



City of Rowlett
Meeting Minutes
City Council
Planning and Zoning Commission

4000 Main Street
Rowlett, TX 75030-0099
www.rowlett.com

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Thursday, July 12, 2012

6:30 P.M.

Municipal Building – 4000 Main Street

As authorized by Section 551.071 of the Texas Government Code, this meeting may be convened into closed Executive Session for the purpose of seeking confidential legal advice from the City Attorney on any agenda item herein.

The City of Rowlett reserves the right to reconvene, recess or realign the Regular Session or called Executive Session or order of business at any time prior to adjournment.

Council Present: Mayor Gottel, Councilmember Pankratz, Councilmember Davis, Councilmember Miller and Councilmember Gallops

Council Absent: Mayor Pro Tem Phillips and Deputy Mayor Pro Tem Kilgore

Commission Present: Vice-Chairman Landry, Commissioner Alexander, Commissioner Jeffers, Commissioner Peebles, Commissioner Charles, Commissioner Crawley, Alternate Commissioner Tune and Alternate Commissioner Meyer

Commission Absent: Chairman Sheffield

1. CALL TO ORDER

1A. Mayor Gottel called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

1B. Vice-Chairman Landry called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

2. WORK SESSION ITEMS

2A. Staff and the consultant team led by Hellmuth Obata Kassabaum LP HOK will provide the City Council and Planning and Zoning Commission with an update regarding the Realize Rowlett 2020 Phase II Planning Process.

Staff gave a brief overview of the process and expectations. It was noted that the Form Based Codes will be adopted as an additional zoning district and applied only to the four target areas but that developers could request to have additional areas rezoned under the Form Based Codes. Form Based Codes would offer a smoother and expedited process for developers would provide clear guidelines and promote high quality development for the City to ensure citizens protection of their vision.

Dennis Wilson, Townscape Inc., began a review of the Draft Form Based Codes with the process overview and designation of two districts, New Neighborhoods and Urban Village. It was noted that as long as the developer was not asking for 'major warrants' the plan could be approved administratively. If the developer made a request to deviate on a 'major warrant' item, the plan would go to the Planning and Zoning Commission for a recommendation before moving on the City Council for approval or denial. Mr. Wilson noted that New Neighborhoods would be primarily single family homes with open spaces and trails, a mixture of unit types and sizes, and would have amenities and services within walking distance. Urban Village would be largely mixed used with plazas and courtyards, mixture of unit types and sizes, and amenities and services included. He reviewed the Form Based Codes organization and outlined the associated six articles.

Article One covered terms general to all Form Based Code development including major and minor warrants and platting.

A member of Council if the percentage of public space should be considered a major or minor warrant.

Mr. Wilson stated that it may be better to discuss that issue after the upcoming Development Tour when everyone has had a chance to see how different developments have utilized open space.

There was discussion concerning the substitution of building materials and Mr. Wilson stated that exact building materials would not be outlined in the Code but all materials would be required to be of quality and durability.

A member of Council inquired of the ease of developers to follow the Code.

Mr. Wilson responded that developers willing to build quality developments that would sustain reinvestment over time would not find the Codes difficult to work with and noted the flexibility built into the Code.

A concern was voiced that some building material substitutions may need to be considered major warrants while others are minor.

There was discussion about further exploring minor versus major warrants in general. Mr. Wilson reviewed the platting process under the Form Based Codes and noted the streamlined process.

A Commissioner expressed concerns about some of the items required being listed on a recorded plat in the event of minor changes.

There was discussion about Homeowner's Associations (HOA) and Public Improvement Districts (PID) and that PIDs would ensure maintenance even if the HOA were to fail. Concern was expressed about the language that sub-HOAs would be responsible for replacement funds on townhomes and it was noted that the intent of the statement was that sub-HOAs would have funds available for the maintenance and repair of buildings in attached homes. There was further discussion about the need for flexibility on plats.

Article Two addressed the general district standards. For New Neighborhoods this includes building types and housing mix for large developments. It was noted that accessory units would be permitted throughout.

Members of Council expressed concern that if not done properly the accessory units would decrease appeal and did not want "airplane hangar" in backyards.

