



MINUTES

Workshop Meeting

Reno City Planning Commission

Tuesday, January 21, 2020 • 5:00 PM

Reno City Council Chamber, One East First Street, Reno, NV 89501

Commissioners			
Mark Johnson, Chair 326-8864			
Kathleen Taylor, Vice Chair	326-8859	John Marshall	326-8863
Peter Gower	326-8860	Paul Olivas	326-8861
Ed Hawkins	326-8862	Alex Velto	326-8858

1 Pledge of Allegiance

Commissioner Taylor led the Pledge of Allegiance.

2 Roll Call

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Mark Johnson	Chair	Present	
Kathleen Taylor	Vice Chair	Present	
Peter Gower	Commissioner	Late	5:15 PM
Ed Hawkins	Commissioner	Present	
John Marshall	Commissioner	Present	
Paul Olivas	Commissioner	Absent	
Alex Velto	Commissioner	Absent	

The meeting was called to order at 5:06 PM.

3 Public Comment

Andrew Samuelsen expressed support for reducing or eliminating parking minimums where possible.

Mercedes de la Garza spoke regarding historic preservation and her support for incentives for listing properties on the City Register.

4 Workshop Item

4.1 Staff Report (For Possible Action): Workshop for review of preliminary draft ordinances for the RENOvation Development Code Update. 5:14 PM

Arlo Stockham, Community Development Director, presented the staff report. The staff report focuses on the major amendments and significant discussion topics that have

emerged. Eleven key topics for discussion include: 1) Code Update Process and Scope of Amendments; 2) Land Use table (housing); 3) Grading and Hillside Development; 4) Parking; 5) Landscaping; 6) Site and Building Design Standards; 7) Residential Adjacency Standards; 8) Historic Preservation; 9) Application Review Processes and Decision Making Bodies; 10) Processes for Flexibility and Relief; and 11) Application Review Findings. More detailed information is provided in the digital attachments.

(Commissioner Gower present at 5:15 p.m.)

Mr. Stockham reviewed the basic scope of amendments and asked for any comments or concerns. There were no comments from the Planning Commissioners at this time.

Code Organization:

Chapter 18.01 - General Provisions

Mr. Stockham explained the targeted updates.

Chapter 18.02 - Zoning Districts and Chapter 18.03 - Table of allowed uses

Mr. Stockham stated there has been a lot of discussion on housing, density, and residential use allowances. That is the main public input point on Chapters 18.02 and 18.03. He reviewed the changes, feedback, and recommendations.

Commissioner Hawkins discussed concerns with accessory dwelling units (ADU).

Mr. Stockham explained the regulations for ADUs are not modified in this draft and staff is not recommending that.

Commissioner Gower appreciated the discussion on the housing options related to single family and addressing affordability and density. That is something we can consider and he likes the idea of a phase II taking a closer look at that. What came up with ADUs was that we had just gone through a master plan update process and we were not clear with the community that we were looking at things like ADUs or changing the density of existing neighborhoods and that's where we got pushback from the community. If we go through a public process and explain some of the advantages related to affordability and density, it would be a valuable exercise to go through as a community.

Commissioner Marshall agreed with Commissioner Gower and stated it would be best politically to address ADUs and other mechanisms as a general housing topic. He also discussed the need to focus not just on the cost of building housing but also sustainability

and other costs associated with housing.

Mr. Stockham responded to questions from Commissioner Marshall regarding the 20% bonus for units less than 800 square feet. It is a fairly modest density bonus proposal maxing out at 20% that will make a meaningful impact for some property but would not replace a bigger housing initiative. Commissioner Marshall expressed support for a more significant incentive

Chair Johnson discussed the need to explore this further.

18.04 - Development Standards

Mr. Stockham stated the Technical Working Group (TWG) had recommendations regarding the shadowing ordinance for parks and residences that will require further discussion.

Commissioner Taylor expressed support for the TWG recommendation to streamline the process for modifications to grading and hillside development.

Mr. Stockham summarized for Commissioner Gower the rationale for holding off on the tree protection ordinance component. Staff's recommendation was not to load too many controversial topics into this process and to focus on some of these important issues by themselves. City Council already initiated a tree protection ordinance update that involves part of Title 18 and other portions in the municipal code.

Commissioner Gower discussed the hillside process noting that multiple special use permits (SUP)s are triggered by a project in a scenario where this procedural path is chosen with the SUP for hillside. His recommendation is that the city consider being more overt about splitting that component of the SUP out from whatever other component is triggering an SUP so they are not being lumped together as part of an overall SUP since they do require separate findings.

Mr. Stockham responded stating they will hear some broader recommendations along those lines when discussing procedures.

