



MINUTES

Code Review

Ad-Hoc Committee

May 20, 2021 5:30 P.M.

Coburg City Hall

91136 N Willamette Street

Via Virtual Conference

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Patty McConnell, City Councilor; John Fox, City Councilor; Marissa Doyle, Planning Commissioner; Alan Wells, Business Owner; Cathy Engebretson, Citizen At-Large.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT: Planning Commission Chair; Paul Thompson, Anne Heath, City Administrator; Jerry Behney, Citizen At-Large

STAFF PRESENT: Megan Winner, Planning and Economic Development

RECORDED BY: Jayson Hayden, LCOG

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Fox called the meeting to order at 5:33 P.M.

2. ROLL CALL

Ms. Winner took roll and a quorum was present.

3. MINUTES FOR APPROVAL – May 6, 2021

The Committee decided to defer minutes approval for the next meeting.

4. COMMITTEE BUSINESS

Chair Fox began by sharing a slide about formula business restrictions.

Mr. Wells asked about highlighted sections of the text and Chair Fox explained that the ordinance was taken directly from the website of Port Townsend.

Councilor McConnell asked there were certain requirements before having restrictions in the downtown quarter. Chair Fox explained that when developing ordinance they should note legislative history, reference the town's comprehensive plan, and identify goals in the plan that the formula business restrictions would help to fulfill such as maintaining the unique character of the community and the appeal of the commercial district.

Councilor McConnell suggested adding the goal of preserving not just the historic integrity of downtown but also the ability of small business to thrive. Chair Fox outlined the goal of protecting the community's economic vitality by ensuring diversity of businesses, with sufficient opportunities for entrepreneurs to foster new business that serves the basic needs of the surrounding neighborhoods rather than the region. He added that ordinance had been enacted after the Planning Commission had approved Hollywood Video and 4000 people signed a petition to ban it.

Mr. Wells noted section 6a, explaining that a restaurant or formulaic retail establishment could not be done without a conditional use permit and asked if this would override everything else. Chair Fox said he would defer to a lawyer so that if it went to court it would not get overturned.

Chair Fox said that Councilor McConnell sent pictures of a variety of downtowns or continuity districts, noting that Coburg did not have that. He asked Ms. Winner to point out some of the less tasteful examples so that they were able to refine the wording of the code and avoid unwanted obsolete buildings.

Mr. Wells said that every scenario couldn't possibly be covered but that they could still make it clear that they did not want chain businesses in the community. He noted that Corvallis did this by making every development project go through a planned development process. He said this may not be popular with the development community but stressed the importance of stating these things clearly, adding that this was a good way of keeping chain businesses out of Coburg.

Chair Fox gave the example of county-owned stormwater runoff regulation, saying that he did not want to over-regulate but also pointing out potentially unfamiliar terms. He asked about rain gardens and Mr. Wells explained that riven asphalt and plastic grids got clogged up and cost more to maintain than a rain garden, which also gave a nice landscape effect. Mr. Wells added that there were a lot of these around town and noted that they were expensive but permanent.

Ms. Engebretson offered one reason they could give to explain banning formula stores from downtown would be the limited space downtown. She outlined three possible options; not allowing them at all, allowing them only with a conditional use permit, or requiring a design review process with the Planning Commission. She suggested that the design review process would be more thorough and allow the Commission more flexibility and asked for professional feedback on the options. Chair Fox was concerned about the possibility of a group of citizens having to take on a large developer if the code were not tight enough. Councilor McConnell thought that they could be allowed only in the commercial area and wanted to see the process

as simple and as airtight as possible. Mr. Wells asked if this would be written directly into the zoning code and Councilor McConnell said that would be her recommendation. Chair Fox said he was not sure of the difference between code and ordinance and Ms. Engebretson explained that an ordinance was not needed, just a planning code.

Mr. Wells asked if they could refer to the pictures taken by Councilor McConnell of downtown elevations as reference rather than using illustrations. Chair Fox said yes, if this was allowed by the code, noting the development across from Dari Mart and the Van Duyn house as examples. Mr. Wells suggested labeling the different building features in photos to save money on having them drawn up.

Councilor McConnell shared photos of various buildings in small historic towns.

Mr. Wells remarked the high cost of construction and Ms. McConnell noted the shortage of rebar. Chair Fox added that manufacturing had been halted for almost a year.

