



DUBLIN PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION

SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

OCTOBER 13, 2009

CITY OF DUBLIN

Land Use and
Long Range Planning
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AGENDA

1. Bridge Street Corridor Study

Group Discussion

Chair Chris Amorose Groomes called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. Other Commission members present were: Richard Taylor, Todd Zimmerman, Warren Fishman, Kevin Walter, John Hardt, and Amy Kramb. City representatives were: Steve Langworthy, Claudia Husak, Gary Gunderman, Rachel Ray, Dan Phillabaum, Jennifer Readler, and Barb Cox.

1. Bridge Street Corridor Study

Group Discussion

Chair Chris Amorose Groomes introduced Ben Carlson of Goody Clancy and Associates, who introduced the group discussion with members of the Planning and Zoning Commission.

Mr. Carlson thanked the Commissioners for meeting with him tonight. He mentioned that after meeting with members of City Council, a variety of stakeholders, and the Planning and Zoning Commission Chair and Vice Chair, he and his team wanted an opportunity to meet with the rest of the Planning and Zoning Commission. He stated that he and his team wanted to learn more about the Commission's concerns and what they may see as opportunities and/or challenges for this critical portion of the city, generally defined by Bridge Street/State Route 161 between Sawmill Road on the east and I-270 on the north and west.

Mr. Carlson provided a brief background of the Bridge Street Corridor Study to date, and informed the Commission members of the next steps and upcoming dates that would give them additional opportunity for participation, including the Bridge Street Corridor Study Speaker Series and the public participation workshops planned in October and December.

Mr. Carlson circulated a memo to the Commission members containing the background themes, issues, opportunities, and challenges impacting the Bridge Street Corridor, along with the reasons for focusing on the Bridge Street Corridor. He opened the discussion by presenting the "Forces of Growth and Change" that are impacting Dublin as a whole – not just within the study area. He mentioned that the issues listed in this portion of the memo were developed through the consultants' background research for this project and through numerous interviews with project stakeholders. He listed and briefly explained each of the Forces of Growth and Change:

1. Dublin faces greater competition;
2. Dublin's employers are finding it harder to attract the staff they need;
3. Households are seeking new and broader choices of places to live;
4. There is significant demand for housing in the Bridge Street Corridor;
5. Dublin desires a still stronger sense of community and identity; and
6. Development concepts need to respond to market opportunity.

The Commission members asked Mr. Carlson about the housing market analysis conducted by Laurie Volk of Zimmerman/Volk Associates. They asked about the methodology used to conclude that there is a demand for approximately 1,500 housing units within the study area over the next five to seven years. The Commission members recommended that the consulting team verify that this number of units was realistic, particularly in light of the current economic circumstances. They also suggested that Zimmerman/Volk Associates confirm that the study accounts for the recent condominium-to-rental housing conversions along Sawmill Road in order to get the most accurate reading of the housing market in this area.

Regarding item 6, "Development concepts need to respond to market opportunity," the Commission members reiterated to the consulting team that the ultimate vision concepts for this study area must reflect financially-viable development. Some of the Commission members were concerned that although the housing market analysis says that there is a strong demand for housing in this area, developers may not be able to finance and build the high-quality housing that the Planning and Zoning Commission would expect for the price points quoted in the market analysis. They cautioned that developments have failed in the past not necessarily because of misleading demographics, but because they were in the wrong location, with unsuccessful design, and/or a lack of other factors that combined to result in failure.

Although the Commissioners agreed on the need for viable development concepts to guide the vision for this corridor, they also discussed the need for additional public green space in the study area, particularly on the east side of the Scioto River. They discussed the opportunity to connect the Historic District and areas on the west side of the river with redeveloped sites on the east side of the Scioto River as a way to expand the Historic District and build upon its success. The Commission members generally agreed that the vision for this study should not be unduly constrained by financing this type of public green space, at least not by the economics of near-term development or specific sites. The Commissioners suggested that the need for a significant amount of green space on the east side of the Scioto River was an important enough opportunity and goal for this study that the financial viability may be less important than the positive impacts to quality of life and community identity that would result from such a development.

The Commission members concluded their portion of the discussion by restating the need for a strong, central vision to organize the Bridge Street corridor, particularly in the study area east of the Scioto River.

Ms. Amorose Groomes asked if there was anyone from the public that wished to speak in regards to this discussion item.

Kevin McCauley, Stavroff Interests, stated that he and his associate, Jeff Stavroff, had come to the special Planning and Zoning Commission meeting that evening to learn more about the Commission's thoughts about the study area and their thoughts about the Bridge Street Corridor Study in general. They agreed that although the demographic and commercial market analyses show that Dublin is a strong market with a lot of pent-up demand, they are skeptical that Dublin is ready for more "unconventional" mixed-use development patterns and streetscapes with buildings built up to the street. He continued that they appreciate the opportunity to work closely with the City of Dublin and the representatives from Goody Clancy and Associates, but they are also concerned with the development approval process. Mr. McCauley stated that he and others in the development community would like a more efficient review and approval process to help facilitate development in this area.

Mr. Carlson concluded the discussion by reminding the Commissioners of the upcoming Speaker Series dates and public participation opportunities. He provided the Commission members with his contact information should they have further questions or comments about this study.

Ms. Amorose Groomes thanked Mr. Carlson, the other Commission members, and the Stavroffs for their participation in the discussion.

Motion and Vote

This was a discussion item only; no vote was taken.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00p.m.

As approved by the Planning and Zoning Commission.