

MAYOR'S BUSINESS READY TASK FORCE (BRTF) MINUTES

March 4, 2013

4:00 - 6:00 PM, Council Chambers

Albany City Hall, 333 Broadalbin St. SW, Albany

Members: Sharon Konopa, Jeff Christman, Oscar Hult, Arthur Meeker, John Pascone, Dave Reece, Rob Richards, Dala Rouse, Janet Steele, Mark Spence

Members Absent: Ron Reimers

Planning Commissioners: David Faller, Lolly Gibbs, Danon Kroessin, Cordell Post, Dan Sullivan, Larry Tomlin

City Council: Dick Olsen, Floyd Collins, Ray Kopczynski, Bill Coburn, Bessie Johnson, Rich Kellum

Staff: Wes Hare, Heather Hansen, Anne Catlin, Tari Hayes

1. Business from the Public - None

2. Approval of Minutes

(a) October 23, 2012 - Steele made a motion to accept as written, Pascone seconded, passed unanimously.

3. Discussion of detailed summary of proposed code amendments in the BRTF Issue Matrix.

The groups discussed, in detail, the summary of the proposed Albany Development Code (ADC) revisions in the BRTF Issue Matrix provided. There will be about 65-75 pages of "bold & strike" revisions to review and it was agreed that the BRTF would review the "bold and strike" first.

A. and B. Change of use in mixed use, commercial and industrial zones.

These revisions add definitions and differentiation in the code for compatible uses. They also address small scale manufacturing in the mixed use and commercial zones

The group discussed compatibility criteria. There is neighborhood involvement during the site plan review. Frequently, the use request has a small retail aspect (artesian goods of specialty foods, etc) so they don't wish to be too far out of town. The group agreed with the proposed amendments in A. and B.

C. Nonconforming uses.

The nonconforming section of the code is rarely used because the section is confusing and it's difficult to understand the applicability. Many vacant properties have lost their nonconforming status, and the required improvements are confusing and cost-prohibitive. The proposed ADC revisions to this section will reorganize the entire section, prioritize the requirements, revise the review process, and allow for lesser administrative reviews when appropriate.

The group agreed with staff's proposal that a smaller sub-group review this section, with considerations to site plan and conditional use review and A. & B. above. The group generally agreed with the proposed amendments in C.

ACTION ITEM: Smaller group to meet

D. Infill & redevelopment – challenging standards and inflexibility.

Sometimes the smaller lot sizes (< 1) struggle to meet today's site design standards. The proposed revisions modify some of the mixed use zoning districts to encourage infill. They would allow some adjustment to design standards, and add flexibility in orientation and traffic aisle locations. The group agreed with the proposed amendments.

E. Infill & reuse - specifically for downtown.

Recreation and open space requirements can be challenging to meet downtown. Since many properties are in close proximity to paths, parks, and other open spaces, it makes sense to exempt some new, multi-family uses from these requirements. Historic design standards will not change. The group agreed with the proposed amendments.

F. Tree felling.

This is a short term solution for one particular issue. This will allow the Director, in consultation with the City Forester, to grant exceptions to some tree cutting standards on undeveloped industrial properties. Tree regulations will be revisited in their entirety within the next year. The group agreed that a comprehensive review is needed and agrees with the proposed amendments.

G. Parking requirements – standards consolidation, adding some standards, reducing others.

After staff review, some Albany requirements are relatively high compared to surrounding cities. These revisions relax some parking requirements by changing the basis from gross to new square footage. They will reduce requirements for off and on-street parking and promote alternative parking standards, such as for multi-tenant developments, employee carpooling, tree preservation, etc. The group agreed with the revisions.

H. Overflow requirements and temporary parking needs.

Surfacing and paving can be cost prohibitive and the code does not have a provision for temporary parking needs. With occasional overflow, the revisions allow unpaved parking up to 15,000 sq. ft with some improvements such as buffering and screening still being required to mitigate impacts to adjacent uses. The group agreed with the proposed changes.

