

**Planning Commission Work Session**

**June 25, 2019 5:00 - 7:00 p.m.**

**NDS Conference Room**

**Members Present:** Chairman Lisa Green, Commissioners Jody Lahendro, Lyle Solla-Yates, Hosea Mitchell, Gary Heaton and Rory Stolzenberg

**Members Absent:** Commissioner Taneaia Dowell

**Staff Present:** Missy Creasy, Alex Ikefuna, Lisa Robertson, Joey Winter, and Brennen Duncan

Chairman Green called the meeting to order at 5:05 pm.

**Access Management Code Update Request**

Missy Creasy provided an overview of the materials in the packet and Commissioners began discussion on the request.

Commissioner Mitchell asked if there was access management language in the Standards and Design Manual (SADM). Brennen Duncan, Traffic Engineer clarified that the current SADM does not but there is language in the draft SADM. He noted there is also language in the Fire Code that would assist with evaluating access.

Commissioner Lahendro understood that if the zoning code remains in place that would govern rather than the SADM. It was clarified that he is correct.

Chair Green asked if we needed to wait to strike the current code until after the SADM was updated. She also asked how changing this code would relate to good urban planning. Has that been reviewed?

Ms. Creasy noted that review on the access issue specifically had not taken place yet.

Lisa Robertson reminded everyone of the review that took place by the consultants to develop the SADM which took planning principles into account.

Mr. Duncan stated that there are some remaining details to work out on the SADM but it is very close. He noted that the current SADM is VDOT based which is significantly suburban based. The new manual takes into account more urban principles.

Chair Green asked if the comments on the draft SADM are property specific or holistic. Mr. Duncan noted that they are more general. Many were received from the Bike and Pedestrian Committee and CADRe.

Commissioner Stolzenberg asked if the code could provide staff more discretion.

Ms. Robertson noted that would not be ideal. Having references to the SADM means that decisions would be made with the background of industry standards which is preferable.

Chair Green asked the opinion of Legal on removing this zoning section and placing in the SADM.

Ms. Robertson said she supports removal of the section but did note that the current landowner may not benefit from the removal regardless.

Mr. Duncan clarified that he supports two access points for the Steigman property and that is shared by the Fire Marshal.

Commissioner Stolzenberg asked if there was value in having the code reside in regulations outside the fire code.

Mr. Duncan noted that vehicle trip generation criteria for analysis of access points makes more sense than the use of DUA.

Ms. Robertson noted that Section 34-896(e) provides good guidance noting the use of sound engineering practices.

Chair Green asked Mr. Steigman to speak.

Trey Steigman introduced his team of Valerie Long, Steve Houchens, and Craig Kotarski. Mr. Steigman noted that there are at least 9 projects not in compliance with this code and they had fire approval. He provided background on the materials he submitted. He would like to find a way to make this work and would like to have it initiated now.

Commissioner Lahendro asked what is the concern with the ordinance.

Mr. Steigman noted that it restricts the number of units one can build on a site. He noted that entrances would need to be placed in areas that could have buildings.

Commissioner Lahendro asked if projects with more than 50 units need access.

Mr. Steigman pointed out projects in the community.

Commissioner Solla-Yates asked about the cost difference for putting in a second entrance.

Mr. Steigman noted that he was planning to place 80-90 units and he felt he could only do 49 units under the current code.

Chair Green asked why this had not been addressed before. Mr. Duncan noted that these projects were before his time as Traffic Engineer and there had not been someone in that role for a while and some in the past did not have engineering experience.

Ms. Long reiterated that Brennen said that DUA is irrelevant to the access requirements. She noted the code should be removed and allow the fire code to address. That way the zoning ordinance would not need to be updated as changes are made.

Mr. Duncan clarified that at the Beacon on 5<sup>th</sup>, there was a concern when a power line fell over the only access point. There was an emergency route and he noted that he looks at the size of the site as a large factor in access point requirements.

Chair Green asked if the SADM outlines multimodal options. It does.

Commissioner Heaton noted that he doesn't see a compelling argument for this to stay in the code.

Chair Green pointed out that we don't have an updated SADM yet.

Mr. Craig Kotarski, Timmons Engineering, pointed out the details in Section 34-896(b) and then reviewed each subsection of that code. He did note that this section of the code does not address how access applies to commercial properties.

Chair Green asked for information on AASHTO asking if it is more suburban.

Mr. Duncan noted that the NACTO standards are more urban and the SADM allows for using the standard which makes the most sense for a situation.

Commissioner Stolzenberg was concerned that only a few areas allow for multifamily.

Chair Green asked why we don't continue as has been done.

Ms. Robertson recommended that a change be made so that staff is not in a position to look the other way.

Commissioner Lahendro noted that staff should be directed to review and provide analysis

Mr. Duncan noted this is the code he uses at this point so without it, he is relying on other reviewer's codes to point out access concerns.

Ms. Robertson noted some potential updates to the code (using 34-896(a) and adding reference to SADM) could address concerns. The quickest way to address would be to initiate in July and move to hearing in August.

There was a brief discussion on potential updates to the code.

Ms. Long noted that this solution could be a short and a long term solution.

Ms. Robertson noted that staff can provide a draft of the code with the initiation materials.

Ms. Long thanked the Planning Commission for having this conversation. She noted this was very productive. She suggested that it may be helpful to have public comment earlier in the meeting so items may be addressed if needed.

Mr. Morgan Butler, SELC, thought the meeting was productive as well and supported consideration for the public to talk more in the discussion.

Commissioner Heaton did note that not all topics are conducive to back and forth discussions.

Commissioner Stolzenberg suggested maybe having public comment at the one hour point.

Ms. Robertson reminded the Commission that they wanted to schedule time in the future to talk about bylaws and meeting process.

Chair Green noted a good time for that meeting may be in October after a new chair has been selected.

**Adjournment: 6:25 pm.**