

PLACE Design Task Force Minutes
February 8, 2018 12:00 – 2:00
Neighborhood Development Services
Conference Room, 2nd Floor City Hall

Members Present: Mike Stoneking, Fred Wolfe, Mark Rylander, Clarence Green, Andrew Mondschein, Andres Pacheco

Staff Present: Carrie Rainey, Missy Creasy, Carolyn McCray, Lisa Robertson, Alex Ikefuna

Call to Order – Chairman Stoneking

Agenda

Arrival (5 minutes)

Public Comments (5 minutes)

Charlottesville Parking Policy Presentation, Rick Siebert (40 minutes)

Currently, the City does not have a formal parking function (i.e. parking department or authority) to manage its parking activities. Those responsibilities have been dispersed throughout the organization and this approach has served the City adequately for many years. However, as the City grows it has become clear that a new approach will be beneficial. Our parking consultants have recommended that we create a parking function and organize all parking activities under that structure. In the coming months, the City will take steps in this regard to better and more holistically manage the City's parking assets. The Office of Economic Development has been tasked with leading this effort with support from the affected departments and our parking consultant. This action plan provides targeted action items to be accomplished over the next three years by staff in collaboration with various internal and external partners. The stated action items focus on three key areas, as recommended by the 2015 Parking Study conducted by Nelson Nygaard, including: **optimizing existing resources, enhancing access alternatives, and maintaining and growing supply**. For each objective, the year of the plan during which the objective will begin is stated, as well as the estimated time investment, monetary investment, and overall impact the objective will have once completed.

Andrew Mondschein, a University of Virginia School of Architecture professor and member of the PLACE Design Task Force, said there is an existing plan that has certain recommendations in place that included the on-street meters but are much more than that.

Mondschein invited Rick Siebert the city's parking manager, to brief the task force Thursday on the status of the program following the council's decision to end the program after many downtown merchants argued that meters were bad for business.

Mr. Siebert said nobody decides to take their car and go somewhere because they really want it there, and parking is not an objective. Parking is, unfortunately, what you have to do if you choose to use an automobile. There are costs associated with providing parking in desirable areas. There are lost opportunity costs when you use land for parking when you could be using it for something else, he said. Simply adding more parking is generally not the best solution. The best solution would be to use as little as parking as necessary to generate economic development.

Siebert said multiple studies since 1986 have recommended that the city charge for on-street parking. A 2015 report from Nelson Nygaard suggested lowering rates in garages while charging for on-street spaces. The idea was to free up the number of unoccupied spaces on the street to attract customers and other people to downtown businesses and restaurants. Another aspect of the plan includes a park-and-ride lot on Avon Street that's on Charlottesville Area Transit's Route 2.

He said the more we get people not to use single-occupancy vehicle trips to go somewhere, the less parking we need, and we need to do things to encourage the use of the bus system here in Charlottesville. Another is a special daily rate in the Market Street Parking Garage of \$6.50 for downtown employees. Siebert said one reason for the pilot was to see if the meters did in fact free up spaces. One of the problems that had been noted in the parking study was that there was a lot of circling going on where people were driving around looking for that free parking space. Another item to be studied was whether the meters had an effect on business.

Siebert said we were going to compare sales tax for the six months during the pilot to the six months of the prior year and the year before, unfortunately, we didn't get very far with that.

He said proceeds from the meters were to have gone into a special enterprise fund within the city's budget. Siebert said the idea was to use this money to increase the parking supply as well as pay for infrastructure improvements downtown. This program lasted just 72 days, resulting in an incomplete data set. I can tell you anecdotally just from walking down the

street that there seemed to be a lot more turnover and there seemed to be a lot more empty spaces, and I think the idea that the meter was there and you had to pay it, it was a disincentive for the car shuffling.

Siebert said many downtown businesses want at least two hours of free parking so they can compete with Barracks Road Shopping Center, 5th Street Station, Stonefield and other destinations.

As part of the plan, the hourly rate at the Market Street Parking Garage was lowered from \$2.50 to \$1.50, a tariff that is still in place. The first hour also remains free.

The rate at the Water Street Parking Garage, which is managed by the Charlottesville Parking Center, is \$2 an hour. The city and CPC still are locked in legal disputes over rates and other issues.

