

City of Springfield
Work Meeting

MINUTES OF THE WORK SESSION MEETING OF
THE SPRINGFIELD PLANNING COMMISSION HELD
Tuesday, July 21, 2009

The City of Springfield Planning Commission met in Work Session in the Jesse Maine Meeting Room, 225 Fifth Street, Springfield, Oregon on **Tuesday, July 7, 2009 at 6:00 p.m.**, with Frank Cross as Springfield Planning Commission Chair.

ATTENDANCE

Present were Chair Frank Cross, Vice Chair Johnny Kirschenmann, and Planning Commissioners Sheri Moore, Steve Moe, Eric Smith and Sean VanGordon. Also present were Development Service Director Bill Grile, Planning Supervisor Linda Pauly, Administrative Specialist Brenda Jones, Gary Karp Planner III, Steve Hopkins Planner II, Lou Allocco and Brand Melick, and Assistant City Attorney Mary Bridgette Smith.

GUEST

- Rick Satre – Satre and Associates

ABSENT

- Lee Beyer – Excused

APPLICATIONS

1. Land Use Efficiency Measure Implementation: Discussion of a proposed new residential zoning district

At the June 2nd work session the Planning Commission and a Residential Lands Study focus group discussed the concept of creating a new Low Density Residential (LDR) zoning district with an intermediate density range between LDR and MDR levels. The zoning district would be applicable to new residential areas added to Springfield's UGB and later – after additional analysis, public involvement, adoption of Infill Design Standards, and through refinement plan updates and specific neighborhood planning – the City could consider the application of the new zone to infill sites within existing neighborhoods. The new zone implements one of several land use efficiency measures prioritized by the City Council, Planning Commission and Residential Lands Stakeholder Committee. The zone is tentatively named LDR-3 (“-3” refers to the proposed 3,000 square feet minimum lot/parcel size).

The results of Springfield's Residential Land Study and Housing Needs Analysis indicate that the housing need for the plan period 2010-2030 exceeds the available development and redevelopment capacity of land inside the UGB and that Springfield has a different needed housing density and mix than it experienced in the 1999-2008 period. ORS 197.296 requires cities to consider implementation of land use efficiency measures if the need for housing exceeds the supply of buildable land, prior to any UGB expansion. On April 13th, the City Council directed staff to work with the Planning Commission to continue development of Land Use Efficiency Measures that could be implemented through the adoption of Springfield's comprehensive plan policies and plan designations. Most cities have more than one Low Density Residential (LDR) zoning district with varied development standards to address the unique development patterns of different eras of

neighborhood development, rather than a “one size fits all” LDR standard. On June 2nd, staff introduced to the planning Commission a proposed LDR zoning district with a density of 8 – 15 dwelling units per acre. The Planning Commission raised a number of questions, and directed staff to develop draft code amendments.

Application of the proposed zoning district would create options and opportunities to expand available housing choices responsive to changing demographics by: 1) allowing development of homes on a range of lot sizes, including small lots; 2) permitting a mix of single family detached and attached homes within a neighborhood; and 3) providing smaller lot sizes and a range of housing types to help meet the community’s need for affordable housing.

Planning Supervisor Linda Pauly greeted the Planning Commission and provided the commission with a PowerPoint presentation to remind it of what the City was doing and why it was doing it. The presentation is outlined below:

Land Use Efficiency Measures Implementation:

Proposed LDR-3 Zoning District

- Council Goal: “preserve small town feel as we grow”
- Community Development Survey – How important are the following community amenities to you? – **See Paper Copy for survey results**
- Community Development Survey – Following is a list of community issues. Please indicate whether you think each issue presents a problem for the City of Springfield? – **See Paper Copy for survey results**
- Community Development Survey – Community Development involves tradeoffs. Land development can be balanced with land conservation. Please indicate how important preserving the following natural and community amenities are to you. – **See Paper Copy for survey results**
- Proposed LDR-3 Zoning District
 - Implements new land use efficiency measures in Springfield
 - Increases density in new single family neighborhoods (expansion areas)
 - 8-15 dwellings per acre (Existing LDR density is <10 du/ac)
 - Reduces minimum lot size to 3,000 square feet to allow creation of small lots and attached housing types
 - No maximum lot size
 - Allows flexibility and greater degree of housing choice
- Housing Needs Analysis 2010 – 2030
 - Population growth and changing demographics
 - Springfield needs to accommodate housing need, not just housing demand
 - Springfield has a significant need for more affordable housing types
 - Larger residential lots are attractive features to many people
 - Much of Springfield’s buildable land supply is in hillside areas. Some of our future growth will be in new hillside subdivisions
- Land Use Efficiency Measures Process to Date
 - Planning Commission Work Session – February 20, 2008
 - Land Use Efficiency Measures reviewed and prioritized by residential Lands Study (RLS) Stakeholder Committee – February 28, 2008
 - On line survey (RLS and CIBL)
 - Community Workshops (CIBL)