ACTION ITEM: Have Jim review the ADA impact of this section.

I. Temporary signs, allowances, regulation, permits.

The group discussed size limits and clear vision standards. Hansen shared that enforcement of sign code violations is more of a focus now, not just complaint driven as in the past. She's proposing that consolidated enforcement be addressed by all the departments at an upcoming Director's meeting. The City Council will work with individuals in the community to educate the public. These proposals increase the number of signs from 1 to 2 per business as well as increasing the days allowed for some types of signs (banners, pennants, etc). The revisions will allow A-frame and Sandwich Board signs year round city wide. The signs will need to be secured in place or portable. And all temporary signs will still meet setback and right-of-way requirements.

J. Sign allowances – definitions, allowances, and the need to “open” the sign code up for review.

All agreed that it may be time to open the entire sign code up for review. Today's small proposed revisions include additional definitions, and updates to portable signs. They combine and reorganize standards so that sign allowances can be determined by type rather than confusing calculations.

During this process, staff made a lot of headway on the sign sections of the ADC. But they found that whenever they tried to reorganize, clarify, streamline, or amend portions of it, there were "ripple effects" that required them to delve into new sections. There are also significant sections of the code that are unenforceable because they regulate content.

They have noticed a trend in recent requests for wall signs that haven't been addressed by the revisions being worked on – businesses that request a large main wall sign and multiple smaller signs that indicate the types of products they sell or services they provide. These requests cannot be approved because they exceed both the total square footage and the number of allowed signs. A recent example is Sportsman's Warehouse (Attachment B). The task force is exploring a new approach that would enable "scaling" the sign size based on the percent of building façade, up to a particular size limit. Staff need time and assistance from sign companies to help flesh out this concept.

The group discussed individual opinions of the right size and quantity. What may bother one person doesn't necessarily bother the next.

The group agreed with the revisions presented and asked staff to form a committee to look at comprehensive revisions to the sign code. Tomlin and Collins would like to be on that committee. Konopa would like to see Meeker and some local architects and sign companies on the committee as well.

Action Item: Move forward with sign committee.

K. Neighborhood meetings – coordination and notifications.

These revisions would clarify that meetings should be held when the most amount of neighbors can attend (business hours for commercial, evening meetings for residential). While it would still require the applicant to notify, the revisions would allow for the City to produce the mailing list and add the

requirement for the City to review the list if produced by the developer. The group agreed with these revisions.

L. Site Plan Review - level of review, procedures and definitions.

Some site plan review seems unwarranted when staff can apply clear and objective standards. These proposals will be combined with the non-conforming situations review (See C. above).

M. Planned developments – process, phasing, and standards.

The proposed revisions will combine the preliminary and interim reviews. A new section is added that allows planned developments to be phased with flexibility, such as where amenities are located, so that each phase provides a suitable share of facilities and amenities.

In order to make the requirements proportional to the development, the standards for common open space (reduced), indoor recreation (removed), density transfer (amended) and compatibility (addition) will be revised. The group agreed with the proposed revisions.

N. Expiration of land use approvals.

Most approvals expire within 3 years. Sometimes economic or other conditions may warrant an extension. These proposed revisions will allow a 1 year extension, as long as there are not changes to any local, state or federal standards. The group discussed the number of years and agreed with the proposed revisions.

Future revisions will include:

- (a) Landscaping requirements – delayed until spring, packaged with Public Works stormwater regulation updates
- (b) Tree Standards – delayed until 2013 when tree regulations are reviewed in their entirety
- (c) Home Occupations and Vacant building upkeep – requires costly Measure 56 notices. Hold off and bundle with more Measure items.

4. Next steps:

- (a) Form a sign committee
- (b) Form a non-conforming site (C)/site plan review (L) workgroup
- (c) Schedule a BRTF to go over the “bold & strike” revisions
- (d) Complete staff report and ordinance for adopting code amendments

5. Adjourn 6:00 pm

Sincerely,

Tari Hayes
Administrative Assistant