

## MEETING NOTES

Zoning Update-Technical Committee Meeting  
Metropolitan Planning Commission  
Arthur A. Mendonsa Hearing Room  
June 20, 2007  
3:00-5:00 PM

### I. Status of Zoning Update-Related Projects

Charlotte Moore and Dennis Hutton reported on the status of several projects that are related to the Unified Zoning Ordinance:

- a. **Zoning Assessment Report-** MPC staff has completed this report. Copies were distributed to committee members at this meeting. The report can also be downloaded at [www.thempc.org](http://www.thempc.org)
- b. **Woodville Neighborhood Rezoning-** City Council will hold a public hearing on the rezoning of this neighborhood on June 21, 2007.
- c. **Hudson Hill Neighborhood Rezoning-** Zoning work on this neighborhood will begin following the adoption of new zoning for Woodville.
- d. **Workshops with City Council and County Commission-** These workshops, which are scheduled for June 21<sup>st</sup> (City) and June 22<sup>nd</sup> (County), will provide elected officials with a status update on the Unified Zoning Ordinance.
- e. **Zoning Update Webpage-** The webpage is up and running, and will be improved in the coming weeks and months. The site can be accessed via a link on the MPC's home page ([www.thempc.org](http://www.thempc.org)). Presentations and draft materials related to the Unified Zoning Ordinance will be posted here.
- f. **Downtown Master Plan Questionnaire ([www.savannahga.gov](http://www.savannahga.gov))-** This questionnaire is designed to collect public on the draft concepts for the Downtown Master Plan. These are the same concepts that were presented at the public meeting that were held at the DeSoto on May 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>. Members of the general public are encouraged to complete the questionnaire and submit it online.

### II. Downtown Master Plan Presentation (Lise Sundrla, SDRA)

Lise Sundrla from the Savannah Development and Renewal Authority (SDRA) summarized the planning process that is currently underway for the Downtown Master Plan. A PowerPoint presentation was provided.

### III. Downtown Master Plan Concepts Discussion

Charlotte Moore led the committee in a group discussion of the planning and development concepts that are currently being considered for inclusion in the Downtown Master Plan. Committee members raised the following points:

- **Parking**
  - It would be desirable, although not always practical or possible, to require off-street parking to be accessed only from the lane. However, as a general rule lanes are intended to provide service access, not general access, to properties.
  - The Downtown Master Plan should explore the feasibility of providing peripheral off-street parking, either permanent or temporary, on the fringe of downtown to help alleviate the current parking shortage.
- **Requiring a Minimum Number of Building Entrances**
  - Although this is intended to enhance the pedestrian experience, it may create a disincentive for infill. The Downtown Master Plan should study other places that have implemented this requirement to see how it can be done without creating negative impacts.
- **Reclaiming Lost Right-of-Way**
  - This is important for downtown's future, but it may not be feasible if the City were required to purchase all of the right-of-way from the current property owners. Other options, such as land swaps, should be explored.
- **Alcohol Sales**
  - The question was raised regarding whether zoning should be involved at all in determining where alcohol can be bought and sold, since this is already regulated by a separate permitting process.
  - Zoning can be effectively used to regulate alcohol sales, but only if those regulations are enforceable. For example, it was pointed out that zoning can be effectively used to define areas where alcohol can be bought and sold, but it cannot be effectively used to require that alcoholic beverages be served with a meal.
  - Concerns were expressed that not tying alcohol to zoning at all would be too ambiguous because it wouldn't provide elected officials with any guidance in determining which areas are appropriate for alcohol sales and which are not.
  - The special use process might be a good tool to use to help strike a balance between creating enforceable laws and providing an appropriate level of guidance for decision-makers.
- **Floor Area Ratio (FAR), Height Map, and Lot Coverage**
  - FAR would not be an effective or useful tool unless lot coverage and the height map were variable.
  - Compatibility is a difficult thing to regulate through an ordinance. It needs to be approached on a case-by-case basis.

- Property values downtown are closely associated with height and lot coverage. Creating new standards in the form of FAR could result in regulatory takings for some properties.
- **Affordable Housing**
  - Affordable housing is needed, but how can the City maintain affordability over time?
  - Beaufort County has regulations in place that may serve as a model on this issue.