- Planning Commission forwarded recommendations to City Council – March 18, 2009- PC Consensus “Allow Small Lots”
 - Open House – April 2, 2009
 - City Council Work Session – April 13, 2009
 - Planning Commission Work Session – June 2, 2009
 - Planning Commission Work Session – July 21, 2009
- Land Use Efficiency Measures partially or fully implemented – **See Paper Copy for survey results**
 - Increase allowable densities - **See Paper Copy for survey results**
 - Allow small lots - **See Paper Copy for survey results**
 - Terms to know:
 - Lifelong Community: A community that respects the needs of children and seniors by making it possible to walk, cycle or ride transit to important places like schools, grocery stores, pharmacies, and parks
 - Complete Community: A community whose mix of housing offers many types of homes affordable to people with a wide range of incomes.
 - Affordable Housing: Housing that is priced within reach of households making the area median income or less
 - Springfield’s Housing needs (Table 5-29, Estimate of needed dwelling units by income lever, Springfield 2010-2030 - **See Paper Copy for survey results**
 - Quality vs. Quantity of space – one of the trade-offs in the residential real estate business. It is the quality of space versus the quantity of space. Figure 1 (see paper copy for diagram) shows how many types of housing typically fit within this trade-off
 - LDR-3 Zone –
 - Choice
 - Opportunity
 - Affordability
 - Flexibility
 - Diversity
 - Adaptability
 - Resource conservation
 - Proposed Springfield Development Code Amendments
 - Will establish a density range for new single-family neighborhoods in none-hillside expansion areas
 - Detailed development standards will be prepared after additional staff analysis and coordination with Public Works Department

Ms. Pauly invited questions.

Commissioner Van Gordon reviewed the purpose for the work session, which was to solicit the commission’s input on the direction on the process was headed, the general district concepts, and draft code language. He referred the commission to *Attachment I, Overview/Questions*, which included questions for commission resolution.

Commissioner Van Gordon reviewed the dwelling types in *Attachment II-2, Density and Lot Size Comparisons with Other Cities*. He confirmed, in response to a question, that attached homes would be limited to duplexes and zero-lot line or “townhouse” style of house. Mr. Karp, in response to a follow-up question, defined townhouses as one unit on one lot with shared walls; ownership would accompany the land.

Commissioner Van Gordon reviewed the concepts that the commission directed staff to pursue, which included options for smaller lots and reduced frontage. Staff had concluded that there needed to be increased coverage for smaller lots, and that it might be wise to prohibit panhandle lots in the new zone. That opened up more options for subdivision design and dwelling types.

Commissioner Van Gordon indicated that Springfield's current frontage requirements were not supportive of zero-lot line or small house development. Commissioner Cross asked for more explanation. Commissioner Van Gordon said that those requirements made it difficult to achieve the desired densities, which was the premise for creating the new Low-Density Residential (LDR) 3 zone. He recalled that staff had proposed the new zone for areas where the urban growth boundary (UGB) was to be expanded, and to look at other existing areas of the community to see if the zone could fit there. He believed that there might be other areas the zone could apply to, but he reminded the commission that the City had agreed to protect its existing low-density residential districts, which were primarily composed of single-family houses.

Commissioner Moore believed that that small lots and small houses could be beautiful and suggested it was to the City's advantage to encourage infill in Springfield neighborhoods that contained aged housing stock. She suggested that such housing could be replaced with denser infill in a positive way. Commissioner Van Gordon agreed that such housing should be replaced, but other issues were triggered, including the appropriate location for such infill. He said that current process was not designed to address that question, and he envisioned that once the zone was more developed and the City had more neighborhood plans in place, it could be appropriate to apply the zone or some version of the zone in certain areas in existing neighborhoods.

Commissioner Moore recalled commission discussion of the area around 19th Street and Hayden Bridge, and confirmed with Mr. Karp that the current development pattern in place at that location was allowed; Mr. Karp was unsure if the property owners went through the subdivision process.

Ms. Pauly pointed out that currently, Springfield allowed for cluster subdivisions. Those subdivisions were governed by essentially the same provisions as the proposed zone, with the exception of the shared common area. Commissioner Van Gordon said the purpose of the cluster subdivision was to cluster development to preserve features on a site; the proposed LDR-3 zone presumed that the land to be developed had no such constraints.

