

MINUTES

Meeting went live on Zoom at 5:34pm

I. CALL TO ORDER: Commissioner Frost called the meeting to order work session at 5:39pm

PRESENT: Commissioners Megan Ramey, Mark Frost, Tina Lassen, Sue Powers, Bill Irving, Amy Schlappi, Erica Price

ABSENT: Erica Price

STAFF: Planning Director Dustin Nilsen, GIS Analyst Jonathan Skloven-Gill, Senior Planner Kevin Liburdy

Director Dustin Nilsen explained there is no chair currently and asked commissioners to select a chair for tonight's meeting. Commissioner Frost asked Sue Powers if she is interested in the chair position. Commissioner Powers is interested in a co-chair position. Irving noted that we can't have a co-chair, but we can have a Vice Chair.

Commissioner Ramey moved to appoint Mark Frost as Chair and Sue Powers as Vice Chair. Commissioner Schlappi seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

II. PLANNING DIRECTOR'S UPDATE:

Nilsen introduced Amy Schlappi as the newest commissioner. Commissioner Schlappi introduced herself and explained her background in urban planning and transportation.

Nilsen explained that tonight's agenda introduces some middle housing code concepts.

III. MIDDLE HOUSING CODE

Nilsen introduced materials in the commission's packet for middle housing and this discussion is moving forward based on direction from the city council's 2020 work plan. Prototypes are provided. House Bill 2001 (2019) specifies middle housing requirements for different sized jurisdictions. The intent is to adopt a new chapter in the zoning ordinance for middle housing.

Chair Frost asked what Nilsen would like to accomplish at tonight's meeting. Nilsen explained that he would like the commission to review the material and provide feedback on some of the more significant questions.

Irving asked how the legislative process will work. Nilsen responded that the commission will open a public hearing at a future meeting and forward recommendations to the city council. Council also will hold a public hearing prior to adoption. The initial hearing is expected January 4, 2021.

Frost asked if it would be helpful to respond to a question about porches in front-yard setbacks because it comes up in several of the prototypes. Nilsen provided some background and noted that other zoning codes are allowing porches closer to streets.

Irving asked if Hood River's 10-foot front yard setback is similar to other zoning codes. Nilsen responded that 10 feet or less is common, and garages have a maximum setback of 20 feet for this product type.

Frost asked how these product types would be limited. Nilsen explained that the code is intended to be specific to these smaller product types. For example, the City has separate zoning code for townhouses.

Powers asked if there would be a limit on the size or dimensions of a porch. Nilsen responded the porch could be size- and depth restricted, such as to allow within six feet of the front property line.

Ramey explained she has more overarching questions about cottage housing. State of Oregon voted on December 14 to eliminate off-street parking requirements statewide for certain sized jurisdictions. Are cottage and pocket neighborhoods the same concept? Nilsen responded that cottage and pocket neighborhoods are not interchangeable. Pocket neighborhoods are larger scale. LCDC voted on administrative rules applying to cities over certain sizes, addressing off-street parking requirements.

Ramey asked about common space in cottage clusters and if the percentage designated could be added to the matrices. Nilsen confirmed it will be necessary to address common vs. private open space areas.

Nilsen shared his screen to display the December 14 memo prepared by SERA architects that was distributed to the commission. He explained significant questions on the first page of the memo and noted how driveway design had a significant effect on the prototypes. He noted the importance of clear and objective zoning standards for housing.

Irving explained that from a development perspective, unit size and density drive profit. The current code limits the number of units but allows fairly large units. It will be necessary to incentivize other housing types because it is unlikely some of the units in the current memo will be built. For example, why would one choose to build two small units when one can already build two larger units? Powers noted that the size limitation is intended to improve affordability and asked if more density is needed to provide the incentive to build them. Irving confirmed. Powers asked what is easier to sell? Irving noted there is very little inventory and anything that is built will find demand.

