



CITY OF BELLAIRE TEXAS

PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION

JANUARY 12, 2016

Council Chamber

Regular Session

6:00 PM

7008 S. RICE AVENUE
BELLAIRE, TX 77401

I. CALL TO ORDER AND ANNOUNCEMENT OF QUORUM

Chairman Frazier called the meeting to order at 6:01 P.M, and announced that a quorum was present consisting of the following members:

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Christopher Butler	Commissioner	Present	
Winfred Frazier	Chairman	Present	
Bill Thorogood	Commissioner	Present	
Paul Simmons	Commissioner	Present	
Marc Steinberg	Commissioner	Present	
Dirk Stiggins	Vice Chairman	Present	
S. Lynne Skinner	Commissioner	Present	
John McDonald	Director	Present	
Scott Eidman	Attorney	Present	
Ashley Parcus	Secretary	Present	
Trisha S. Pollard	Councilman	Present	

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM PAST MEETINGS

1. Planning and Zoning Commission - Regular Session - Nov 10, 2015 6:00 PM

RESULT: APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER: Paul Simmons, Commissioner
SECONDER: S. Lynne Skinner, Commissioner
AYES: Butler, Frazier, Thorogood, Simmons, Steinberg, Stiggins, Skinner

2. Planning and Zoning Commission - Workshop Session - Dec 8, 2015 6:00 PM

RESULT: APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER: Dirk Stiggins, Vice Chairman
SECONDER: Paul Simmons, Commissioner
AYES: Butler, Frazier, Thorogood, Simmons, Steinberg, Stiggins, Skinner

III. REMINDER TO CITIZENS DESIRING TO ADDRESS THE COMMISSION

Chairman Frazier reminded all citizens that wished to address the Commission to fill out a sign in sheet.

IV. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENTS

Persons at the meeting who have indicated their desire to be heard on matters of general interest to the Commission by submitting the form provided shall have three minutes to present their comments. The Commission is not permitted to fully discuss, debate, or consider items that are not on the agenda. Questions presented to the Commission may be referred to staff.

There were no general comments.

V. CURRENT BUSINESS (ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION, CONSIDERATION, AND/OR POSSIBLE ACTION)

1. Approval of the Planning and Zoning Commission's 2015 Annual Report to City Council.

Commissioner Skinner asked that Attorney Scott Eidman's name be added to the list of "thank yous."

RESULT:	ADOPTED AS CORRECTED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Dirk Stiggins, Vice Chairman
SECONDER:	Marc Steinberg, Commissioner
AYES:	Butler, Frazier, Thorogood, Simmons, Steinberg, Stiggins, Skinner

2. Proposed amendments to the Code of Ordinances, Chapter 24, Planning and Zoning, Sec. 24-535, R-MF Residential Multi-Family District, to bring the R-MF District more inline with the requirements and regulations of the Corridor Mixed-Use District.

Mr. McDonald explained that this item stemmed from the workshop held by the Commission during December in an effort to bring the R-MF district more in line with the CMU with regard to height regulations. He added that there has been some interest in redeveloping the Pont Alba Apartments site, but the current regulations are limiting and are not conducive for redevelopment. Mr. McDonald stated that allowing some additional height as well as adding protection for surrounding residential properties would be beneficial. He informed the Commission that the proposal is to raise the height maximum to 4 stories, and to allow under building parking except for those buildings that would front a main street. Mr. McDonald stated that if the Commission is comfortable with the proposal then staff would like to set the public hearing for February. He stated that the design standards that were created for the CMU, UV-T, and UV-D would be applied to this new district (CM-F) as well.

Chairman Frazier asked if the height would be referred to in feet instead of stories.

Mr. McDonald confirmed this and explained that it would be a maximum of 53 feet, with an additional 10 foot allowance for mechanical equipment, gables, chimneys, or other aesthetic properties.

Vice Chairman Stiggins stated that he was having a hard time tying the new language into the definitions.

Mr. McDonald explained that RM-F will be replaced with CM-F.

Vice Chairman Stiggins mentioned that the reference to Bellaire Boulevard, Bissonnet, South Rice and Loop 610 was confusing. He felt that someone reading

that would assume that this district has already been applied to those streets.

Mr. McDonald explained that this language ties to a conceptual district that could be applied anywhere within the City, but is intended for the main thoroughfares, such as those.

Commissioner Thorogood asked what the changes would mean for the Pont Alba site, specifically.

Mr. McDonald explained that today, 10 feet off of the back property (where the residential homes are located), a 40 foot tall building would be allowed. However, with the proposed language it would have to be 15 feet off of the property and only 27 feet tall. He added that it would also have to be sloped away from the residential properties in an effort to allow for more natural light. Mr. McDonald explained that the proposed language is increasing the allowable height in the front from 3 stories to 4 stories with a maximum of 63 feet when gables, chimneys, etc. are installed. He added that the front setback is being decreased from 25 to 10 feet. Mr. McDonald stated that a site plan would be required for any proposed development, and that the minimum lot area is one acre.

Commissioner Thorogood asked how many units could be built under the new rules.

