



PLANNING COMMISSION

MINUTES of September 8th 2020

Members of the Buena Vista Planning Commission met in a hybrid format, both in person a City Council Chambers and virtually via Zoom at 7:00 PM on Tuesday, September 8th, 2020.

Members Present:

Dennis Hawes, Chairman
Michael Ohleger, Vice-Chairman
Sandy Burke
Lucy Ferrebee
Marolyn Cash
Melvin Henson, City Council Representative
Preston Manuel

Members Absent:

Bradyn Tuttle
Jay Scudder, Ex Officio member

Staff Present:

Tom Roberts, Director of Community & Economic Development

Meeting is called into order. Mr. Roberts encountered technical difficulties and was not able to begin the Zoom call until partway through the first presentation.

REGULAR MEETING

New Business

Site Plan approval for Buena Vista Pentecostal Holiness Church

Mr. Roberts summarized the contents of the staff report. Mr. Ron Cash, representative for the church, spoke to the Commission. He reviewed the overall long-term development of the site and the purpose of constructing a new covered pavilion (metal carport) for short-term use. It will be used for events and outdoor worship services in a Covid-19 context.

Mr. Hawes asked about applicability of the design guidelines. Mr. Roberts replied that while there were design guidelines for this zone, they did not need to be stringently followed because the structure will not be visible from the public ROW and the structure is not intended to be permanent.

Mr. Henson brought up the water and sewer availability to the site for future development. Mr. Cash responded that he had already met with City staff about these issues.

A member of the Commission moved to approve the site plan, and all voted yes.

Zoning Map Amendment for 2776 Maple Avenue, Preliminary Presentation

Mr. Roberts began by summarizing the staff report. The initial applicant is the owner of a single lot at 2776 Maple, but City staff are recommending proactive rezoning of surrounding parcels to tee them up for future multifamily development.

Mr. Roberts addressed an email from Mr. Henson asking how many additional small buildings could be built were it zoned to R4 as proposed. There is no limit to the number of buildings, but there is a maximum of 15 units per acre in R4. Mr. Roberts pointed out that no construction is proposed at this time. If rezoned, a developer would need a site plan approval before development.

Mr. Spencer Allen, applicant, addressed the Commission. He explained that he is purchasing the property and wants to rent out the accessory building and to be in compliance.

Mr. Hawes and other members noted concern that the accessory building may not be well-built or be adequate housing. They asked if there was a certificate of occupancy for it, or to what code specifications it was renovated. Mr. Roberts explained that there was very limited information in the building permit database and that CO's were not typically issued for apartments like this. Mr. Allen offered to provide the appraisal and home inspection report that he had done. Mr. Hawes and others were also concerned about encouraging conversion of accessory buildings into housing, as well as the principle of asking forgiveness for already-converted buildings versus asking permission.

The Commission also raised the question of which zone might be appropriate here, and whether Institutional was better. Several members felt that INST was intended for the neighborhoods around the university. Mr. Roberts stated that his position was that INST zoning should only be used for buildings directly owned or used by the university. As a corollary, they were concerned that R4 at this location could permit some commercial uses which would be inappropriate. Mr. Roberts countered that the range of commercial uses in R4 is limited, although offices and retail associated with the multifamily are permitted.

At Mr. Henson's initiative, there was brief discussion and clarification of what property is City-owned near this property (a triangular parcel) and the paper streets.

Mrs. Burke asked if the zoning would affect the tax assessments. Mr. Roberts replied that no, the assessment is not directly tied to the zoning but is based on the developability of the property.

Mrs. Cash raised the question about the minimum square footage of a detached dwelling. She suggested that the multifamily efficiency apartment square footage minimum only applies if there are multiple units in a building, so the accessory building at 2776 Maple Ave would be a single-family dwelling not a multifamily unit.

The Commission expressed that they were not in support of the proposal.

Zoning Text Amendment for 616.16 Yards in the Mixed Business zone

The Commission discussed some of the history of adoption of the Mixed Business zone and the Seminary Hill Historic District, and specific projects when the question of yard/frontage requirements. Echoing the staff report, Mr. Roberts noted that his concern is primarily with 29th Street and the potential of a build-to line requirement for new development.

There was consensus of the Commission to support the text amendment as presented.

Mr. Hawes added that he would like City Council to consider changing the name of the Seminary Hill Historic District.

Public Comment

None

Review and Adoption of Minutes

Old Business

None

New Business

None

Adjournment 11:10 AM

Approved: _____