

MINUTES

Minutes approved by the Springfield
Planning Commission: 11/4/2003

Springfield Planning Commission
Work Session
Springfield City Hall
Jesse Main Room
225 Fifth Street, Springfield

September 16, 2003
6:30 p.m.

PRESENT: Steve Moe, Chair; Greg Shaver, Jim Burford, David Cole, William Carpenter, Gayle Decker, commissioners; Mel Oberst, Greg Mott, Mark Metzger, City of Springfield staff; Joe Leahy, City Attorney; Doug Dupriest, Lithia Motors.

ABSENT:

1. Lithia Motors Request to Amend the Springfield Development Code LRP2003-00009

Mr. Metzger, Planner III explained that, due to the change of zoning to Mixed Use Commercial slated to occur soon, Lithia Motors was seeking modifications to the development code so that auto dealerships were no longer excluded from this type of zone.

Commissioner Shaver asked why the code specified that auto dealerships were excluded in Mixed Use Commercial zones. Mr. Metzger responded that the MU zoning was not written with auto dealerships in mind, as the dealerships had extremely large footprints. He said it was designed to support the development of smaller commercial ventures and had architectural standards that made resulting development more attractive. Regarding the existing car dealerships in the downtown area, he asserted that they did not have the sort of urban "feel" that went along with a downtown area.

Mr. Metzger noted that the Lithia Motors dealership was outside of the area of the downtown that was designated to be a nodal/pedestrian-oriented zone. He stated that as the downtown area experienced revitalization the land values would continue to go up and, at a future date, the three dealerships in its vicinity would sell out.

In response to a question from Commissioner Shaver, Mr. Metzger said that motions suggested in the staff report included a cut-off date because the intention was to grandfather in the existing dealerships while disallowing new ones. He clarified, in response to another question from Commissioner Shaver that should a dealership sell out to a different dealership the use would remain grandfathered in.

Mr. Metzger relayed staff's hope that Lithia Motors request be granted.

Commissioner Decker asked if the grandfathered status would also allow a used car dealership. Mr. Metzger replied that it would be allowed.

Commissioner Carpenter wondered if a size limit should be included as a condition to the grandfathered dealerships, so that they were not allowed to purchase more property and get larger.

Commissioner Burford felt that the key word was "auto" and that this would prevent a different sort of transportation or a dealership of construction equipment. He suggested that staff alter the language to indicate the code amendment was strictly applicable to dealers of automobiles. Mr. Metzger said he could add language that specified that automobiles and light trucks were the only items for sale at an automobile dealership.

In response to a question from Commissioner Shaver, Mr. Metzger noted that there had been complaints filed about the motorcycle dealership in the downtown area and that city residents would likely oppose including them in the code amendment.

Mr. Metzger provided a short discourse, with the aid of a map of the vicinity, on the Lane Transit District (LTD) station in relation to the automobile dealership and the proposed node.

Mr. Metzger explained that the 1/4 mile radius for the boundary of the proposed downtown node was largely Mixed Use Commercial. He said the City was looking at the situation from the standpoint of achieving a desired outcome. He added that the City was asking any parties interested in redevelopment in that area to rezone to Mixed Use Commercial.

Commissioner Moe likened Lithia Motors to a land bank, stating that the dealership would be a low intensity land use for the next ten years, during which time the downtown area would hopefully experience a renaissance, thus increasing land use values. He felt that if and when land values skyrocketed, the dealership would likely sell the land and it will have achieved a high value.

Commissioner Carpenter asked when the community node would be delineated. Mr. Metzger, noting some opposition at the council level to the concept of nodal development and some distrust of the language, said that the council had directed staff to examine Articles 40 and 41 to ascertain whether the development standards were feasible for development.

The Work Session adjourned at 7:02 p.m.

(Recorded by Ruth Atcherson)

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