Nilsen continued through the list of questions from the first page of the memo, including asking how open space and landscaping standards should be applied. The final question asks whether Accessory Dwelling Units should be permitted in duplexes and triplexes. Nilsen proceeded by sharing prototype profiles for detached duplexes and explained that height could be increased to allow more floor area. Powers asked where off-street parking is depicted on the plans. Nilsen explained these are head-in, back-out driveways without garages. Irving explained that from an appraiser's perspective, they are looking at dollars per square foot and comparable sales. A detached option may be attractive in the R-2 Zone but a developer won't achieve the needed valuation. How to make this equally compelling to a two-unit townhouse project? Nilsen this is an exercise in what housing types look like. Irving suggested

asking the architects to present more financially compelling housing types. Powers asked what makes this design a duplex. Nilsen responded that it is two units on one lot. Frost asked about current maximum lot coverage standards. Nilsen explained the permissible range of coverage, but this does not address height. Irving suggested producing a chart of current code vs. proposed code, and also discuss building volume. Powers agreed.

Nilsen continued sharing the middle housing memo and the prototype for three units on one lot. There is limited demand for condominiums so this study assumed each unit is on the ground. The front unit is two-stories tall. Irving noted that this allows an additional dwelling unit, and maybe a fourth unit would be appropriate on a lot of this size in the R-3 Zone. As an example, he noted Joel Knutson's duplex on a 2,500-square-foot lot.

Nilsen continued sharing the middle housing memo and the prototype for detached duplexes with detached garages sharing a single curb cut. To take things further, Nilsen suggested allowing ADUs over the garages. This design features more paving than is desirable. An alternative features two detached garages subject to allowing garages to encroach into side-yard setbacks. Frost explained concerns about pushing more structures into rear yards and impacts to solar access.

Nilsen continued sharing the middle housing memo and the prototype for cottage clusters featuring common open space. It is unknown if this could be approved currently through a Planned Development process but it seems unlikely. Lassen asked if there is a key to the letters. Nilsen noted that there is a key on the matrices. Ramey believes this is the first prototype that addresses needed middle housing, recognizing parking is in the back and there is a common walkway through the site. Schlappi asked if sidewalks would be ADA compliant. Nilsen confirmed this is the intent. However, along public streets with steep grades it may not be possible to comply with ADA.

Nilsen continued sharing the middle housing memo and the prototype for attached triplex pairs. He asked about sufficient of open space, whether porches are appropriate, and if they could be sold fee simple. Frost questioned feasibility of keeping the porches in this design. Lassen asked if all these designs are based on one off-street parking space per units. Nilsen confirmed that up to this point, yes, but there are prototypes with no off-street parking to see how it affects design. Ramey believes reduction of off-street parking changes priorities. Lassen anticipates further discussion.

Nilsen continued sharing the middle housing memo and alternative prototypes for attached and detached triplex pairs, some featuring multiple curb cuts that reduce open space. Irving asked if driveways are permissible in side-yard setbacks. Nilsen confirmed.

Nilsen continued sharing the middle housing memo and the prototype for cottage clusters and for detached duplex pairs and detached triplex pairs on 14,000-square-foot parcels. Most of these prototypes depict interior lots but there is more flexibility on corner lots. Lassen asked where the street frontages are in the prototypes. Nilsen responded.

Nilsen explained the middle housing memo includes a section on design standards with questions posed by the consulting architects, as well as some draft code addressing orientation, garages, driveway width, cottage clusters, etc. The memo includes notes from the consulting architects to help illustrate the discussions that resulted in the prototypes. Irving appreciated the format of the matrix for cottage clusters and suggested using it to compare current code with proposed code.

Nilsen explained that commentary and guidelines will be provided to encourage low impact stormwater approaches but these can be difficult to codify in a clear and objective manner.

Frost suggested asking the audience for questions, and explained that he has some questions too. Lassen wants to discuss common and private open spaces. Ramey wants to discuss conversion of older, larger homes into these types of housing products.

There were no questions from the audience.

Frost suggested going through the list of questions from the first page of the memo, starting with question 3 recognizing we haven't agreed upon an approach for parking requirements. Frost noted that porches may no longer be "front" porches depending upon the layout. Lassen asked if the commission is trying to achieve interaction in cottage clusters or if a different approach is acceptable to get a variety of products.

