

MEETING NOTES

Zoning Update-Technical Committee Meeting
Metropolitan Planning Commission
Surrency Meeting Room
April 16, 2008
3:00-5:00 PM

I. Review February Minutes (Handout)

The committee reviewed the notes from the previous Technical Committee meeting on February 20, 2008 and requested that they be revised to include the discussion that was held regarding call centers and 24-hour offices.

II. Introduction of New Technical Committee Members

This was the first meeting for new committee members Frank McIntosh (Georgia Conservancy) and Randolph Scott (City of Savannah).

III. Update on work of Historic District Revisions Committee

Tom Thomson provided an overview of recent progress that has been made by the Historic District Revisions Committee (HDRC). The HDRC has been meeting on a weekly basis to update the design regulations for the Landmark Historic District. Work on the revisions has progressed smoothly, in part, because the HDRC has been able to build upon the work that was completed in Component 2 of the Unified Zoning Ordinance. The HDRC expects to have a draft of their work completed for public review by June, 2008.

IV. Component 3 (Zoning Districts and Uses)

A. PowerPoint Presentation on Component 3

Charlotte Moore and Amanda Bunce gave a presentation on the scope of work that will be completed in Component 3. Work on this component will be iterative, but will generally follow a six-step process:

- 1) Develop the list of uses
- 2) Create definitions for each use
- 3) Identify zoning districts
- 4) Draft zoning district sections and bulk and height standards
- 5) Assign uses to each zoning district
- 6) Create use standards

B. Review Draft Use Table and Definitions for Conservation, Agricultural, and Industrial Districts

The committee began the process of reviewing the draft use table. At this time, the table contains one conservation district (C), one agricultural district (AG) and three industrial districts: industrial

transition (IT), light industrial (IL) and heavy industrial (IH). More districts will be added to the table and will be reviewed by the committee in subsequent meetings. Committee members made the following comments on this section:

- Staff was asked to clarify the proposed regulatory system for daycare centers. In zoning districts where there are compatibility concerns, it is likely that daycare centers will be classified as special uses. Special uses will require approval by the governing body (either City Council or County Commission). This represents a change from the current system, where special uses are approved by the Board of Appeals. The reason for the change is to conform to state law, which defines special use approval as a legislative action. In districts where compatibility is not an issue, daycare centers will be allowed by right.
- Some committee members questioned the proposed residential use classification system. Staff has proposed that duplexes be referred to as “single family attached”, and that all residential types with three or more units be referred to as “multifamily”. The term “duplex” was not used because, in reviewing zoning ordinances from other communities, staff has noticed that the term has fallen out of favor in the same way that ordinances no longer refer to “trailers”, but instead call them “mobile homes” or, increasingly, “manufactured homes”. Residential types with three or more units have been grouped under the heading of “multifamily” because terms like “townhouse” and “condominium” are not so much separate residential uses as they are systems of property ownership.
- The definition of “upper story residential” needs to be revised to make it clear that the intent is to allow residential units above stores, offices, and other commercial uses. As it is currently written, the definition could be misinterpreted to allow residential uses above garages in single family neighborhoods, which are intended to be classified as “accessory residential units”.
- Why are SROs allowed in the IT district when most other residential uses are not? Similarly, why aren’t artisan live-work units allowed in the IL, where it seems like they would be appropriate? Although this could change with subsequent drafts, the intention at this time is to avoid placing residential uses in the IL district. Areas where residential and industrial uses mix should be zoned IT instead. This is why SROs and artisan live-work units are both proposed to be allowed in the IT district, but not the IL district.
- There was a lengthy discussion about the definition of “family”. There is concern that the current definition, which

defines a family as consisting of as many as six unrelated persons, is too permissive and creates a niche industry for single family homes to be used as de facto rooming houses. It was suggested that the definition be revised to limit the number of unrelated persons to three or four. However, it was pointed out that this could have unintended consequences for non-traditional families as well as people who are in dire financial circumstances. If time permits, it may be appropriate to prepare a separate report on this issue.

- Home-based businesses can become nuisances if they are allowed to grow too large. The number of employees should be limited to two or three, but we should also try to think of a way to limit deliveries as well.
- The point was raised that, because transitional and emergency shelters are proposed to be allowed by right in the IL district, it appears that we are pushing these uses into areas where we don't want anyone else to live. Staff responded that the intention is to allow this use in many other zoning districts that do not appear in this draft of the use table. We will need to re-examine the placement of this use in a few months when all of the other zoning districts have been added to the use table to ensure that we are not creating a situation where shelters are only allowed in districts where there are no other residential uses.
- The committee was in general agreement that, because the IT district allows schools, it should allow daycare centers as well.
- K-12 schools should be referred to as pre-K-12 so as not to exclude preschoolers from districts that allow other educational uses.
- Why are churches not allowed in the IL district? The intent was to protect industrial uses by avoiding all non-industrial uses that result in the mass assembly of people, not just churches.

The committee ran out of time and was not able to finish discussing the draft use table. The discussion will resume with the commercial uses at the next meeting.

C. Review Intro to Base Zoning Districts (Secs. 5.1-5.3)

Due to time constraints, discussion of this section will be reserved for the next Technical Committee meeting.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, May 21, at 3:00 PM.