



Affordable Housing Advisory Commission Meeting

REMOTE*

May 20, 2020

7:00 PM

Remote Meeting



Present: Chairman Quinton Harper, Amy Singleton, Pamela Atwood, Cain Twyman, Betty Curry, Council Liaison Damon Seils; Staff Liaison Rebecca Buzzard, Staff member Anne-Marie Vanaman

Absent: Gabe Vinas (partial meeting), Terri Buckner (partial meeting)

Guests: MPA intern Lori Gerson, Planning Director Trish McGuire, Aspen Romeyn (Self-Help Venture Fund), Planning Administrator Tina Moon, Richard Turlington (Habitat for Humanity of Orange County)

I. Welcome

Chairman Quinton Harper welcomed the AHAC and guests and reviewed the agenda.

II. Consider Approval of April 2020 Meeting Minutes

Amy Singleton made a motion to approve the April minutes. Cain Twyman seconded the motion. Voted all in favor. One absent excused. April 2020 meeting minutes approved.

III. Review: Draft LUO Text Amendments relating to residential uses in the B-1(c) District

Using slides, Tina Moon gave a brief presentation of the proposed text amendment, which was reviewed jointly by members of the AHAC and the Planning Board on May 7, 2020. At the time, the AHAC did not have the quorum needed to make a recommendation to the Town Council about the proposed text amendment. She noted that Aspen Romeyn and Richard Turlington were on hand to answer questions about the proposed affordable housing project on 104 Cobb Street in Carrboro, which is dependent upon the text amendment.

Moon noted that project involved Jim Spencer Architects and Self-Help Venture Fund, and had input from the Jackson Center and the Compass Group.

The main component of the text amendment seeks to amend a requirement of the current zoning of 104 Cobb Street (B1-C) which stipulates that the ground floors of buildings in this commercial district cannot support residential units. The project calls for 4 affordable housing units, which maximizes the property and still allows for parking. The ground floor units are slated for low-income seniors and will be built for accessibility by Habitat for Humanity of Orange County. For this project to move forward, the text amendment is necessary.

Moon reiterated that the discussion this evening is about the text amendment, not the project. She stated that the text amendment was written very narrowly so that it would not change the character of the district. The amendment could only be used on a property less than 10,000 square feet and is currently being used for residential purposes; the proposed development is no more than 4 units, and all units are to be used for affordable housing as defined in Carrboro's Land Use Ordinance. She shared aerial visuals of the lot and surrounding properties (a mixture of residential and commercial zoning).

The text amendment has additional elements:

1. Removes separation requirement of the downtown overlay
2. Allows for a reduction of the value of urban amenities
3. Uses an alternate standard of appearance – Affordable Housing Vernacular Standards
4. Permits less stringent tree screen

5. Permits a modification of tree canopy requirements

Moon reviewed questions from the Joint Review:

- Is there a way to increase density? Moon said the text amendment is written for 4 units as requested by applicant and noted that this is dense for Carrboro.
- Can the existing house on 104 Cobb Street be moved? Romeyn says that the house is in poor condition and cannot be moved.

Harper requested to review the slides again and then Moon turned the discussion of the proposed project over to Romeyn and Richard Turlington. Romeyn gave background of the project's inception and noted that it was very much shaped by the community via the Northside Initiative and the Compass Group. The community wanted higher density and intergenerational housing, and specifically sought Habitat for Humanity of Orange County as the builder because the nonprofit offers homeownership to households of lower-incomes. She added that the lot can't accommodate a higher density between parking, tree canopy and other requirements.

Turlington discussed affordability and income of Habitat homes and homeowners. He stated that Habitat offers homeownership to households earning 30-60% AMI and that mortgage calculation is approximately 25% of the household income. The mortgage payment includes insurance and property taxes. To maintain affordability, Habitat utilizes a 99-year affordability deed restriction and has right of first refusal if a homeowner wishes to sell their home. He said they just completed Magnolia Place in Hillsborough, 24 townhomes for ages 55+ with a zero step entry and other universal design features. They plan to use these features in the Cobb Street development. Depending on the impact of COVID-19, Habitat will begin construction either in the fall or in spring 2021.

a. AHAC discussion and recommendation for Draft LUO Text Amendments relating to residential uses in the B-1(c) District

Pamela Atwood asked the age of the existing house and what precautions would be utilized during tear down, noting older homes could have asbestos. Romeyn said she would look up the age of the home and that the demolition would be done safely. Turlington echoed that demolition permits would be required and that they will take all the proper precautions. Singleton thanked them for their presentation and Betty Curry said that her only questions had been about the neighborhood effects of the text amendment and the affordability of the homes, and thanked them for answering her questions.

Rebecca Buzzard brought up the recommendation template for the text amendment and stated that the AHAC can also add comments as they wish. Harper read the recommendation. Betty Curry made a motion to recommend the text amendment. Amy Singleton seconded the motion to recommend the Town Council approve the Land Use Ordinance text amendment relating to residential uses in the B-1(c) district. Voted all in favor, noting one absent/excused. The recommendation is approved.

