

PLANNING & ZONING WORKSHOP

MINUTES

June 8, 2023, at 6:00 P.M.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Time: 6:00 PM

Debbie Moore	Present
Ishmael Harris	Absent
Carrie Caylor	Present
Scott Long	RESIGNED 06/08/2023
Patrice Parsons	Present
Judah Ross	Present
Kristi Koch	Present
David Barrow	Present
Ashleigh Henson	Present

2. CITIZEN COMMENTS

Debra Jones, resident at 1606 Pecan Street spoke regarding the hardships and potential loss of income in trying to install utilities and to receive authorization needed to development her property.

3. WORKSHOP

- 3A. Discussion and workshop on an ordinance amending the Bastrop Building Block (B3) Code, Article 3.1 Place Type Zoning Districts, and Adding Article 3.4 Planned Development Districts, for the purpose of considering Planned Development Districts within the City of Bastrop.

Mechanics of a PDD

- Orderly Development
- Base Standards
- Own Rules/District
- Public Hearing AND Public Comment

PDD Process

- Conceptual Plan
- Public Hearings
- Amendment to the Zoning Map by Ordinance

Misconceptions to the PDD

- Staff Makes All the Decisions
- It is Spot Zoning
- We Won't Ever Get Good Connectivity
- It is an Attempt to Undermine the Code

Discussion ensued between Commissioners and City Staff regarding consideration of Planned Development Districts within the City of Bastrop.

1. Will we adopt the new code and use it to update things according to the B3 Code or vice versa?
 - a. We will look at the big picture and see how we can make things work for that particular development. A PDD cannot be brought in to destroy an underlying district.
2. When staff is considering working through a PDD does it allow for amendments to happen for the public?
 - a. If we see the same items being brought up, then those are things that need to be addressed in the code.
3. Can you speak to how the PDD may alleviate any current financial or administrative burden for the City and how they currently must navigate this process?
 - a. We will need to run some financial models. Currently the process runs linear. The City requires certain plans and then they receive approval from Planning & Zoning. The applicant now must follow those plans. If any issues arise, the applicant must come back to Planning & Zoning to get permission to make any necessary changes. A PDD allows for a more overall view of projects with basic requirements being met, but allowing necessary changes as the project develops.
4. Why can't we take the B3 and add elements of the PDD to the B3?
 - a. That is what we are doing – the PDD will “sit” inside the B3.
5. Can you speak more to the Public Hearing process – where would it be held?
 - a. It would be held here in Planning and Zoning Commission.
6. You mentioned City Council and Planning and Zoning Commission being able to speak – will upcoming projects be placed on the agenda, or will be if Planning and Zoning Commission brings it up?
 - a. It must be approved here, so must be discussed here for each amendment or project.
7. A concern, as stated previously, is that we've had approximately 4 projects that have come before us in the past two years, and we worked it out here. One specific project, there were three (3) meetings – the client failed to show up to one meeting - commissioners were able to come to a conclusion in two meetings. Commissioners addressed concerns and worked through the issues. It does not seem there have been very many brought before Planning and Zoning – are they getting mired down before even coming to P&Z? If so, we want to see them because we feel we can help them work through it. Commissioners would appreciate clarification. Process at the dais is painful for applicants. There is limited authority for staff/city manager to make a decision. Ties the hand of staff who are the professionals who are responsible for working through the process and as expeditiously as possible. House Bill 3167 requires action within a specific time frame. Anything must have action – approval or denial within 30 days from the date of acceptance. No response gives automatic approval. We accept every other Monday, go through a detailed review process, and we deny quickly because we know how it ends up here.
8. Can you elaborate on why it's not beneficial to have discussions like this in public?

- a. It is beneficial to determine what didn't work and what is not in the communities best interests. As professionals, you've entrusted us to ensure that we are executing all the plans and that all our actions relate to that. There is a stripping away of authority of the staff if we bring a product that checks all those boxes, and we don't get to do that. If we must bring you a product, as submitted, and must tell you what is wrong with it, even if I have a solution. I must bring everything that is wrong with the project and the Commissioners make the decision whether to grant a warrant or not.
 9. Do you have any concern that there could be political pressure applied to staff to rule one way or another?
 - a. That is in every City. That is why we have a public process here.
 10. Is it safe to assume that the PDD process applies regardless of the size of the project?
 - a. Yes.
 11. Is it safe to assume that there is a little bit of a bi-directional flexibility for the benefit of the developer as well as the City?
 - a. Yes, staff are living and breathing it. Staff cannot deviate from our lane unless we are given authority to do so. The code is supposed to be a living breathing document. It has not been.
 12. Why could we not look at the specific things that are causing the problems and amend the B3 code around those items?
 - a. We are, but it's taking some time. The pieces of the code that don't work are mainly on the commercial side. The PDD is a short-term solution enabling us to work on solutions to prevent the situation from imploding. Code amendments take time. Yes, we are amending the code and yes, we will be bringing the amendments forward.
 13. If you decide to leave and are supportive of the code changes and then a new City Manager comes in with different ideas and now, we are locked into something that may not be what we believe the community will support. If we look at the major items first, Commercial and Multi-Family are having problems with, and figure out a way to amend the B3 Code without the PDD, would it be more palatable?
 - a. The PDD is a way to salvage the good things without throwing out the B3. An amendment to the code may remove your ability to do certain things and then you end up with something that is not wanted.
 14. Do we need to make a recommendation currently?
 - a. A recommendation is not needed as this is a workshop.
- 3B. Discussion on a Town Hall meeting to revisit the B3 code on June 15th from 6pm to 8pm.

Planning and Zoning Commission is invited. It will be held at the Bastrop Convention Center, and it will be recorded and live streamed.

4. ADJOURNMENT

Judah Ross made a motion to adjourn at 6:56 pm. Patrice Parsons seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Debbie Moore, Chair

Carrie Caylor, Vice Chair