

# UNIVERSITY DISTRICT ZONING WORKING GROUP COMMITTEE

## Meeting Minutes

Date: March 1, 2017

Time: 7:00 PM

Place: Jack Reidy Conference Room, 140 West Pine

Attendance:

Keith Kuhn, Martina Rolando, John Snively, Heather Harp, Steve Adler, Peggy Miller, Laura Timblo, Brian Petty, Mary Coar, Garin Wally, Tom Zavitz, Gwen Jones, Jane Kelly.

### 7:07 PM: **Meeting Opens, Introductions**

7:10 PM: Gwen Jones reminds the group of the goal: to reach a starting point to begin further researching tools for the purpose of initiating the process for a potential Neighborhood Character zoning overlay. A “thumbs up/down” approach will be taken by the group to vote to further research the selected tools.

Kuhn asks Gwen to define “tool”. He explicitly requests his opinion that non-conforming uses be added to the group’s over-all goal. Gwen disagrees that the issue is out of scope. Kuhn disagrees. Snively comments in agreement about addressing non-conforming issues. Kuhn asserts abuses of non-conforming uses; strongly wants opinion to address non-conforming issues on record. Zavitz offers his professional assistance to Kuhn at another time. Petty adds concern for “shoe horn-ing-in” units. Jones addresses the new growth policy’s “Focus Inward” directive, and Zavitz supplements further. Miller asks about apartment houses and related roommates. Zavitz answers that defining “Family” is unconstitutional and nothing can be done about that.

7:36 PM: **Minutes of January 18, 2017 were approved;** Snively addresses his input via a printed handout. Zavitz lists reasons against a Design Review board. Jones adds that questionnaire respondents and constituents that had coffee with her were explicitly against design review. Kuhn asks about the possibility of cinderblock houses. Zavitz mentions on-going commercial design project with a consultant from Denver. It is asserted that architectural guides are not being considered by this group.

### **Review and finalize tools**

#### **Discuss next steps and public outreach**

7:47 PM: Scraping Tool defined and discussed. Alternate definition of “no net loss of housing” brought up. Old anti-scraping law, currently on the books is briefly reviewed. Adler draws concepts on whiteboard. “Lots” and “Parcels” defined: lots originally platted were more often sold in pairs to create parcels. Snively expresses his agreement with the tool; mentions housing prices not falling during his life in Missoula. Timblo inquires about requirement to replace lost units. A passing hand-raise vote occurs to include this tool in further research.

8:05 PM: Decreased Height Limit Tool defined and discussed. The idea is to lower the height limit from 30 feet with a roof pitch of less than 8/12 and 35 feet with roof pitch of 8/12 or greater to 25 and 30 feet respectively. Zavitz displays PowerPoint slides on the screen; shows Google StreetView image of 368 Beverly. Timblo notes that her house is only 23 feet high of the 30 foot limit; expresses concern that the questionnaire was not properly distributed. Snively mentions that he likes the architecture “break

up” of the Timblo residence as it has developed. Addler diagrams “bulk by unbroken surface”; mentions the principle that “‘Difficult’ may force [architects] to be *more* creative”. Hand-raise vote passes to include this tool.

Kuhn adds that this tool does not solve the problem.

8:XX PM: Side-Street Setbacks defined and discussed. Zavitz explains historic setback patterns; proposes 15 foot street-side setbacks, and/or 50% of height, on corner lots. Additionally, the concept of “articulated side street wall” was discussed and added as something to be researched and possibly made part of any new side-street setback rule; an articulated wall is a wall with variation in depth, as opposed to a solid plane. Show of hands passes the tool.

8:50 PM: Required Consultation for Construction within the Historic District discussed. Gwen describes the historic district. If a house is not on the Historic Register but in the district and is externally remodeled or constructed, the owner is required to seek consultation for education purposes only and does not have to act on the given advice. Hand-raise passes this tool forward.

8:55 PM: Lot Coverage & Floor Area Ratio (FAR) defined and discussed by Zavitz. Each method is insufficient alone, but in combination it may address the group’s goal. Concern is expressed that it is a complex idea when compared to the other, more simple proposed tools, and that it may be confusing for the average person to understand. Adler, an architect, and Snively disagree. Jones pitches a graduated setback approach to address the drawbacks of the Coverage-FAR tool on extremely large lots. Hand-raise vote passes this tool with the explicitly mentioned caveat that the option is for “keeping it on the table as a backup”.

#### **No non-agenda items or public comment**

9:16 PM: Jones reviews the list of approved tools and asks for more comment. Seeing none, she closes the meeting.

## University District Working Group Mission Statement:

To fulfill the mandate of the Growth Policy by articulating and promoting neighborhood character through appreciating the University Neighborhood's history while allowing for mindful growth and change. The neighborhood will ensure the future of its unique character, personality and feel by positively influencing housing size and proportionality relative to lot size.

Residential building standards I would like to see for Missoula's University District and other historical districts (Slant streets, River front, Downtown, Rattlesnake, etc):

After several hours of study, I still found Austin's tent scheme awkward and confusing.

What I liked: Spokane model

Charts with zoning categories and lot dimensions and areas under which fall guidelines for;

Footprint of primary building

Total floor area of primary building

Height of primary building, wall height and roof pitches allowed

This should mesh with setbacks governed by code.

I feel strongly that a design review is also necessary. Bozeman has two comprehensive documents outlining guidelines for its "historic district overlays" which give guidance to owners, builders and developers on acceptable standards for architectural detail. Builders and remodelers are required to obtain a permit based on these guidelines. While the guidelines are very general and supplemental to underlying zoning regulations, they prevent some of the undesired outcomes we have seen in Missoula, including the University District.

I discussed the process at length with one of the planners and found that many people are very appreciative of the process, although as always, there are others who do not like it. In any case, there is great flexibility, although the process keeps reinforcing the importance of bringing some order to new development in older neighborhoods. I emphasize that these guidelines appreciate innovative design to a point, at the same time demanding architectural detail and grace.

This would have prevented the abomination visited on residents of the 800 block of East Beckwith.

I further feel that if some degree of architectural detail is dictated to protect the entryways of Downtown Missoula (after the Verizon fiasco), the least the city can do is act to protect our neighborhoods as well.

John Snively

3-1-17