

Housing Committee Meeting
Tuesday August 5, 2008
5:30 – 7:00 p.m. City Hall – Room 209

Attendance: Councilor Jill Duson, Chair, and Housing Committee Members Councilor Kevin Donoghue and Councilor Nicholas Mavodones, TJ Martzial, HNS Division Director, Alex Jaegerman, Planning Division Director, Peter Hodgkin HNS Office Assistant (note taker)

1.) Meeting Minutes of June 3, 2008 (beginning at 5:30 p.m.) were unanimously approved by The Councilors.

2.) Text Amendments R5 Zone

Alex reviewed listing of the HC contract & R5 zoning amendments and emphasized the wide public notice coverage, as well as, the wide ranging public input and comment regarding the mix of single family, two family and multi family units and that the neighborhood appears to be coexisting now, without any issues, but to be cognizant that single and multi family units grouped closely together can sometimes create tensions due to those density issues and that the publics concern in the forum mostly dealt with this issue of multifamily development lot size.

Multiplex density would be left as is with single family or two family units allocated 6,000sq ft lot size and 18,000 sq ft for three family units. Design standards would be left in and carriage houses would be allowed to be developed in R5 on the peninsula despite the objections of residents. The surplus space issue was also raised with regards to building volume being under utilized by those who are limited/by land area to expand horizontally. This will go to the City Council on 08/18/08.

Councilor Donoghue asked what potential changes could result in increasing the actual number of units created and Alex responded that a rough estimate would be 3,000+/- units could be created. Councilor Donoghue stated that this could make an actuality of new housing growth and achieve a good balance between policy objectives and neighborhood concerns.

Councilor Donoghue suggests that 1.5 spaces of off-peninsula parking to accommodate permanent affordable units and 1 space per market units and Councilor Duson questioned if affordable housing parking rules should be different than other requirements and Councilor Donoghue responded that data confirms that on-peninsula affordable housing actually uses less parking.

Councilor Duson complimented the work done and appreciated hearing about all the public input.

Recommendations in favor of these changes to R5 moved by Councilor Donoghue and 2nd by Councilor Mavodones. Unanimously approved.

2.) Text Amendments R7 Zone

The next public hearing meeting is scheduled for 09/09 and to create more public awareness and make the meeting more viable it was suggested that the sign in sheets from previous meetings be used to notify local residents.

Alex reviewed reducing side-yard set-backs yet still maintaining light and air has considered replacing 5' set-backs with 7'6" when there is a neighboring residence but the Planning Board wants to deal with just one number irrespective of whether there is a neighboring structure. Councilor Donoghue is okay with a 7.6" setback whether or not there is a neighboring structure.

Current zoning permits 60 units per acre, but within proximity to a park, it increases to 100 units per acre. However, 100 units per acre in the R7 zone regardless of proximity to a park will be the recommendation to the Planning Board. Councilor Donoghue agrees with Alex's recommendation of 100 units per acre despite the location of a park, and he proposes impact fees.

Alex continues that parking on the peninsula is designated at one space per unit and reduced need may be met through shared use vehicles but the goal of reducing the requirement by 50% seems unrealistic. The Planning Board has asked for flexibility to reduce parking requirements for unique circumstances but that needs to be developed as a separate item. Councilor Duson suggested a need for public comment with this issue. Councilor Donoghue would rather legislate than give the Planning Board that latitude and also expressed concern that the shared vehicle ratios are not tested and questioned how those numbers worked. Councilor Donoghue comments that he is concerned that the shared car ratios are not tested, and that designing parking regulations based on the shared car concept is not a good method of creating policy. Councilor Donoghue suggested making all affordable housing projects that are currently drafted at .75 on the peninsula effective city wide, however this would have a broad effect on city residents so this change would need to be widely publicized, so it was decided to leave it as drafted (.75 only on-peninsula). First reading will be done and then sent to the Housing Committee and on to the City Council.

3.) Westbrook Housing (Guy Gagnon, Dick Begin, Willie Audet)

The WDC (Westbrook Development Corporation) was established in 1987 as an affordable housing development company. For the past three years their company has spearheaded affordable housing for seniors, the disabled and low-income population in Westbrook but are now looking to expand into neighboring communities. They are currently working with architect David Lloyd and looking to develop Portland properties that offer 30,000 sq ft, preferably in a residential area, and are adjacent to public transit and the metro. The current potential site is at 1251

Congress St, 1257 Congress St and 13 Frances St. The former St. Patrick's school site is currently R5 which seems unusual, and does not allow for the density that makes their development feasible without a conditional rezone agreement. They could gain some density bonus using the Inclusionary Zoning clause. They have not yet met with local residents to discuss plans for moving forward with this project.

The WDC group's interest in meeting with the Housing Committee was to introduce themselves and explain their goals and objectives.

4.) Next Meeting Tuesday September 2, 2008 at 5:30 p.m. in room 209

Councilor Duson moves to adjourn, seconded by Councilor Donoghue. Unanimously approved.