Commissioner Cross asked if street blocks would be smaller. Mr. Karp said not necessarily; he posited there would be more houses facing the street. Ms. Pauly suggested that there could be garages in the back of the house served by alleys.

Commissioner Smith asked if staff was concerned about the impact of parking. Mr. Karp said that was an issue, and he suggested it depended on where the houses were located on the lot and where garages were placed. He envisioned more staff discussion on the topic. Commissioner Smith suggested that when Springfield implemented the efficiency measures, it could find itself with many developments with small lots and narrow streets, and asked if there was a concern about emergency vehicle access. Mr. Karp said that fire departments were always concerned about skinny streets.

Responding to a question from Commissioner Moore about the difficulty of responding to emergencies on panhandle lots, Commissioner Van Gordon confirmed they were also an issue for fire departments. Panhandle lots were an infill tool designed to address large lots that could be divided at most once or twice.

Responding to a question regarding why the City needed a density of 8 to 15 dwelling units in the LDR-3 district, and if that could be a different number, Mr. Hopkins said that staff selected that number for several reasons. The lower number was considered the threshold that would support public transit. It was also the level at which attached homes become necessary to meet that density. Mr. Hopkins said the proposal was similar to the approaches used by other cities. He referred the commission to *Attachment 3, Examples of Attached Homes*,

for information about those approaches. He noted that Springfield was also the sole Oregon jurisdiction he could find with only three zoning districts. The proposed zone was intended to be a LDR zone with a higher density, as opposed to a medium-density district that allowed more attached housing and most apartment types. Ms. Pauly said the City was attempting to encourage home ownership by allowing developers to build small houses on small lots.

Responding to a question about other cities, the ranges they used, and if they were producing the desired development type, Ms. Pauly indicated that that staff had ranges from those cities but only anecdotal information about how well they worked. Commissioner Cross asked how easy it would be to secure information about how well those zones worked. Ms. Pauly reminded the commission that Springfield was planning for future housing needs, not today's market demand, and while the City could look to other cities to see how they dealt with growth and the tools they used, the proposed density approach was one of those tools.

Commissioner Moore observed that some of the cities mentioned in the supporting materials did not have the geographic constraints to growth that Springfield had. Mr. Karp concurred. He said the current zoning districts were based on designations in the Eugene-Springfield Metropolitan Area General Plan and now that the community was running out of land, it had to look at new ways to achieve density. Ms. Pauly added that cities with relatively low maximums might have been challenged on them in the past, causing them to add zones.

Mr. Grile said the City had not yet determined how many acres the zone would be applied to. If the concept was applied to 50 acres in an area where it had a chance to exist with some restrictions that precluded housing over individual lots, he believed that the City would receive considerably less resistance than it would if it attempted to apply to the concept to 400 acres, for example. He suggested that was another policy issue for the commission to consider if it was contemplating applying the concept to more land.

Staff described how it currently addressed applications for placing a house in the middle of two platted lots by ensuring the deed restriction was recorded so that such lots could be sold as one unit without the need for replatting.

Responding to a question regarding the potential that the small lots created for the zone would be combined for larger lot development, Mr. Karp pointed out that would defeat the purpose of the district and indicated staff would consider that issue in more depth.

Commissioner Smith suggested the possibility that Springfield moved forward and then found out the small houses that were developed were not economically viable. While he understood the need to increase densities, he suggested that allowing some flexibility might be appropriate. Mr. Hopkins believed that the new zone gave developers more options. They would not be precluded from creating larger lot developments.

Commissioner Cross said that, as Mr. Grile suggested, if Springfield forced the concept on the entire community, it could encounter more conflicts where people attempted to combine lots and defeat the purpose of the zone. Mr. Grile noted that many of the initial plats in older communities were 25 foot lots, and they were frequently combined by buyers to achieve the lot size they wished. He pointed out that many lots in the Washburn plat were 25 foot to 30 foot lots, but there were many larger houses in the plat on lots that had been combined in the past. Commissioner Moe concurred. He said that frequently, people had purchased lots and built their own houses, starting out small and adding to them as time went on, buying the lot next door if necessary to allow expansion.

Mr. Hopkins asked if the density range seemed appropriate to the commission. There was general support for the direction that staff was taking.

Commissioner Moore asked why duplexes were historically restricted to corner lots. Mr. Karp said that for some reason in the past, people considered such lots more conducive to duplexes. The City had legitimized the

community's non-confirming duplexes during a process in 1986. Commissioner Moe said that duplexes were considered an investment strategy by homeowners who sought to support the costs of their own residence with the proceeds of renting the unit next door.

