

CITY COUNCIL WORKSESSION
Monday, February 20, 2020
Water Street Conference Center
407 East Water Street
5:00 p.m.

The Charlottesville City Council met in worksession on February 20, 2020, at the Water Street Conference Center, 407 East Water Street, with the following Councilors present: Mayor Nikuyah Walker, Vice Mayor Sena Magill, Ms. Heather Hill, Mr. Michael Payne and Mr. Lloyd Snook.

Ms. Walker called the meeting to order at 5:08 p.m.

City Attorney John Blair made opening remarks and turned the meeting over to Mr. Brian Haluska, Principal Planner with the City of Charlottesville. Ms. Lisa Robertson, Chief Deputy City Attorney, served as moderator for the worksession.

Ms. Walker interjected with an announcement about a closed session at the end of the meeting to discuss terms for the Civilian Review Board members.

Mr. Haluska gave an overview of the relationship between Zoning and affordable housing. He shared the following purpose of zoning:

- Zoning implements restrictions in order to promote the welfare, safety and convenience of the community; avoid overcrowding; accommodate adequate water, sewer, transportation facilities; promote affordable housing; etc.

Incentive zoning was discussed: allowing special benefits (above by-right parameters) in return for features, design elements, uses, services, or amenities desired by the community.

Mr. Haluska shared a list of zoning impacts on housing construction:

- o Minimum lot sizes
- o Density restriction
- o Restriction of types of residential buildings/structures
- o Restriction on number of dwellings or bedrooms
- o On-site parking requirements
- o Required yards/building setbacks
- o Lot fringe requirements

He advised that the conflict of zoning appears to be that City Council controls the types, size and locations of what can be developed in the City, but developers determine what will be developed.

Mr. John Sales, City Housing Program Coordinator, advised that he is following legislation related to affordable housing. He shared information about affordable housing

support and efforts 2010 to the present, and projections through 2025. He also shared items that are working and items that are not working,

Ms. Robertson, Mr. Sales, and Mr. Haluska recommended four items for immediate action:

- 1) Amend the Zoning Ordinance provisions, and add Charlottesville Affordable Housing Fund (CAHF) revolving loan program, to incentivize creation of a new Accessory Dwelling program throughout the City in more low density areas;
- 2) Adopt new Zoning Ordinance provisions, and add CAHF revolving loan program, to incentivize “missing middle” (Single Family Accessory, duplex, triplex, fourplex) – initially (near term) by means of renovation/alteration of existing structures throughout the City;
- 3) Adoption of an Ordinance to officially enact an Affordable Dwelling Unit Program, implementing all available local authority;
- 4) Restructure the housing advisory commission, transforming a 22-member policy advisory committee to a 10-member working Advisory Housing board, advisory to the Housing Coordinator. Specific areas of expertise on the board would include: real estate agent or broker; banker who finances City housing projects; engineer/architect; SFD developer from the Charlottesville-Albemarle area; MFD developer from the Charlottesville-Albemarle area; City planner; local non-profit service provider (homeless prevention, etc.); and two City residents from low-income community (one may be CRHA board member).

Councilors Magill and Payne spoke about the use of green retro-fitting and keeping climate and energy efficiency as a focus, as these items also impact equity.

Mr. Payne expressed hesitancy in eliminating the Housing Advisory Committee, advising of the need to maintain a policy advisory capacity outside of City staff, in particular for transparency to the public.

Ms. Walker expressed a need to address problematic issues quickly if the program is found to not be effective. She also advised that she would prefer for the Council member on the Housing Advisory Committee continue to work with the working group.

After further discussion from Council, Ms. Walker opened the floor for public comment.

Mr. Walt Heinecke, City resident and member of the Charlottesville Low Income Housing Coalition shared that there is a significant history of racism in zoning that needs to be corrected. He asked if there is a way to speed up the process for coming up with the equity housing strategy and the Zoning Code audit. He asked about Council setting up a land bank strike fund.

Mr. Navarre Bartz shared some of his experience in working on some of the ideas recommended by the panel. As a Soil and Water Director, he advised that getting rid of parking requirements is good for the environment, helping the flow-through of water.

With no one else coming forward to speak, Ms. Walker closed public comment.

Mr. Blair advised that staff could prepare a resolution for the March 2, 2020 City Council meeting. Councilors spoke in unanimous support of having the City Attorney's Office prepare the necessary resolution for referring the proposal to the Planning Commission for review.

Council continued discussion of maintaining the Housing Advisory Committee.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:41p.m.

BY Order of City Council

BY Kyna Thomas, Clerk of Council