Mr. McDonald stated that the number of units would be increased. He added that it would just depend on the project, and that the Commission could set a max density if they wished to do so.

Commissioner Simmons was concerned with the number of units that would be allowed and how much traffic it would bring into that area of the City. He stated that if a project was in front of him today he would insist on a Traffic Impact Analysis (TIA).

Mr. McDonald stated that a TIA can be requested when an application is submitted.

Commissioner Simmons suggested that the requirement be added to the language.

Commissioner Butler mentioned that a lot of work was just done on the five year review of the Comprehensive Plan and that he was hesitant to pass anything that does not coincide with the plan. He asked Mr. McDonald why this district could simply be re-zoned to CMU.

Mr. McDonald explained that the Comprehensive Plan mentions allowing for a variety of housing types and that this is the only solely multi-family district within the City.

Commissioner Butler asked whether or not drive-under parking is permitted.

Mr. McDonald stated that it is permitted, just not under buildings that front corridor streets, in an effort to hide it from the main thoroughfares for aesthetic reasons.

Commissioner Butler felt that the language with regard to drive-under parking was a little confusing, and added that even on the main thoroughfares, under-building parking is more aesthetically pleasing than a parking lot.

Commissioner Steinberg asked that the City go above and beyond the notification requirements for this public hearing.

Commissioner Skinner asked what the requirements would be for sidewalks if a new apartment development were to come in. She also asked whether elevators would be required for a 4 story apartment complex.

Mr. McDonald stated that the standard for sidewalks in that area would be 5 feet, and that elevators are not a requirement. He added that the units on the ground floor would just be made handicap accessible.

Commissioner Skinner asked if that is something that could be added to the code in order to accommodate older residents.

Mr. McDonald explained that adding in the cost of elevators could negatively impact the feasibility of the project.

Commissioner Thorogood recommended deleting the reference to Bellaire Boulevard, Bissonnet, South Rice, and Loop 610.

Mr. McDonald felt that "corridors" should be defined. He mentioned that he could add it to the definition section of the code.

Commissioner Thorogood felt that it was better left out.

Commissioner Skinner asked if the Commission could put a limit on unit size.

Mr. McDonald stated that he would be hesitant to do that as it would limit the developers even more. He felt that setting a max density would give developers a lot more flexibility.

Chairman Frazier asked if it would be possible to ask Gary Mitchell of Kendig Keast Collaborative to be part of this code amendment.

Mr. McDonald explained that he probably does have the budget for it, but that his plan was simply to give Mr. Mitchell a call and get his input.

The Commission agreed that they would like to see one more "go-around" of the proposed language prior to calling a public hearing.

VI. COMMITTEE REPORTS

There were no Committee Reports.

VII. CORRESPONDENCE

There was no correspondence.

VIII. REQUESTS FOR NEW BUSINESS, ANNOUNCEMENTS AND COMMENTS

A. Staff liaison report on the status of projects previously addressed by the Commission, as well as projects for future meetings.

Mr. McDonald informed the Commission that a new restaurant, Inoteca Rosa, is open on Bissonnet Street and that Condit is on schedule and looking to finish in the summer. He added that school will begin in August in the new building. Mr. McDonald stated that there is still no word on Bellaire High School. He also mentioned that in the first quarter of fiscal year 2016, there have been 22 new residential permits issued, which is down from 25 in 2014, and 30 in 2013. Mr. McDonald explained that he had attended an

economic forecasting luncheon that day where it was stated that the fourth quarter was the worst in Houston history in about fifteen years.

He added that although oil is down, Houston is fairly well diversified now and should be fine. Mr. McDonald also pointed out that the problem is that Bellaire is such a small microcosm, and what affects Houston as a whole may not affect Bellaire. He added that the value of homes within the City of Bellaire has decreased in recent years.

Commissioner Thorogood asked what the builders have said about the current state of the economy.

Mr. McDonald stated that the builders seem very confident, and have not implied that they are concerned.

Commissioner Thorogood asked about the commercial sector side.

Mr. McDonald explained that addition of the new H-E-B will add a whole new dimension to the downtown area, as well as the fact that about 10 other tenants will be looking for new places.

Commissioner Skinner asked if the City website listed permit information for new businesses coming into Bellaire.

Mr. McDonald explained that staff does not put any permit information up on the website in an effort to respect the businesses/developers who wish to keep the information as confidential as possible.

B. The Chairman shall recognize any Commissioner who wishes to bring New Business to the attention of the Commission. Consideration of New Business shall be for the limited purpose of determining whether the matter is appropriate for inclusion of a future Agenda of the Commission or for the referral to staff for investigation.

Commissioner Butler thanked Councilmember Pollard for attending the meeting. He added that the Beautification survey would be closing in 3 days and is very close to getting 1,000 participants.

Chairman Frazier also welcomed Councilmember Pollard and thanked her for attending the meeting. He also suggested that the Commission hold more workshops sometime between now and April.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Motion: a motion was made by Commissioner Thorogood and seconded by Commissioner Simmons to adjourn the Regular Meeting.

Vote: the motion was carried on a unanimous vote of 7-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:38 PM.