Frost asked about question three, encroachments. Powers asked if this applies to side yards. Nilsen suggested it is intended for front porches but we might see eaves, gutters, chimneys and mechanical equipment in side yards. Ramey does not support all encroachments in setback areas, but does support porches in setbacks especially in front yards. Lassen has concerns about allowing porches in side yards due to proximity to structures on neighboring properties. Lassen asked if cottage units could be located entirely closer to streets, not just their porches. Nilsen noted that we are trying to be sensitive to what is constructed on neighboring properties. Lassen suggested smaller units may be OK closer to the street. Frost noted this could create conflicts with existing homes for infill projects. Lassen suggested scaling down the size of new buildings. Powers supports allowances for porches in front yard setbacks but not in side yards. Schlappi is open to encroachments by porches but has questions about side yards and potential fire safety issues based on Lassen's comments. Nilsen noted that the Building Code also affects what can be constructed near property lines. Schlappi is less worried about side-yard porches if they meet fire standards. Irving believes a minimum five-foot setback around the perimeter of a lot is reasonable, and some of the prototypes don't provide a compelling case for porches. Some private outdoor space is desirable. Schlappi asked if private garden spaces were considered. Nilsen explained that private open space areas are addressed in the cottage cluster code. Irving asked if fences less than six-feet tall are permitted in setback areas. Nilsen confirmed, though he recommends a height restriction to improve visibility along streets. Frost explained that he supports a porch in the front yard but not side yards, and porch should be defined.

Frost asked for feedback on floor areas, question five on the first page of the memo. Nilsen explained that staff is not proposing a floor area ratio because it does not design an outcome or get at quality. The City has a height standard and maximum coverage standard. Powers supports regulation of height and coverage, and also supports a flexible approach to size by allowing use of an average in cottage housing. Lassen is not sure about size limitations yet and would like to hear from other commissioners. Ramey desires creativity and flexibility and is more interested in open space than square footage of units. Nilsen suggested using amenities to drive design. Schlappi supports using the height and coverage standards but asked what incentives could be implemented to achieve a smaller home that isn't as tall. Irving suggested allowing more units that are smaller. Nilsen noted that system development charges and other approaches can be explored to encourage smaller units. Ramey suggested lesser SDCs for smaller square footage. Frost acknowledges Irving's approach to encourage smaller units but is concerned about the vertical element and impact that taller homes have on neighboring properties. For example, four 28-foot-tall homes on a 5,000-square foot lot is a lot of building. Irving suggested

considering floor area ratio. For example, if two 3,000-square-foot townhouses can be constructed today, could that same floor area be accommodated in three or four units at lower prices?

Frost continued with question six in the memo regarding open space and landscaping. Lassen asked how different types of open space are allocated. Ramey believes narrow strips of open space are useless and open space should be larger, contiguous areas. Lassen agrees. Powers asked how much space is required between structures. Nilsen noted a minimum of six feet is common based on Building Code, and 10 feet is common based on two, adjacent five-foot side-yard setback areas. Irving noted that in PUDs, open space often is not very useable and sometimes doesn't get planted or maintained. Schlappi agrees open space should be useable to allow people to congregate. Frost agrees that maintenance of open space is challenging but over-legislating is a concern; whether private or common, we should be looking for a certain amount of green area and maybe the market determines how to achieve it. Irving explained that each homeowner probably has different interests so giving people flexibility makes sense.

Frost explained we will probably need an evening devoted exclusively to questions about off-street parking. Nilsen responded that one way to look at it is to decouple parking from development to allow some units with parking and others without. That said, the market may dictate need for a garage if for no other reason than storage. Ramey believes off-street parking requirements is the most important amenity that needs to be discussed.

Nilsen explained he will continue to work on the memo with the consultants and return for a discussion on January 4, 2021.

IV. MINUTES

Frost asked if commissioner reviewed the draft minutes from 12/7/20.

MOTION: Lassen made a motion to accept the minutes prepared for 12/7/2020.

Ramey asked if she can vote on the minute if she was not there. Nilsen confirmed. Ramey seconded the motion.

Frost called for discussion. There was none.

Motion passed unanimously.

VI. ADJOURN

Frost adjourned the hearing at 8:03 p.m.

Mark Frost, Chair

Date

Dustin Nilsen, Planning Director

Date (Approved)