Mr. Stockham reviewed the key issues for Access, Connectivity and Circulation, and Parking.

Commissioner Marshall stated he is in favor of bringing Midtown in to the downtown standard and asked what the reason is for eliminating the maximum parking limits.

Mr. Stockham stated some cities adopt maximum parking to prevent businesses from building a huge parking lot that would be environmentally impactful. We have not found that to be an actual problem. As we are moving to more reliance on shared parking areas and offsite parking, we thought removing the maximum would help encourage shared and offsite parking. Land values are so high that no one is buying a bunch of extra land to pave it as a parking lot these days.

Commissioner Marshall urged that they not eliminate the maximum parking. If there is a need to develop something about shared parking, we can work with that but there may be unintended consequences from eliminating the maximum parking. He also discussed trip reduction programs and stated he would like to see some programs that work off of vehicle miles traveled (VMT).

Mr. Stockham confirmed that they plan to pull together some possible VMT ordinances from other communities and bring them forward for discussion.

Commissioner Gower discussed the need to be more specific in the contents of required traffic impact analyses. He suggested that more discussion or metrics in those analyses would be valuable so we're not focused specifically on trips related to level of service on intersections directly adjacent to a proposed project for example, but asking and providing a little more criteria on what we are looking for in the contents of those analyses so we can understand for a particular project in a given location relative to other uses what we could expect with not only the trips generated but the directionality of those trips beyond the site and the potential for VMT given the location of the site relative to other uses.

Mr. Stockham summarized feedback so far stating he heard mixed thoughts on the maximum parking standard and general support for refining the trip reduction program and reviewing traffic analysis standards.

Commissioner Gower discussed the connectivity section. Staff did a good job pulling in the connectivity components and emphasizing those. With regard to walkway design, there is a series of criteria for the physical components of the sidewalk but nothing related to the building design that it is adjacent to.

Mr. Stockham stated that language would belong in Articles 8, 9 and 10. This is more of a subdivision than site design.

(Commissioner Marshall absent at 6:18 p.m. Commissioner Marshall present at 6:18 p.m.)

Commissioner Gower discussed the bike connectivity section and felt they could do a little bit more.

Mr. Stockham explained it was a model ordinance that came from our consultants. We can look at that and expand on it.

Mr. Stockham moved on to Landscaping, Buffering, Screening and Fencing.

Commissioner Gower stated he did not see tree canopy requirements included in the landscape area requirement.

Mr. Stockham explained there is a general standard that says landscaping shall prioritize shade trees over streets, sidewalks, and other paved areas but we don't have specific language on tree canopy requirements. We can probably expand on that.

Commissioner Taylor stated she does not want to get in a situation where we have a drought and we have a requirement for people to plant all these trees when we don't have the water. She suggested taking into consideration shade features that can be used that don't require water and maintenance.

Public Comment:

Melinda Smith, Builders Association of Northern Nevada, we believe things are going in the right direction and are excited about the possibility of streamlining the process with findings that are more specific to uses and conditions.

Jeff Borchardt, Builders Association, Toll Brothers and member of the Technical Working Group, discussed the work done by the TWG and their recommendations. He also discussed the benefits of streamlining the process and proposed a more clear differentiation between land use and site plan review processes.

Stacie Huggins expressed support for the proposed changes making the code more user friendly and streamlining the processes. She suggested topics for further streamlining and refinement of development standards

Donna Keats expressed concern for process streamlining and commented on the earlier discussion regarding making Midtown parking discretionary. She suggested considering Midtown commercial versus Midtown residential. She will submit more comments to Mr. Stockham.

Jack Hawkins expressed support for code changes and explained challenges he faces as

an architect specializing on infill development.

Chair Johnson stated he will open public comment again later in the meeting.

Mr. Stockham reviewed the Site and Building standards.

Commissioner Gower asked about sustainability elements. He noted that in the mixed use district there is a list of options with varying levels of benefits, and asked what the logic was in including certain of these elements versus others.

Mr. Stockham explained this was modeled largely after the existing code. Currently you have to pick two options from a broader menu but one of the options was energy efficient buildings and that is now a code requirement so we deleted that. It is generally a continuation of the existing regulation but applied to additional properties.

Commissioner Gower asked if there is interest in looking at those in more detail. For example, LEED Certification requires a suite of green building and site design components that include some of the other components in the list. He suggested an option might be to pursue green building certification or choose from three of the other options to create more of a balance.

Mr. Stockham stated that was existing code. He asked for help coming up with something that does more on sustainability but is also sensitive to the affordability priorities of the City Council. The Planning Commission has recommended this before and City Council said they were concerned about affordability.