Twyman made a motion that the adoption of this amendment is consistent with Carrboro Vision 2020 and furthermore finds that the amendment is consistent with the Town's housing goals. Atwood seconded the motion. Voted all in favor, noting one absent/excused. The AHAC had no additional comments. Harper thanked the guests who then departed the meeting.

IV. Vice-Chair Election

Harper said that Gabe Vinas would join the meeting late to cast his vote for Vice-Chair and suggested moving on to the Comprehensive Plan Committee Member Selection.

When Vinas later joined the meeting, the AHAC considered the election of the Vice-Chair. As they have done in previous meetings, Twyman and Singleton briefly shared their background and interest in serving as Vice-Chair. Council Member Damon Seils suggested using the poll feature on the Zoom platform to serve as a ballot. Buzzard created the ballot.

Cain Twyman received 5 votes and Amy Singleton received 1 vote. Terri Buckner had left the meeting early and did not vote. Twyman is elected Vice-Chair in a majority 5-1 vote, noting one absent/excused.

V. Comprehensive Plan Committee Member Selection

Trish McGuire provided background of the Comprehensive Plan, a project that has been in active development since 2018. The Plan will be created with community input to establish the vision for and expectations of Town services, property use, etc. The Town Council finalized a RFP process to select a consultant team to guide the process, including identifying the opportunities and issues before the work begins. The Town is finalizing a contract with a Chicago-based consulting firm now.

McGuire said that Advisory Boards will play a critical role in the process and is seeking members from Advisory Boards to serve on the Comprehensive Plan Committee, which will include engaging the community and representing their respective advisory boards. She said she seeks one representative from the AHAC. The total number of Comprehensive Plan Committee members is 28. She reviewed the number of meetings planned and estimated that serving would require about 50-60 hours over an 18-month period.

Terri Buckner asked why so many members from the Planning Board were required. McGuire responded that the Land Use Ordinance is a large part of the Comprehensive Plan. Harper asked how the Comprehensive Plan differs from Carrboro Vision 2020. McGuire said that the 2020 document is largely a policy document. The Comprehensive Plan will dig deeply into service provision, land use, etc. Council Member Seils added that the Comprehensive Plan goes beyond vision and goals – it addresses how we reach those goals, how we achieve our vision.

Twyman, Curry and Harper noted their interest but that they were not able to make the time commitment. Amy Singleton, who participated in Carrboro Vision 2020, volunteered to serve as the AHAC's representative on the Comprehensive Plan Committee. McGuire will share the application. Harper thanked Singleton for volunteering to serve on this committee.

VI. Fair Housing remote workshop

The Fair Housing Workshop was revisited. Originally the workshop was scheduled for March 2020 but was cancelled due to COVID-19. Buckner would like to hold a virtual workshop this summer in English and in Spanish and noted that the information to be provided is more critical than ever due to the financial impact of the pandemic and an anticipated flood of evictions once the moratorium is lifted. Orange County Housing and EmPOWERment would like to co-sponsor. However, the workshop would have to be largely organized and marketed by the AHAC and EmPOWERment, as Carrboro and Orange County staff have no additional capacity. The AHAC mentioned a desire to include El Centro and the Orange County Human Rights Commission in their efforts. Curry noted she was in favor of the workshops now that there was a longer lead time for grassroots marketing. After discussion, the AHAC determined two dates for the workshops: Wednesday, July 15th and Thursday, July 16th, and noted that the moratorium on evictions expires on July 24th.

VII. Additional comments/questions

Buzzard shared information sheets created by Orange County regarding tenant rights and evictions during COVID-19. She asked the AHAC to share with their networks.

a. Community Home Trust Update

Buzzard reported that Executive Director Kimberly Sanchez met with Town Manager David Andrews and Council Member Barbara Foushee to inform them that Community Home Trust received the payroll protection funding and that they don't know if this support is forgivable. They plan to update the local governments in the fall on the impact of COVID-19 on the organization, the payroll protection funds and any budget impact. Council Member Seils stated that he hoped other organizations who needed support were able to apply for payroll protection.

- b. Next meeting 6/17/20 – Year in Review**
 - i. Pilot application process**
 - ii. AH quarterly report**
 - iii. Goals & Strategies document**

Buzzard said the next meeting will be devoted to an annual review using the Goals and Strategies document and quarterly report as guides. She noted that this is a good time to analyze and prioritize our goals and strategies, as the development of the Comprehensive Plan is an opportunity to advance affordable housing goals. Harper added that the pilot application process is also part of the review and asked members to come to the meeting prepared to discuss.

Curry made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Vinas seconded the motion. Voted all in favor with one absent/excused. The meeting was adjourned at 8:35 p.m.