Commissioner Kirschenmann wished more people took an ownership approach to duplexes as he believed that would improve their appearance. He questioned who policed the appearance of dilapidated rental duplexes in the midst of single-family development and asked if duplexes located mid-block were permitted in LDR. Mr. Karp responded that when staff developed the use list for the new district, it looked at permitted uses in LDR, leading to the question asking if duplexes in the new district should be limited to corners as they currently were in LDR. That question tied into the second question, which concerned the application of design standards. He suggested that design standards could help build a certain degree of quality into a development, and if those standards were not heavy-handed they would not add much to the costs of the development. He suggested that might be the appropriate way to proceed. Ms. Pauly recalled that the commission asked staff to find additional opportunities for duplex development to occur with design standards.

Commissioner Cross suggested it would be advantageous to have a standard for duplexes that was consistent in both the LDR and LDR-3 zones in regard to the application of both design standards and location.

Commissioner Kirschenmann wanted to leave LDR as it was now and allow design standards to be applied to be applied to duplexes. He believed to some degree it was a matter of both investment and curb appeal; when one was viewing a duplex on a corner it often had the appearance of a single-family house. The same was not true of a duplex in the middle of a block. He concurred as to the desirability of design standards for duplexes in the LDR-3 zone.

Ms. Pauly observed that some of Springfield's MDR districts were being built out as duplex subdivisions, achieving the low end of medium density. That was consuming the land supply without achieving the density anticipated for MDR. She acknowledged that in the past, zone changes involving duplexes had engendered neighborhood opposition, leading to the commission's request for design standards for duplexes as well as a suggestion that duplexes be required to go through a review process similar to that for multi-family development. Commissioner Cross suggested that the design standards could remove the need for such a review.

Responding to a question from Commissioner Cross about the zoning split envisioned for new development, Ms. Pauly indicated that was part of the commission discussion, but she also indicated that the City's density projections were based on having some level of attached housing.

Mr. Hopkins determined there was general commission support for retaining the existing rules for duplexes in existing LDR zones, to allow duplexes in mid-block in the new LDR-3 zone as well as on corners, and to apply design standards to duplexes in all zones.

Commissioner Moore asked if design standards increased costs for developers. Mr. Karp said they did increase to some degree, but not significantly. Commissioner Moore asked if additional development fees were involved. Mr. Karp suggested that depended on whether the City directed the development through site review or allowed a planner to check an application to ensure that clear, objective, and proscriptive standards were followed.

Mr. Grile suggested that the problem facing the commission was at the heart of the infill issue: it was counter-productive to impose questionable standards when attempting to encourage reasonably priced infill. If the City attempted to impose criteria that did not work for people it could lead to responses such as homeowners purchasing the vacant lot next to them so it could not be developed at all.

Mr. Karp believed that it was possible to address the design elements of a duplex in a way that did not overly burden the developer. He pointed out that currently, duplexes did not require site review and he preferred to keep it that way.

Ms. Pauly said staff had also discussed the idea of continuing the process for site plan review and in some cases making it a Type I process to create more certainty for the developer. Commissioner Cross asked how staff would determine if an application should go through the Type I application process. Mr. Karp envisioned a hierarchy of standards that a developer must build to; if the developer could demonstrate that the application complied with those regulations, they could be exempted from the full site review process. Mr. Grile described how such a process might work.

Mr. Hopkins reviewed the staff proposal for solar protection in the new LDR-3 zone, stating that only solar protection for abutting LDR properties north of the development was required. Mr. Karp noted that a similar provision was included in the City's cluster subdivision provisions.

Commissioner Moore believed that there should be some way for a homeowner to take advantage of their rooftop to install solar photo voltaic panels or a solar water heating system. Mr. Karp noted the existing code protections that provided some protection for rooftop units, although not for such things as enclosed patio areas at ground level intended for solar gain. He added that he had not seen such an application since he joined the organization.

Mr. Hopkins summarized the discussion, saying that it appeared the 3,000 square foot smaller lots were acceptable for the new LDR-3 zone, with the reduced frontage of 30 feet and increased lot coverage to 50 percent. No panhandle lots would be allowed. The commission indicated tentative support for eight to fifteen units per net acre. The commission supported the retention of existing regulations governing duplexes in existing LDR zones, supported the allowance of duplexes in mid-block in the new LDR-3 zone as well as on corners, and supported the application of design standards to duplexes in all zones. The commission supported the creation of clear and objective design standards applied through a streamlined process. The commission concurred with the staff direction regarding solar protection.

Ms. Pauly reported that the City Council had directed staff to work on infill design standards, and indicated that the work on design standards for duplexes would be deferred to that process.

ADJOURNMENT

- The meeting was adjourned at 7:20 p.m.

Minutes recorded by Brenda Jones/Kimberly Young