

**City of Camden
Planning Commission
March 20, 2012**

Minutes

The City of Camden Planning Commission met for a regular meeting on Tuesday, March 20, 2012 at 6:00 PM in the City Council Chambers at City Hall. Commission members present were Mr. Bill Ligon, Chairman; Mr. Jim Burns, Mr. Byron Johnson, Mr. Brandon Moore, Ms. Joanna Craig, Mr. Charles Wood and Mr. Shawn Putnam, Secretary. Commission member Mr. Johnny Deal was absent. Also present was Ms. Cheryl Matheny.

Mr. Ligon entertained a motion to accept the minutes from the February 28, 2012 meeting. Mr. Burns moved to accept the minutes, and Mr. Wood seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

Presentation on Zoning Ordinance Update

Ms. Matheny reviewed the discussion and points agreed upon from the February meeting, which focused on landscaping and tree conservation requirements. These points included making the requirements easier to understand, incorporating the city's Urban Forester in the review process, and including ANSI standards for installing landscaping.

Ms. Matheny began a discussion on setback requirements. She described what the ordinance states are allowed in setback areas. She showed the diagram from the ordinance that helps explain setbacks, and Commission members noted the way the diagram defines setbacks does not match the description in the ordinance. Ms. Matheny reviewed Table III from the ordinance and noted that the large amount of footnotes is an indication that the table needs to be cleaned up. She discussed the number of exceptions in the table and how they need to be minimized. Mr. Putnam noted that some of the front setbacks are different in residential zones because of the higher density that is allowed. Ms. Matheny explained how setback averaging would work. Either within a certain distance or certain number of lots, the front setbacks could be averaged so that a new building is not set a lot farther back than the surrounding structures. Mr. Ligon and Mr. Burns noted that this was something that the form-based code would address because of the issue with the Habitat houses on Church Street being setback much farther than the neighboring houses. Commission members agreed that setback averaging should be included in the ordinance. Ms. Craig commented that some historic houses were setback a lot farther than required and that should be considered.

Ms. Matheny reviewed the objectives for buffer areas listed in the ordinance. She noted the ordinance states that "passive recreation" is allowed in a buffer area, but there is no formal definition listed in the ordinance. Commission members agreed a definition is needed. Ms. Matheny explained that the reason to use buffers is to provide separation between uses. She

suggested buffers should not be required downtown since the goal was to create a mixed-use area. She reviewed the four different buffers listed in the ordinance. Ms. Matheny explained that buffers provide a horizontal distance between uses. She noted that buffers between a use and a street are really landscaping and should be moved to the landscaping section. Commission members agreed to move buffer requirements along roads to the landscaping section. Ms. Matheny explained that screening is to provide vertical separation, but that vegetation does not provide an opaque screen whereas a wall, fence or berm is opaque. Landscaping can soften screening and make it more attractive.

Ms. Matheny noted that buffers are required between some residential uses and asked if the commission wanted to keep or modify that requirement. Members agreed that a five-foot buffer is too small to be effective. Mr. Putnam asked if buffers should be required in residential areas between single family residential and duplexes. Commission members agreed that they were not necessary. They should be primarily used between residential and non-residential uses. Members agreed most buffer requirements could be moved into the landscape requirements.

Ms. Matheny reviewed the open space requirements in the ordinance. Mr. Putnam noted that the ordinance calls for open space requirements for cluster development but the ordinance does not authorize cluster developments. She indicated the Commission should consider revising the explanations of open space types and what can be included in open space. Mr. Ligon noted that this was what Ms. Craig mentioned about open space in residential areas at the previous meeting. Ms. Craig commented about the open space in front of Invista as an example of open space on an industrial site. Ms. Matheny reviewed options of how open space would be owned and maintained. PC members discussed having several options for ownership and maintenance to provide flexibility. Members also discussed exploring open space requirements for single family residential, multi-family residential and industrial developments.

Ms. Matheny summarized the main points the Commission agreed on: setback averaging, incorporating buffering requirements into landscape requirements, and adding open space requirements for residential and industrial developments.

There being no further business, Ms. Craig made a motion to adjourn, and Mr. Johnson seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously and the meeting was adjourned.

Shawn Putnam
Secretary

Bill Ligon
Chairman