



TOWN OF BEAUX ARTS VILLAGE

PLANNING COMMISSION

MINUTES

September 15, 2016
Johnston

Present: Commissioners Jan Johnston, Paula Dix, Hans Juhle and Jeff Kendall

Excused: Chairperson Bennet Yen

Staff: Planner Mona Green, Deputy Clerk Angela Kulp

Commissioner Kendall called the meeting to order at 7:10pm.

MINUTES: Commissioner Dix moved to approve the July 21, 2016 minutes as written. Commissioner Kendall seconded. Vote: 4 For, 0 Against. Motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS: Historic Preservation- Certified Local Governments (CLG's) and Private Covenants

Commissioner Dix reported positive feedback on her Council meeting presentation September 13, 2016. She described the Planning Commission's current focus on three suggestions for encouraging historic preservation. Commissioner Dix noted the Council responded favorably to both suggestions of the CLG Draft Ordinance and Voluntary Deed Restriction (also known as a Private Covenant) as they met the Council's criteria of being voluntary to the homeowner, and not financially detrimental to the Town. She explained the Council would like some local examples of towns using CLG's, as well as more time to review and discuss the CLG information before holding a public hearing. The Commissioners agreed on WA DAHC's assistance to the Council for local examples. Ms. Dix also noted the Council's satisfaction over the Planning Commission's third suggestion of a *Mission Statement of Home Design Guidelines* being finalized, as our historic homes exemplify this concept.

OLD BUSINESS: Zoning Code

Commissioner Juhle shared is completed draft of the *Mission Statement of Home Design Guidelines*, which states the community's preference of encouraging a variety of smaller, well-designed homes that fit into the village landscape with green space while complementing our community's values. He reasoned the Zoning Code states regulations of what one can't do, but this Mission Statement will create awareness of what one can do. Commissioner Dix shared some re-wording suggestions, and after some discussion, Planner Green noted the next step of sharing with the Council for their feedback. She noted when finalized, this document can be permanently added to the Town's website. She clarified the timing of distributing this communication will still need to be determined as submissions to or meeting with the building department are too late to learn the Town's preferences. After further debate, Commissioner Juhle moved to

send this document to the Council pending minor edits of the guidelines through collaboration by Commissioners Juhle and Dix, with a cover letter by Planner Green. Commissioner Dix seconded. Vote: 4 For, 0 Against. Motion carried.

Deputy Clerk Kulp distributed the *Zoning by Lot* document with the new column calculating the 35% limits, which proved to be a good reference for the Zoning discussion.

Commissioner Johnston led the Zoning discussion, continued from June.

- **Ceiling height; impacts to volume/mass of structure:** Commissioner Johnston began the discussion with her concerns over a homeowner potentially manipulating codes in what she described as “gaming the system” and expressed concerns for such type of violations. She explained how ceiling height impacts the volume or mass of a structure. Since code compliance here is on a complaint basis, when no complaints are received, the building department is unaware of activity done after a home is occupied. Discussion ensued over the structural safety concerns of this type of action, potential homeowner liability for the next buyer, the concept that room height can affect a home's perceived size (i.e. - a 3,500 square-foot single-story home with 20 foot ceilings can look just as massive as a 7,000 square-foot home with two stories) and how this action visually doubled this home's maximum allowable GFAR creating an unfair advantage for this property.

Discussion also included debates over the definition of a “story”, the purpose of lot coverage and GFAR limitations and their importance to the Comprehensive Plan. Commissioner Johnston noted Carmel, CA referenced some favorable but complicated definitions, and in looking to simplify, the conversation turned to the current IBC and IRC where the Commission agreed on the importance of simple code definitions to be consistent with the International Building and Residential Codes.

After considerable debate, Commissioner Juhle suggested adding a third benchmark in our Zoning Code for measuring the maximum residential volume, in addition to the Lot coverage and GFAR benchmarks. After playing with some math calculations, the Commission considered Mr. Juhle's suggestion of calculating a room's volume with 35% of 10 (using 10' as an average for room height to measure cubic feet), but realized that settling on a way to calculate volume for a 3rd benchmark seemed problematic for a plan review. After further reflection, Commissioner Juhle suggested treating the proportion of any room with ceiling height in excess of 14 feet as counting double toward a home's GFAR calculation. He explained that would leave out language about ceiling type or slope and 14' is just low enough to prevent anyone from converting one level into two levels after a final inspection, while still allowing for higher ceilings preferred by some.

Deputy Clerk Kulp noted while this recent example of a homeowner's actions is troublesome, it is the exception rather than the rule. In the interest of time, the Commission agreed to table this topic for further reflection to the next meeting.

- **Façade modulation:** Commissioner Johnston shared that as an architect she sees cantilevered architectural elements as a way to modulate the outward image of a

structure through allowable setback intrusions, specifically in the front and back. She gave examples of these elements in Section 18.10.080 of the Zoning Code, and her additional recommendations started a dialogue. After much debate, the Commission agreed to have Planner Green draft the approved revisions to review by the next meeting. The revisions include consideration of arbors, bay windows and other minor elements, while restricting façade length of these elements.

In the interest of time, the Commissioners agreed to table the other zoning issues for discussion but to meet again in two weeks for a special meeting to continue the dialogue with a goal of completing the Zoning conversation and a Council recommendation by year's end. Those additional topics tabled for additional discussion include: Plate height, Construction time frames and limits, any 35% Analysis of Lot Coverage / Lot Coverage / GFAR, Impervious/Pervious, and Green space as current concerns.

NEW BUSINESS: There was no new business.

Adjourn: Commissioner Kendall moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Dix seconded. Meeting adjourned at 9:20pm. Vote: 4 For, 0 Against. Motion carried.

Next Meeting: The next meeting will be a special meeting off schedule, at Commissioner Johnston's home on Thursday, September 29, 2016, 7:00pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Angela Kulp, Deputy Town Clerk