Siebert said the city is, however, still negotiating with CPC to try to come to an agreement where we can operate the Water Street garage more in tandem with the Market Street garage. He acknowledged the city could have rolled out the program differently. For instance, the city of Roanoke began a metering pilot program in July that took one-hour spaces and converted them to three-hour spaces. You can park for the first hour for free in the city of Roanoke and don't have to buy the second hour and all you have to do is put your license plate in and ask for an hour and it says no charge. The fund also was to have been used in part to help the city pay for a new parking garage at the corner of Ninth and Market streets. The City Council in November 2016 opted to purchase the property where the Lucky 7 convenience store and a Guadalajara restaurant currently operate for \$2.85 million. However, if that lot was to be combined with an existing 63-space surface lot on Market Street, a deal would need to be negotiated with Albemarle County, as that jurisdiction is a joint owner.

Siebert said a decision would need to be made whether the potential future garage would be devoted exclusively to parking or whether additional uses would be involved. However, he added there will need to be a resolution between the city and county regarding the future of courts facilities downtown before the vision for that project's future can become clearer.

Comprehensive Plan Discussion

Commissioner Jody Lahendro spoke on the Planning Commission meeting next Tuesday. He said nothing is finished, but we will have it ready to go out for comments with what we have captured for broads and commissions inputs on March 7th, and then out to the public. We will take to City Council in the fall. We are all hearing the same public input and

interpreting it differently. He gave a synopsis on the agenda and what is to take place on March 7th.

Lena Seville asked about whether there is going to be a chapter in the comprehensive plan on community engagement.

Lahendro said they still plan to have a public engagement chapter, but they have not drafted it yet since they have been focused on the land use map.

Ms. Creasy explained that a chapter on community engagement will be discussed by the planning commission but at this time the Planning Commission time had been stretched a bit but community engagement will not be discussed at the March 7th meeting.

Lahendro stressed that nothing is finished yet. They are going to go out to the public with what they have so far, first meeting with boards and commissions and then later with the general public. He said since they are all coming from different backgrounds, the commissioners have been interpreting the public input differently. He explained all of the community engagement that has been done for the comprehensive plan so far.

Andrew Mondschein gave an update on the lighting study for downtown.

Mixed Use Discussion Update: Lisa Robertson, City Attorney,

PLACE was asked by Lisa Robertson to help the discussion of defining "mixed use." They found that there were two soft spots in the ordinance: the Downtown Extended and the Corner. Both of these have no real definition of what mixed use means, yet both came with a potential bonus if you provided a mixed use building.

Lisa Robertson said they want to put some additional language at the beginning of the mixed use zoning district section that basically says if there is not a specific mixture otherwise provided, the minimum percentage of a use has to be 12.5% (Proposal 1). She said that also some of these districts don't do a very good job dealing with some things that can have a big visual impact on the development of the city in general, such as parking, so a language has been proposed to address this too (Proposal 2).

PLACE decided to only discuss Proposal 1.

Proposal 1 for Consideration:

Where a provision of any mixed use zoning district included in this article.

Mixed use zoning district included in this article allows additional height

Where a provision of any for a mixed-use building, or allows additional residential density for a mixed use building, development, or project, the following requirements must be met for the building, development, or project to be entitled to the additional height or density:

- Where the provision allows for additional height for a mixed-use building, residential and non-residential uses shall each occupy at least 12.5% of the Gross Floor Area of the proposed building.
- Where the provision allows for additional residential density for a mixed-use building, residential and non-residential uses shall each occupy at least 12.5% of the Gross Floor Area within the proposed building unless different percentages are specified within the division containing the regulations for the applicable mixed-use zoning district.
- Where the provision allows for additional residential density for a mixed-use development or project, residential and non-residential uses shall each occupy at least 12.5% of total Gross Floor Area of the buildings comprising the proposed development or project unless different percentages are specified within the division containing the regulations for the applicable mixed-use zoning district.

Proposal 2 for Consideration ("Companion" Amendments)

Within mixed-use buildings, developments, and projects, off-street parking facilities must meet the following requirements along streets designated as "framework streets" in the Streets That Work element of the Comprehensive Plan:

- Within structures containing parking: (i) any floor at street-level [of a framework street] shall be devoted to a permitted use other than parking; or (ii) any parking use at the street level [of a framework street] shall be concealed from view from the [framework] street using liner retail, residential, commercial, or office space.
- Entrances to surface parking lots and structured parking shall not be located along the framework street, but shall be located along non-framework streets or alleys.
- Surface parking lots must be located behind buildings and screened from the framework street with landscape elements.

PLACE Design Task Force endorsed Proposal 1 by a vote of 4 yes and 1 abstain.

Adjourn 2:00 pm