

DENSITY WORKSHOP

A Density Workshop was held on December 11, 2023 at 4:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers of City Hall and via GoToMeeting (872)-240-3311 - Access Code: 407-718-637.

Council President Lance Smith called the meeting to order at 4:03 p.m. Roll call was taken. Present were members Lance A. Smith, Charles Proctor, Kenneth Burgess, Jodi Wilkeson, Steven F. Spina, Ph.D., and Mayor Melonie Bahr Monson. City Manager William Poe and City Attorney Matthew Maggard were present.

Staff present: Police Chief Derek Brewer, Planning Director Todd Vande Berg, Building Official Bill Burgess, CRA Director Gail Hamilton, IT Director Mike Panak, Public Information Officer Kevin Weiss, Senior Planner Rodney Corriveau, Historic Preservation Specialist and Community Planner Hunter Gearhart, Planning Commission members Randy Stovall, Beth Aker, Dave Armstrong, Ellen Taylor, Christa Remington, Rosie Paulsen and City Clerk Lori Hillman.

1. WORKSHOP ITEM

1.1 Comprehensive Plan / Density Workshop

Tammy Vrana – Vrana Consulting – Safety Harbor, Florida

Ms. Vrana said this is a continuation of the Density Workshop held on November 27, 2023 and presented a brief overview of the Workshop Objectives for understanding existing conditions and trends with multi-family development, population growth and strategies to address the issues. A map was shown of Pasco County's residential future land use designations in the Joint Planning Area (JPA) which is a lower intensity residential district with residential/office/retail on the US-301 corridor. Zoning districts within the JPA compatible with the Live Local Act established through Senate Bill 102 were highlighted to include commercial (C2), industrial (I1), multi-family (MF2) and MPUD where multi-family could be established in conjunction with the provisions of the Live Local Act. All height limitations expressed in the zoning districts are the maximum permitted; however, building heights in excess of the maximum permitted within a district may be granted through a Conditional Use. Mid-rise structures, defined for the purposes of the code as buildings of three- to-five stories, may be permitted if all applicable conditional requirements of Resolution No. 147 are met. She said the CRA district would be suitable for intense multi-family development and could be allowed through the conditional use process to consider appropriateness, compatibility and impose conditions. She said CRA Director Gail Hamilton spoke about the need to increase the density within the community redevelopment area and the Form Based Code area provides for up to five stories. Density doesn't need to be bad, it just needs to be shaped well. A strategy was proposed to create multi-family context sensitive standards for all districts. The City currently has standards in the Land Development Code for townhouses that could be modified and applied to other forms of multi-family development. Natural occurring affordable housing is at risk with escalating market-rate rental prices that squeeze people out. Everybody is looking for housing with fewer and fewer affordable or entry level type housing options and they become nonexistent. Affordability is not just a house, it is also transportation. People can get by with one car by creating communities where members of a household can walk or ride their bike.

A conversation ensued involving the Planning Commission members relating to the City of Zephyrhills' vision for a small town feel, the need to provide affordable housing for current residents, and reducing the density from 20 units per acre to 14 units per acre.

Planning Director Todd Vande berg said staff has discussed keeping the future land use at 20 units per acre for the CRA District and Form Based Code and changing the R4 (multi-family) 20 units per acre to 14 units per acre. He said the zoning will dictate the density maximum.

Ms. Vrana clarified Todd's statement and said if there is the ability to build 20 units per acre by virtue of the future land use in the COMP Plan and the City decreases the number to 14 units per acre for R4 (multi-family), the conditional use process would be an option but would be open to Senate Bill 102. If the R4 (multi-family) density was reduced to 14 units per acre, the City could provide performance incentives such as proximity to transit, proximity to schools, sidewalks, bike lanes and proximately to shopping to increase the density. She said the first plan of action will be placing a notation on the density table in the land development code stating conditional uses for higher structures would only be entertained within a certain area, for example the CRA. The second plan of action will review the comprehensive plan policies that

guide and direct new development through the establishment of place types and add layers to create a more refined future land use map. The third plan of action will tailor the land development regulations to create multi-family specific standards based on context to create different situations between in town and the suburban rural fringe. The fourth plan of action is to align planning with fiscal decisions by deciding where infrastructure dollars will be spent to prioritize directed growth, i.e., CRA District and the Form Based Code area. The City will kick off a mobility plan through a state grant in January 2024 to look at recommendations for multiple modes of public transportation to lessen congestion on main roads and create streets that are conducive to walking and biking. Completion is anticipated the middle of June 2024.

CRA Director Gail Hamilton said there is a niche market in the CRA for people who work from home and would rather ride their bike or walk to businesses downtown. The CRA is updating their Master Plan and will host a Public Meeting in January 2024 to solicit input from citizens who live within the district. The Master Plan will look at how to attract residents that want to live in an apartment downtown. She said it takes a diverse group of housing to make a community. The Asset Report received from GAI Consultants recommended the removal of the substandard housing to provide the missing middle with higher density housing. An incentive to attract developers could be offered to increase project density through additional height for developers willing to provide 25% affordable housing within their project. Affordable housing would be defined by the City. There are pockets within the CRA district that are considered affordable housing (substandard housing). The City could purchase those properties for affordable housing projects.

Senior Planner Rodney Corriveau said one unique way to address affordable housing is to establish a density level and allow a developer to exceed the base density level by 20% with a 40 or 50 year deed restriction caveat. If the property is sold during this time frame, the property owner cannot realize more than a 3% per year increase in the property value. If the units were townhomes, they would be inter disbursed throughout the project.

City Manager William Poe recommended Council move forward with Senior Planner Rodney Corriveau's recommendation to reduce the density to 14 units per acre with an incentive to build affordable housing. The City will define affordable housing and allow developers an additional 20%. If the City reduces the density to 14 units per acre, 20% above that brings you to 18 units per acre, close to the current 20 units per acre. He asked Council to allow staff to work on a definition for affordable housing and bring back before Council.

Planning Director Todd Vande Berg said staff will leave the future land use at 20 units per acre for the Form Based Code and CRA District and drop the density for R4 (multi-family) to 14 units per acre and offer caveats and incentives for affordable housing.

There was a consensus among Council to lower the R4 (multi-family) density from 20 units per acre to 14 units per acre.

2. CITIZEN COMMENTS

N/A

Meeting Adjourned: 5:42 p.m.
Submitted by Lori L. Hillman