Commissioner Gower stated he would like to be involved in this issue and suggested a similar model to the citizen group the City Council initiated for putting together the components of what is now the city's Sustainability Plan might work here.

Commissioner Marshall expressed concern regarding relaxing the articulation standards for a menu approach. With regard to big box buildings, if we are going to go to an alternative menu type approach, it needs to really focus on the building itself.

Chair Johnson stated what has been put in here has opened it up to a suite of options in an attempt to give the architects a little more freedom. He expressed concern regarding alternative design elements requiring only administrative approval. If that is going to be left in here, we need to be looking at a design review body and not just for architectural standards but for site design standards and everything else.

Commissioner Marshall clarified that his concern is with large box structures, not mixed

use on a smaller scale.

Commissioner Taylor stated she is not in support of design review committees. She stated she is not a design review expert and there are people at the staff level that are more experienced to make those decisions. If that can be streamlined while still getting a quality project within the enhanced regulations, she is supportive of that.

CHAIR JOHNSON CALLED FOR A 15 MINUTE RECESS.

(Commissioner Hawkins absent at 7:26 p.m.)

THE MEETING RESUMED AT 7:42 PM.

Public Comment:

Tray Abney, NAOP Northern Nevada Chapter, spoke in support of the more flexible menu of building design elements. He expressed concerns regarding the appeal process and how easy it is to appeal a project that has been approved.

Donna Keats expressed concern that the streamlining is cutting the public out of the process and making the appeal process harder. With regard to the discussions about alleviating the cost of SUPs to get more builders, she stated if they can't afford the SUP they probably shouldn't be building the project.

Cary Chisum, Wood Rodgers, thanked staff for their work on this and expressed support for the changes to streamline the process allowing more time for better solutions.

Jack Hawkins spoke regarding design standards and suggested another option instead of administrative approval would be to have either a design review board or an in house architect.

Chair Johnson stated Commissioner Marshall has to leave and there will not be a quorum.

Karl Hall, City Attorney, explained that with the loss of a quorum the meeting must adjourn. The workshop presentation can continue with the commission providing feedback but no action can be taken.

(Commissioner Marshall absent at 7:57 p.m.)

RESULT: NO ACTION TAKEN

5 Public Comment

6 Adjournment (For Possible Action)

The meeting was adjourned at 7:57 p.m. due to lack of quorum but the presentation continued.



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18.04 - Development Standards (continued)

Mr. Stockham continued with the presentation.

Commissioner Taylor asked Mr. Stockham to respond to earlier public comment.

Mr. Stockham noted that additional exemptions across railroad tracks was suggested. Staff did not propose that because they are generally narrower and don't always have the same type of noise and inherent activity of a major arterial, but this is not a major staff concern. The drive through was already flagged to add some refining language.

18.05 - Signs

There is a case law we have to come into conformance with. There were no significant changes.

18.06 - Land Division

No changes were proposed.

18.07 - Historic Preservation

Chair Johnson stated this is going in the right direction. He expressed interest in seeing additional incentives for listing, expanded documentation standards, and HRC review of development adjacent to state and national identified historic resources in addition to the city's identified historic resources.

18.08 - Procedures

Mr. Stockham reviewed the key issues and changes in the procedure section.

Commissioner Taylor asked if this process allows for easier building or less requirements or regulations for builders.

Mr. Stockham explained that the regulations are stricter. The process is somewhat streamlined. The overall objective is to require quality design with more predictability.

Chair Johnson stated he can appreciate the difference between land use and site plan applications. He has no issue with the idea of appealing a site plan review directly to City Council. He still has concerns with respect to the administrative approval of exceptions.

Mr. Stockham explained what that would probably look like is having an administrative and public hearing option for site plan reviews and an administrative and public hearing option for land use approvals; and having trigger points where applications change from being an administrative process to being a Planning Commission process. Where those thresholds are is going to be important. He suggested generally having larger projects and special exceptions come before the Planning Commission and having smaller and more straightforward application use an administrative process.

Chair Johnson agreed if we are differentiating between land use and site plan there needs to be a defined process for each. He supported streamlining with a public hearing process to review exceptions to development standards.

Mr. Stockham explained they have ongoing technical working group meetings and they are planning to circle back and look at things in response to these workshops. The deadline to get edits back to the consultants is February 24, 2020.

Commissioner Taylor stated sometimes the findings are a little ambiguous and they can be interpreted differently.

Mr. Stockham explained they need to a little bit subject to interpretation but should not be overly so.

Chair Johnson stated he is in favor of modifications to the PUDs.

Commissioner Gower stated staff has done a great job of taking all of this information and putting it into a draft code. Overall we are moving in the right direction.

