

**CITY OF
ASHLAND**
ASHLAND PLANNING COMMISSION
STUDY SESSION
MINUTES
May 28, 2013

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Melanie Mindlin called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. in the Civic Center Council Chambers, 1175 East Main Street.

Commissioners Present:

Tracy Peddicord
Troy J. Brown, Jr.
Michael Dawkins
Richard Kaplan
Debbie Miller
Melanie Mindlin

Staff Present:

Bill Molnar, Community Development Director
Brandon Goldman, Senior Planner
Derek Severson, Associate Planner
Dawn Lamb

Absent Members: None

Council Liaison: Mike Morris

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Normal Avenue Neighborhood Plan presentation is scheduled for the June 25th Council Meeting. Molnar will present updates to the Council on the Unified Land Use plan in late July.

PUBLIC FORUM

Dale Swire, 233 Clay Street, is a 24-year resident of the valley. He bought a bed and breakfast in 1989 and operated it for eight years, then moved to Medford for 12 years. He recently returned to Ashland. Swire discussed a recent AARP Study pertaining to senior citizens perspective of the Rogue Valley. Affordability and employment and relating interrelationships showed a need for improvement. Ashland shows a high number of financially stable retirees and empty nesters. But this does not help support the diversity of attracting young families. There are very few living wage jobs for families. Ashland possesses a much higher land values than the rest of the valley. It is a desirable hot spot for retirees. SOU and Shakespeare attract financially established retirees, but not many families. Empty nesters, semi-retired residents with nest eggs, and entrepreneurs are not going to change that market because they like what exists. The developers will not be able to change that attraction. There is some diversification with the student population. Middle-income seniors are attracted to single-family homes with shared community space. Most retirees cannot afford the Mountain Meadow assisted living-type residences. Most want to stay in their homes forever and he would like to see more options for these seniors. ADA accommodations built into larger facilities will out price the seniors. This is a future topic that will be addressed by the Planning Commission.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Zoning and Comprehensive Plan Maps

Mindlin asked the commissioners to voice expectations of this meeting to help guide staff in the open discussion. Brown wants to see the available land, the locations, and really look at opportunities for infill, and review zoning. Miller appreciates the review of the maps and the education on the process. This will present an idea of how the projections compare to what is presently on the books. One set of projections show the city accommodating 2,500 more people than are projected to come depending on the type of zoning. Peddicord feels very useful for new commission. She questioned the pedestrian place overview and would appreciate more explanation. Kaplan feels maps are helpful to see differentiated areas and what are we looking at in terms of residential and industrial units and buildable opportunities. He is anxious to see geographic information live. Dawkins pleased with the informational value of the maps. Mindlin scrutinized the maps and recalls wanting to study and discuss the density challenges and the pedestrian zones. Interesting to seeing how the quarter-mile and half-mile pedestrian zones will develop.

Goldman included several maps in the packet with the intention of showing the commission how the ArcGIS system compiles and processes the information supplied to determine buildable land. The packet included the following maps:

Comprehensive Plan Map Zoning Map Buildable Lands Inventory

Goldman projected the live GIS system for the commission to view as he compiled different layers to the maps. The demonstration will help the commission visualize and understand how the program accesses different layers of information to determine a comprehensible calculation. The maps were based on aerial photos and then various layers are attached to the maps; buildable lands inventory, zoning, comprehensive plan, pedestrian places, and physical constraints.

The Buildable Lands Inventory is updated by the issuance of building permits by the GIS department to ensure the maps are current. The physical constraints overlay mitigates seemingly potential lots. The physical constraints include hillside slope, flood area, riparian areas, and other physically restricting characteristics of lots. It may look as though a given property as having vacant area, but considerable amounts may not be buildable. Infill properties are listed as partially vacant and have remaining lot area that is undeveloped. The program helps to identify additional unit potential for an already developed lot with seemingly extra space. It is a long-term projection because of the existing development and the replacement is an unknown time factor. The potential for developing a second house or additional commercial buildings may not be exercised but additional units could be created if standards could be met. The program recognizes the constraints of the lot area and determines number of potential units. Infill properties are listed as partially vacant due to the number of units on the property and given that they have a lot size that would support an accessory unit.

Mindlin knows of an analysis that shows 109 multifamily parcels comprising of about 40 acres, which if divided evenly would be pretty small multifamily properties. The BLI layers look at the lot size, the constraints of development assuming developable land, and how many units would be allowed to determine build ability; Adjusted Dwelling Units (ADJDUS). The program automatically calculates and references the number of potential units. Kaplan questioned how owners would be aware that they have the potential to build. Brown commented that when he moved here and met with the realtor, they were forthcoming which lots were further developable. Staff could compare the 2002 maps to the 2011 to identify the number of second units created. Kaplan asked if the City encourages this communication to developers. Molnar commented that most are aware of the fact and applications are constant. Dawkins reflected back to the creation of the Calypso Drive development and how that was a great example of where we can be creative and that kind of creativity cannot be shown on the maps. Goldman agreed that this is the underlying base zone and if we have the ability to change the underlying zone to change the density. The BLI is based on the underlying zoning. Brown looks at the broadest zone capacity for determination. Mindlin this is a great way to identify potential cottage housing on the smaller lots. Each lot could be handled in a creative way. Molnar feels having a cluster-housing overlay would be a great tool. Current street standards limit the number of units on a particular lot size. Infrastructure and street standards also limit the usable land for actual buildings. Dawkins it is our understanding and purview to be creative to develop within the existing UGB.

