



TOWN OF BEAUX ARTS VILLAGE

PLANNING COMMISSION

MINUTES

April 16, 2009
Roberts

Present: Acting Chairperson Gordon Roberts, Commissioners Dick Stratton, Scott Harpster, Karen Scott, and Jake Donoghue.

Excused: None

Staff: Deputy Town Clerk Angela Kulp and Town Planner Mona Green

Acting Chair Roberts called the meeting to order at 7:05pm.

Minutes: Commissioner Donoghue moved to approve the March 26, 2009 minutes as written. Commissioner Stratton seconded. Vote: 5 For, 0 Against. Motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS: Remodel/Rebuild Definitions

Planner Green reviewed her drafted definitions per discussions from last month's meeting in setting a new benchmark for when a variance is needed. She explained under the proposed changes to the code, the remodel and reconstruction definitions would still have a threshold at \$250K and 20%, but a variance would no longer be required for a remodel and it would now allow reconstruction to apply for a variance if needed. The commissioners still were concerned about the dollar and percentage thresholds not being adequate and discussion ensued.

Commissioner Harpster wondered why we even need a benchmark at all and suggested we remove the definitions entirely. After some debate, Planner Green noted in keeping the Comprehensive Plan in mind, a benchmark of some sort is needed to determine when, why and how a variance would be allowed. Planner Green also reminded the commissioners the new proposal would continue the predictability and still allow for a variance where there was not before. She encouraged the commissioners to remember the goal they had set (of encouraging remodels) during these discussions.

Commissioner Scott expressed she believes the variance process should be limited. She explained there are cases where the variance needs to be an option for the homeowner and therefore supports the variance process but believes a variance should not be required for all types of work to a non-conforming structure.

Commissioner Donoghue suggested we add a third tier to the definitions, setting the benchmark between the 2nd and 3rd tiers. Acting Chair Roberts suggested the benchmark be tied to a percentage of the assessed value. Commissioners Harpster and Scott pointed out some structures here are valued so low than even at 100%, the value would not allow for any decent upgrades needed.

Commissioner Harpster pointed out the 20% we have now is so low most owners here would hit that mark before they could hit the GFAR allowance. After some discussion, it was agreed by raising the percentage, GFAR would be hit first for most, and since nothing can exceed the allowable GFAR, this was acceptable.

Planner Green and Commissioner Scott pointed out that Clyde Hill uses a means index that changes each year, which Commissioner Stratton explained more completely while supporting the concept. Planner Green noted we could still set the value that is tied to the index, which would fluctuate.

Commissioner Scott reiterated the consensus thus far, that interior work should not be limited by a dollar value, the non-conformity and footprint should not be increased, and the percentage allowed for an addition should be tied to the allowable GFAR. Commissioner Roberts shared he prefers a high dollar value tied to the GFAR.

Planner Green suggested we look at an increased dollar amount tied to an index and an increased percentage. The commissioners agreed this spectrum should now be broad enough to assist a homeowner in saving a home, and problems it does not prevent would probably happen anyway. Still, the commissioners noted some contradictions with examples and wondered if this new benchmark suggestion was too much or not enough. Commissioner Harpster suggested we look at this again next month, thinking in the meantime about the impacts of this percentage, dollar threshold and an index.

Adjourn: Commissioner Harpster moved to adjourn the meeting; Commissioner Scott seconded. Meeting adjourned at 9:04pm. Vote: 5 For, 0 Against. Motion carried.

Next Meeting: The next meeting is Thursday, May 21, 2009 at 7:00pm at Commissioner Harpster's home.

Respectfully submitted,

Angela Kulp
Deputy Town Clerk