Ms. Engebretson noted that some of the examples lacked landscaping and Councilor McConnell agreed that more trees would be needed in Coburg.

Mr. Wells reiterated that having photos of desired features in code made a lot of sense and took out all of the guess work.

Chair Fox thanked Councilor McConnell for sharing the photos.

Chair Fox outlined the rough draft of the downtown core, which could be used to start building from the comment sheet to reference right into the code by tracking changes to the document. Ms. Winner asked if everyone was familiar with how to track changes, Councilor McConnell was not and Ms. Winner demonstrated how to use this feature of Microsoft Word to see who made changes to the document and where. Ms. Winner offered to merge the edited drafts together once completed.

Chair Fox asked for additional comments and concerns from the architectural detail sheet.

Councilor McConnell asked if the term 'character architecture' would be discussed more and if it would be an actual term used. Ms. Engebretson explained that the term was used to distinguish between architectural features and personal character. Councilor McConnell suggested adding the term 'historical' and Commissioner Doyle agreed. Ms. Winner added that the terms appeared in the intro to every zoning district. Chair Fox said that it should definitely be in the central business and residential district. Ms. Engebretson suggested adding an additional term to describe the historic layout of the town. Mr. Wells suggested adding the term 'vernacular' and Councilor Doyle explained that this meant a style of architecture specific to a certain region. Chair Fox thought that the vernacular of downtown Coburg would be similar to pre-1950's and suggested also using the word 'plat'. Councilor Doyle suggested using 'style' instead of 'character' to avoid confusion but noted that they would then have to define the

style. She said examples of design guidelines from Portland mentioned architectural style including the time period.

Mr. Wells suggested giving visual examples to the developer who would submit their proposal to the conditional use process. He asked if there were any permitted uses that would not have to go through the Planning Commission. Ms. Engebretson answered yes and said they didn't want the process to be bogged down by every application. She added that they wanted to write the code so as to minimize the amount of applications that would have to be reviewed while still including restrictions for chain stores.

Mr. Wells expressed concern about leaving anything in the code which would be considered subjective but Ms. Engebretson explained that planning code was usually written with a number of specific objective rules and that a master plan track could be required which would still allow the developer to work with the Planning Commission on specific features. Mr. Wells agreed but asked if there was a design review committee in place. Chair Fox said he wanted to minimize the work of the Planning Commission.

Chair Fox asked if the Hayden Homes residential project came out the way it was envisioned regarding the code. Ms. Engebretson shared that the biggest problems were access and extra traffic, noting that design standards could be beefed up more but that their goal was to strike a balance between forcing certain architectural styles and giving leeway. She added that the central business district code was vague and could possibly use more detail. Mr. Wells said that this would also apply to the commercial business district but noted that it would be difficult to write code specific enough to avoid the design review process. Councilor McConnell agreed and explained that the Hatfield development was thought to be specific enough, but noted that they had been able to stretch what they could do. She thought that the downtown business core would need a design review process. Chair Fox agreed, noting that they didn't have a continuity of building design. Mr. Wells added that the design review would be separate from the Planning Committee and said that it might be necessary to preserve the character of downtown Coburg.

Commissioner Doyle said that downtown was in the historic district and shared that there was discussion about the disconnect between the code and the review process in the ordinance that establishes the Heritage Committee.

Chair Fox asked for Ms. Engebretson's input and she admitted that it was difficult to write code to work for every possible situation without prohibiting things they would like to see and allowing things they wanted to avoid. She suggested that maybe the design review process would be easier for sensitive areas but expressed concern about the increased time required from volunteers and the subjectivity of the process. Mr. Wells agreed but was not sure how to avoid that while also preserving architectural character.

Ms. Engebretson noted that the small size of the central business district would make the design review requirement more reasonable. Mr. Wells thought this was fair and didn't think

any developer would object. He added that outside the historic area they wouldn't have to be as restrictive.

Chair Fox thought this was a rich discussion and recapped the changes needed to verbiage including historical architectural style and vernacular.

5. FUTURE MEETINGS | DATES TO REMEMBER

- Next Code Review Ad-Hoc Committee Meeting: June 3, 2021.

6. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Fox adjourned the meeting at 6:36 P.M.

(Minutes recorded by Jayson Hayden)

APPROVED by the Development Code Review Ad-Hoc Committee of Coburg this ____ day of xx 2021.

Chair, John Fox

ATTEST:

Sammy L. Egbert, City Recorder