

POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING

November 22, 2010

6:00 p.m.

County Complex, Building A

1. Roll Call

Present

Mr. Jack Fraley, Chair
Mr. Tim O' Connor
Mr. Reese Peck
Mr. Al Woods (via phone)

Staff Present

Mr. Allen Murphy
Ms. Tammy Rosario
Ms. Leanne Reidenbach
Ms. Kate Sipes
Mr. Brian Elmore
Mr. John McDonald
Mr. Fran Geissler
Mr. John Horne

Mr. Jack Fraley called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

2. Minutes - November 8, 2010

Mr. Al Woods stated the minutes did not adequately reflect the discussion on relating Annual Report strategies and action items. The committee discussed ways in which the minutes could be amended.

Mr. Tim O'Connor moved for approval of the minutes as amended.

The amended minutes were approved (4-0).

3. Old Business

Mr. Fraley asked if staff had prepared a response based on discussion of the Annual Report from the November 8th meeting. He stated Committee member recommendations included better linking strategies and actions, including all priority items not yet acted upon, expanding Office of Economic Development (OED) initiatives, and reporting numbers based upon the residential unit buildout analysis.

Ms. Tammy Rosario stated that staff was still discussing these ideas and preparing a response.

4. New Business – Zoning Ordinance Amendments – Economic Opportunity Framework

Mr. Jason Purse stated that the Economic Opportunity (EO) zone was the first ordinance amendment under review. He stated that staff identified seven topic areas based on Economic Opportunity discussions during the Comprehensive Plan update.

Mr. Fraley stated EO zones should not be limited to Business Climate Task Force recommendations.

Mr. Purse stated that major Business Climate Task Force points, including positive fiscal impact, quality jobs, enhanced community value, environmental friendliness and increased economic stability were all discussed by the Steering Committee as potential EO characteristics, but those were not the only recommendations considered.

Mr. Purse stated that under the Submission Document topic, discussion revolved around the need to master plan the proposed EO zone, including coordinating infrastructure with other localities. Staff believes the ordinance would benefit from a master plan provision. A master plan would assist working with property owners opting-in-or-out of the zone and identifying different residential development densities based on transportation infrastructure.

Mr. Fraley stated that EO zones should not be limited by the need for other localities' involvement. He asked if the EO designation provided a good platform for form-based code.

Mr. Doug Gebhardt, Vice Chair of the Economic Development Authority, expressed concern about the opt-out provision and buffering requirements.

Mr. Mark Rinaldi, a member of the public, suggested the committee and staff pay attention to the economics of construction.

Mr. Purse stated community-wide buy-in on architectural designs would be required before implementing traditional form-based code. He stated architecture was more important than use under the form-based code model. The Toano area already has design guidelines created using public input. Under the Complimentary Design topic, staff is reviewing an alternative type of form-based code.

Mr. Fraley stated that transit-oriented design would not work with a business park or campus design.

Mr. Purse stated that during the Steering Committee, there was much discussion relating to the Balance of Land Uses topic. He stated discussion centered on incorporating transit-oriented development and attracting supporting businesses by including workforce housing and creating a sense of place. Transit-oriented uses and businesses would require certain nearby residential densities. Commercial and residential uses should be secondary in an EO zone, including a possible percentage limit.

Mr. Fraley stated concern about locking down percentages and asked about possible vertical development in the EO zone.

Mr. Purse stated a light rail or bus oriented design would require higher densities to be sustainable. He stated staff recommended similar height standards to the existing Mixed Use height requirements for EO.

Mr. Allen Murphy stated the tallest buildings could be sited during the master plan process. He stated there were vertical opportunities in the proposed EO zone.

Mr. Fraley stated the EO zone should not be constricted by Mixed Use regulations. He stated the brand new EO design should be creative and flexible.

Mr. Fraley stated that the rights of property owners opting out of EO would have to be respected and buffering would have to be inserted.

Mr. Murphy stated language was written into the Comprehensive Plan protecting property owners opting out of EO. He stated there will be additional inclusions into the master plan over time as property values increase.

Mr. Hicks stated the EO zone should not be another Mixed Use development zone. He stated flexibility and clarity are the EO zone's strength and that buffer and height restrictions should be reduced there.

Mr. Purse stated that using Tiered Residential Densities would allow higher densities depending on the existing or proposed transportation infrastructure. These tiered densities could be used in concert with a possible Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program. Construction Phasing would help ensure the County receives the fiscally positive segments of the EO zone first. Complementary Design would help create a sense of place within the development. Developers should think about the entire EO zone when designing a project. To encourage a sense of place, pedestrian connections should be convenient and enjoyable, entry points should be well designed, and local historic viewsheds and environmentally sensitive areas should be preserved.

Mr. Fraley and Mr. Peck expressed agreement with the tiered residential density approach. Mr. Fraley was also supportive of the approach used for the Construction Phasing design.

Mr. Fraley stated creating a sense of place, including walkability, street connectivity, parking management, grid street patterns, and vertical and horizontal mixed uses would expand the tax base. He felt the County should discourage campus-like development.

Mr. Rinaldi stated that density should be geographically centered around infrastructure.

Mr. Purse stated that staff left out many specifics to avoid tying the hands of developers bringing forward good, consistent designs. He stated the EO setbacks were based on Mixed Use setbacks, which are designed to allow internal setback and height limit waivers under the right circumstances. Applying Mixed Use standards is only intended as a starting point.

Mr. Gebhardt expressed a desire for clear expectations with respect to design.

Mr. Hicks stated that EO zones should be apparently different than Mixed Use, with a focus on the creation of economic development, using clear, less restrictive standards, with limited exceptions.

Mr. Peck stated the features of the proposed EO zones should be identified for the public. He stated that regional agreements and plans with York County should be investigated.

Mr. O'Connor stated he was concerned with internal buffers caused by property owners opting out of the EO zone.

Mr. Murphy stated that dealing with property owners opting out of EO may vary depending on the EO master plan.

Mr. Purse stated the EO ordinance would probably not include language on specific buffer requirements for opt-out property owners.

5. Adjournment

Mr. Woods moved to adjourn.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:25 p.m.

Jack Fraley, Chair of the Policy Committee