Dawkins brought up older areas of town like Ashland Street, Clay Street, Park Street, and Siskiyou Blvd which are screaming for redevelopment. The area has no east west accessibility whatsoever. The houses accommodated employees of the 12 mills that no longer exist. Miller questioned how older areas with poor functionality are redeveloped; is there a process for updating multifamily zones to create access or other updated improvements? Dawkins felt identifying homes that could be removed would accommodate a new street access. Peddicord questioned, in terms of already developed lots, what is our purview of up zoning for lots that are developed. Molnar commented that up zoning is very controversial but there are times when the opportunity is there and the neighbors are in favor. Existing ordinances provide developed properties opportunities for second units to encourage infill which began in 1990 and has been progressive. The addition of accessory units is far less controversial than asking an entire neighborhood to raise the density and change the zoning. Intact neighborhoods are typically not in favor of redevelopment. We look for creative ways for additional units in line with the character of the neighborhood. Rezoning looks more into areas that are under or less developed. Peddicord asked for clarification on what mechanism would be used to improve street circulation. Molnar would look at the geographic area and focus on opportunities such as outbuildings or lots that have sections that could accommodate right-of-way. This is the benefit of creating neighborhood plans such as Mountain Meadows, Croman, and Normal. When you look at three largest areas of vacant or partially vacant area, the commercial areas provide services and population density. The vacancies are spread between commercial areas. The zoning is in place for fairly significant residential density but how do you encourage development. The commission needs to look at character to see if infrastructure could accommodate something better.

Goldman Pedestrian Placement Overlay – Three areas that have been approved and are identified as areas that are within a ¼ mile of closest neighborhood center. The overlay considers transit, density, and neighborhood centers. It was developed as part of the Transportation System Plan. Downtown operates as an existing pedestrian place. The commission could identify other areas suitable for a commercial center. In conjunction with the BLI the pedestrian placement identifies development and redevelopment potential where increased density would be in concert with the area. BLI was not going with the assumption that 100% of residential would be met on commercial lots so it uses an assumption that 50% of residential being met. The opportunity to increase density is feasible by maximizing the development as mixed-use. Kaplan asked how are trailer parks represented? Goldman said they are shown on the map as redevelopment opportunities zoned as commercial. Trailer parks would be a no net increase if redeveloped because maximum density already existing.

Miller wanted to know an instance of redevelopment. State has a mathematical computation for redevelopment based on market needs. If the combined value of the improvements plus land is worth less than 35% of the combined value of improvement plus land then redevelopment is an option. Basically it means the development on the property is not maximizing the value of the property. Based on that standard a lot of area in the Railroad District is defined as redevelopable. Some communities use redevelopable in the BLI to determine land availability there is, but we stayed away from that in our BLI because it is not reasonable because the land has a high value even if the building does not. It is not viable if the revenue generated from the trailer park rentals make it viable. Market value is more of a pressure than societal pressure. Some family properties are paid off and they don't see a reason to change. Oregon has been more progressive in mobile home park evacuations and they require a year's notice along with relocation fees and other costs to the existing tenants.

Goldman showed the impervious area layer which is dedicated to parking or travel lanes. It is a determining factor for development. The cost of a parking structure compared to its revenue does not always equal out. The community is not robust enough to support a more extensive transit system either. So creating more pervious surfaces is not always more affordable. Goldman pulled up the transit routes on the map. There are two routes; Route 10 and 15 Route. Route 10 duplicates parts of Route 15. The proximity of the routes and bus stops to developable land is another contributing factor to density. It will help to show where bus stops and routes could be beneficial.

Mindlin asked to see the ¼-acre pedestrian circle represented on the Normal Avenue Neighborhood. Molnar some communities use quarter acre radii and others use half acre radii. Goldman planned to show both radii at the Council meeting in June to show distance from developed neighborhoods and commercial centers. More advanced computer models are beginning to show pedestrian distances as affected by the same criteria as vehicles. They are really looking into factors that come into play to see if people chose walking as their mode of transit. Commission needs to consider pedestrian amenities are included to accommodate people.

Goldman could show consumption rates of land development based on building permits to help with projections in terms of supply. Mindlin wanted clarification is development based on ¾ of a percent per year growth? Molnar said that previous year's land consumption based on building permit issuance. Updates were completed on the BLI: 1990-1999, and then 1990-2002, and then 1990-2005. Population growth is based on the Comprehensive Plan which anticipates growth at 187 people per year. This is a .75% growth rate and Jackson County model .73% between 2010 and 2060. At the next BLI it would be prudent to look at the County's adopted population estimate compared to ours now that we are part of the Regional Problem Solving. Mindlin pointed out that the material from the economic opportunity analysis is not based on the same population growth. It is more in line with job creation. It is not correlated. Molnar explained residential developers were hoping that there was a surplus of commercial employment land that could be rezoned for residential developments. The market was stronger and we could show commercial development land for economic growth. Ashland projects out only 20 years since we are not expanding our UGB. Some communities look at 30, 40 or 50 years out. After you run out of commercial land there is not locations around the perimeter to expand your employment zones.

C. Other Business: None

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 8:10 PM.