



PLANNING COMMISSION

NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN SUBCOMMITTEE MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING

Wednesday, November 16, 2011

The Planning Commission Neighborhood Plan Subcommittee convened in a regular meeting on Wednesday, November 16, 2011, at 301 W. 2nd Street, City Hall, Room #2017, in Austin, Texas.

Commissioner Kirk called the meeting to order at 6:06 p.m.

Subcommittee Members in Attendance:

Saundra Kirk
Dave Sullivan
Jeff Jack

City Staff in Attendance:

Greg Dutton, Senior Planner, Planning and Development Review
Jody Zemel, Neighborhood Advisor, Planning and Development Review
Gary Schatz, Assistant Director, Austin Transportation Department

Others in Attendance:

Tracy Ekstrand, Pedernales Neighborhood Association
Gavino Fernandez, Jr., Holly Neighborhood Plan
Sara Koeninger, Holly Neighborhood Plan / Balcones Resources
Gloria Moreno, Pedernales Neighborhood Association
Kimberly Reeves, In Fact Daily

1. CITIZEN COMMUNICATION: GENERAL

a. None.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. The minutes for the regular meeting of October 19, 2011, were approved on Commissioner Sullivan's motion; Commissioner Kirk's second on a 2 to 0 vote.

3. OLD BUSINESS

a. Holly Neighborhood Planning Area. Discuss and consider the initiation of a zoning and future land use change for the property located at 2416 East 6th Street. This is a continuation from the September 21st meeting. (Discussion and/or Possible Action)

Gloria Moreno explained that the property at 2416 East 6th Street, Balcones Recycling (of Balcones Resources), was likely to move soon, and that the Pedernales Neighborhood Association was suggesting a downzoning from the current LI-CO-NP to something less

permissive and more in keeping with zoning that surrounding businesses have (such as CS-CO-MU-NP). Mr. Gavino Fernandez and Ms. Moreno went over current businesses and uses in the area, and Mr. Fernandez reiterated the desire to see some kind of zoning that was a better fit for the neighborhood.

Sara Koeninger explained that although Balcones Recycling had had a constructive meeting with the neighborhood, the company would like to know what the neighborhood has as a vision for the property and the area. Discussion ensued of different zoning types and how they might affect the ability of Balcones Resources to sell the recycling center property, and Commissioner Sullivan reminded the group that even if the zoning does change, that Balcones Resources may continue their recycling business as is at the current address. LI-PDA was discussed as possible alternative zoning between the neighborhood and Balcones Resources, but the neighborhood ultimately decided they do not wish to see another industrial-type use go into the spot where Balcones Recycling currently is, although LI-PDA is something that Balcones Resources is open to. Commissioner Jack asked if there had been a market study to determine what type of zoning might be the most marketable, and Ms. Koeninger explained that there appeared to be interest in multifamily and industrial uses for the property. Commissioner Sullivan also explained that if the PC Neighborhood Plan Subcommittee and full Planning Commission recommended a change in zoning, that it would go forward as both a zoning change and neighborhood plan amendment, concurrently.

The motion to recommend the zoning change from LI-CO-NP to CS-CO-MU-NP for the property was approved on Commissioner Sullivan's motion, Commissioner Kirk's second, on a 2-0 vote.

4. NEW BUSINESS

a. None.

5. STAFF BRIEFINGS

a. Parking Issues. Gary Schatz, Assistant Director, Austin Transportation Department, will provide an overview of parking-related issues affecting neighborhoods throughout the City of Austin and possible solutions. (Discussion)

Commissioner Kirk explained that she had an interest in finding out if there was a way to address parking concerns that neighborhoods are having, by possibly finding or creating new tools.

Gary Schatz explained that parking should really be viewed as a commodity, as it has a value, and also needs to be managed as a commodity. In addition, demand and expectations need to be managed so that in a city like Austin that is growing, the expectation should be more people-centric and less auto-centric. Mr. Schatz explained that residential permit parking (RPP) was a balancing act between the needs of neighborhoods and the needs of adjacent business owners, and suggested that parking districts where demand is measured every few years might be a good tool. Street parking also needs to be valued appropriately, or parking garages will remain empty while people spend extra time looking for free or lower priced street parking.

Commissioner Kirk made the point that it was necessary to address parking issues in neighborhoods, because people associate overparking with increased density, and at some point people will resist additional density because of the perceived problems it brings, like overparking and other livability problems. Commissioner Jack added that when zoning is considered that parking should also be considered, to determine if a business needs a certain amount of parking, or if customers can get to it by transit or other means.

Commissioner Kirk recommended having a tool chest of different parking options, so that different options could be applied to different neighborhoods, depending on what their specific parking is. Discussion ensued around different tools, such as a cumulative traffic impact analysis (TIA), or painting parking spaces in neighborhoods so that driveways, stop signs, and fire hydrants are not blocked. Mr. Schatz explained that newer TIA studies were starting to evaluate all different modes of transportation, not just automobile use, and suggested that new or redevelopments include not just a TIA but a parking impact analysis (PIA) as well. Discussion followed about the need for more planning efforts to include parking impacts, and the need for improved coordination between the City and Capital Metro, and inclusion of parking recommendations in the Imagine Austin comprehensive plan and/or possibly in next bond election.

A suggestion was made to return to this subject at the January 18, 2012 subcommittee meeting, so that existing parking tools could be reviewed and new solutions considered.

No action was taken.

6. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

a. None.

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Kirk adjourned the meeting without objection at approximately 7:52 pm.