NOZ) is important to establish immediately to address specific issues in specific neighborhoods. Neighborhood Plans that are currently being developed through work with the Miramonte and Jefferson Park neighborhoods, as well as the context study analyzing local subdivisions from the 1950's through the 1970's will help prioritize neighborhoods for possible use of the NOZ.

Some issues to consider for long-term application include:

- If there are elements to the Neighborhood Overlay Zone(s) that appear to be applicable to neighborhoods city-wide, it would make sense to study whether or not to update the Land Use Code versus using an overlay zone.
 - Staff is researching a national trend of Neighborhood Conservation Districts, which may relate to the Neighborhood Overlay Zone.
 - How should the size of a Neighborhood Overlay Zone be determined?
 - What will be the process neighborhoods will go through for a Neighborhood Overlay Zone?
 - Are there concepts that can be used from other newer projects going into Phoenix and other cities that we should be requiring? Also, what have we learned from Civano? Can these concepts be used to address neighborhoods' issues?
- This issue of "mini-dorms" was discussed as an example of an issue that is unclear. Is this specific to the University area? Or does it affect neighborhoods across the city (in that it does not relate only to student housing, but also elderly care facilities that are sprouting up)?

Staff was asked to provide a report on the "mini-dorm" issue: what was done to address the problems in the neighborhood and what have been the results, and the methods' effectiveness.