Council was assured that regardless of the use intended by the homeowner, standards of construction would be in place. It was clarified that an accessory unit would include a bathroom and kitchen for the possibility of a separate living unit. Accessory structures used as storage buildings would not fall into this category.

The issues captured by Staff as needing further review were to debate the definition of an accessory unit, debate building standards, determine if it would be considered a duplex, and determine possible negative economic impact.

Discussion continued with the different housing types and clarified that the diversity of housing types would be needed to balance the large amounts of existing single family and garden apartment within the City and surrounding areas.

Mr. Wilson reviewed the standards for facades and roofs and noted the requirement for non-repeat of facades. Discussion continued concerning the regulation that does not allow for solar screens on houses and expressed concerns about whether it could be enforced. Standard screening for HVAC equipment visible from the street in both New Neighborhoods and Urban Village were discussed. There was a discussion about the definition of non-repeating façade and what constitutes a different façade; and the requirement of a porch option on all house designs and whether a porch should be required on every house or if just allowing for the option would provide for more variety. The group discussed the open space requirement, how much is enough, what it should be used for, and where it should be located within the developments. Mr. Wilson reviewed the standards for fencing and possible alternatives for durable materials were discussed. Concern was expressed that the maximum height would not be taller than six feet and that wooden privacy fences would not be permitted. Discussion continued with the requirement of fences to be set back three feet from the alley with landscaping and whether this was a reasonable and maintainable requirement. They called out the requirement that a shade tree be planted in this space and discussed if this would allow for proper growth of the tree and

if it could possibly hinder the passage of larger vehicles such as garbage collection trucks. They discussed the importance of residences facing streets and end caps to arterial streets. Concerns were expressed about the standard that would not allow homeowners to install security floodlights on their homes.

A Commissioner posed the suggestion that curved alleys may prevent the lights from vehicles from disturbing the homes on the end caps.

Mr. Wilson reviewed Urban Village block sizes, building types and density. Parking availability and possible parking structures were discussed. Mr. Wilson reviewed the new standards for Build-to Zones and noted that in New Neighborhoods the build-to zone is measured from the property line and in Urban Village it is measured from back of curb. They discussed the balcony requirement and inquired if a minimum of 25% would be enough and debated the definition of 'usable'. Mr. Wilson reviewed the standards for residential at grade and gave good and bad examples of building frontages with residential at grade. He reviewed the standards for flex space at grade and stated that it should be required that the developer build the flex space at the beginning of the project and then they can let any allowable use utilize the space until the market catches up at which time the spaces will naturally fill with the desired restaurant and retail uses.

Councilmember Miller left the meeting at 8:56 pm.

Article Three addressed automobile parking for new developments.

A member of Council inquired if the City would be providing bike lanes.

Mr. Wilson responded that it had been proposed that the traffic lanes be marked for dual use with automobiles and bicycles due to the fact that the design of the streets would promote slower automobile traffic and allow for the sharing of the lanes.

A member of Council expressed concern about safe passage on streets that may be too narrow when larger vehicles are parked along the sides.

Article Four discussed lighting, mechanical, and utilities.

A member of Council asked who would provide the poles and fixtures to ensure uniformity within areas.

Mr. Wilson replied that a standard supplier would be used and the guidelines are available for the developer to choose items that match the style of their area but that uniformity within districts would be expected.

Signs are addressed in Article Five. Mr. Wilson noted that generally what is allowed in the current sign standards would be allowed with some additional allowances and a few exceptions. They discussed whether signage should be allowed in New Neighborhoods and they

determined that the new sign regulations would apply to Urban Village. Concerns were expressed regarding the difficulty of maintaining two separate signage codes from the Rowlett Development Code and the Form Based Codes.

Councilmembers and Commissioners indicated a general consensus that the draft codes are in general what they feel are a good match for the City and what the citizens and business owners have expressed they want.

3. ADJOURNMENT

3A. City Council

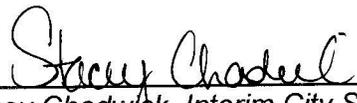
Mayor Gottel adjourned the meeting at 9:22 p.m.

3B. Planning and Zoning Commission

Vice-Chairman Landry adjourned the meeting at 9:22 p.m.



Todd W. Gottel, Mayor



Stacey Chadwick, Interim City Secretary

Date Approved: August 7, 2012

