

**CITY OF ANTIOCH
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES**

**Regular Meeting
6:30 p.m.**

**September 4, 2013
City Council Chambers**

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Sanderson called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday, September 4, 2013, in the City Council Chambers. She stated that all items that can be appealed under 9-5.2509 of the Antioch Municipal Code must be appealed within five (5) working days of the decision. The final appeal date of decisions made at this meeting is 5:00 p.m. on Thursday, September 12, 2013.

ROLL CALL

Present: Commissioners Azevedo, Motts, Baatrup (arrived at 6:32 pm), Miller, Westerman
Chair Sanderson
Absent: Vice Chair Hinojosa
Staff: Community Development Director, Tina Wehrmeister
Minutes Clerk, Cheryl Hammers

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

CONSENT CALENDAR

1. Approval of Minutes: None

END OF CONSENT CALENDAR

NEW ITEM

2. Housing Element Implementation . Provide direction on a set of draft amendments to the City Zoning Ordinance (Antioch Municipal Code Title 9, Chapter 5), including development standards for multi-family residential development and provisions for discretionary parking reductions, in order to implement policies of the adopted 2007 . 2014 Housing Element.

CDD Wehrmeister introduced Vivian Kahn, Dyett & Bhatia, who provided a power point presentation which included objectives, reviewed progress to date, key issues for revising multi-family standards, key issues for parking modifications, proposed revisions to multi-family standards, articulating facades and varying roof forms, multi-family to single family transitions, parking location and frontage, usable open space and storage,

and additional landscaping requirements

Ms. Kahn then presented three questions to the Planning Commission for discussion:

How much flexibility for modifying additional setback adjacent to single family development and other transition standards?

Is the proposed daylight plane an appropriate approach to reduce effect on adjacent lower-density development and districts?

Are the proposed choices for parking locations a good way to limit visual impact without unduly restricting design options on different sites?

Commissioner Azevedo stated that he had concerns with reducing the setbacks with respect to safety and noise interfering with quality of life.

Commissioner Baatrup asked Ms. Kahn about the interpretation of flexibility and said that it seems a little narrow to which she said that they are looking for feedback on flexibility in transition areas adjacent to single family as well as front setbacks with less open space in the front and more in the back. Ms. Kahn said that they are proposing a tradeoff and asked if there were circumstances when you might want less of a setback in the back.

Commissioner Azevedo responded that this appears to almost be taking away some flexibility by shortening the front setback and moving more to the back which removes flexibility by forcing the owner of the property to spend their leisure time in the back yard. He said that he is not sure that he buys this flexibility as an advantage.

Mr. Kahn said that these setbacks are minimums and that if someone wants to provide more of a setback in the front, they can increase this setback. She then asked if it is appropriate to require more setback in the back.

Commissioner Miller asked if the intent is to get more space in the front in multi-family on a court and more of a setback to allow kids to play in front.

Ms. Kahn said that the design guidelines talk about doing things to make the streets more attractive for pedestrians and the idea is that if you have buildings closer to the street with interesting facades, it is more attractive. She said that it also provides a buffer between single family and multi-family and the tradeoff is to provide transition to protect lower density areas.

Chair Sanderson said that she has a different perspective and that she was focused on minimums thinking what is very trendy in apartment housing to have a short setback so people could sit on the porch and talk to neighbors. She said that she thinks that supply and demand is going to determine what developers will do and that personally she doesn't have a problem with the ten foot minimum but would want to keep twenty feet setback for apartments.

Commissioner Miller stated that a single family unit having a big multi-family unit next to it would appreciate more of that twenty feet zone.

Chair Sanderson said that in addition to trying to make things more visually appealing that one of the primary reasons for these revisions is to make it more attractive to potential developers. She asked if flexibility on the twenty foot requirements would be resolved on a case by case basis handled by staff or the Planning Commission

Ms. Kahn said that it is more difficult for staff and the commission if it is unclear to applicants in the ordinance what you want; that it is confusing looking at the design guidelines and then looking at standards which are silent on more issues. She said it is usually the other way around and that they should be working together which will ultimately save time and money. As far as the twenty foot flexibility, she said that in some instances this could be done by staff and others would have to go to the Planning Commission; that would be a discretionary process dependent upon how specific the ordinance will be but that it could be subject to appeal.

Commissioner Baatrup clarified with Ms. Kahn that this could be a formal process before the Commission or could be a decision made at staff level but would be based upon something in the record.

Commissioner Motts stated that this would seem appropriate to him if it is a major arterial with maybe low fencing to which Ms. Kahn said that low fencing could work but they would not want it too high.

Commissioner Baatrup said that his thought is that in these areas you could end up with a three story multi-family next to single family and you have a tunnel effect with narrow setbacks in front with a very tall building next to you and feel trapped. He asked how this would be handled to which Ms. Kahn said that three story buildings are unusual for Antioch but there would not be a tunnel effect with three story buildings given the width of arterial streets and it would just make the area more interesting.

Commissioner Westerman asked if there is a requirement for upper floors of buildings to be set back as the multi stories go up to which Ms. Kahn responded that this is what they are showing in the slides as the daylight plan. She said that doing this on the rear and sides would aid with privacy to adjacent properties and that they are proposing requiring the daylight plan to deal with transition from higher density to lower density.

Commissioner Baatrup stated that with the flexibility aspect, he can see developers pushing setbacks to a minimum to put more product in there and he would feel more comfortable with a certain percentage of minimum setbacks to break up the tunneling effect.

Ms. Kahn suggested creating a setback average to vary the setbacks to which CDD Wehrmeister said that this may put staff in a difficult situation to implement between varying property owners but an average can be required within one lot or project.

Chair Sanderson clarified with Ms. Kahn that tonight would be for comment but that

sufficient direction is needed so that ultimately recommendations would be made to City Council. Ms. Kahn said that the next step will be to come back with a public review draft and that recommendation to City Council would follow.

Commissioner Motts clarified with Ms. Kahn that they are trying to come up with guidelines and standards that work together which are more stringent.

Commissioner Baatrup discussed with Ms. Kahn the graphic on the daylight plane and the proper direction of the arrow.

Commissioner Miller stated that the articulation on the front may address the issue of the daylight plane to break it up and that he liked the idea of larger setbacks in back but with different views in the front.

Chair Sanderson said that the daylight plane in the back is a functional necessity to protect neighbors but that in the front it may be architecturally limiting and confusing.

Commissioner Miller clarified with Ms. Kahn that the site would have to be oriented, have entry features and have variation in roof form regardless of setbacks.

Commissioner Baatrup asked how parking locations would be addressed on corners to which Ms. Kahn said that there is a standard for that with a setback from the street and that on a corner lot setbacks would be required to keep it clear for sight purposes. Commissioner Baatrup said that he would like it made clear what can be done on a corner.

Chair Sanderson asked if it was a requirement that developers fence the parking so that it is not accessible from the street to which Ms. Kahn said that it can be screened with fencing or landscaping or a combination but that there are guidelines to address that; that they want enough in the standards to give the applicant and the public a good idea of what is expected.

Commissioner Westerman said that he is concerned about visibility of parking from the street, that it is possible that there be landscaping to hide all but the entry and that the owner could opt for a reduction. Ms. Kahn said that she would have to check but ordinances have requirements for visibility on corners. She said that maybe they can put fences on a corner and can put in landscaping not exceeding a certain height so as to maintain visibility.

CDD Wehrmeister interjected that the City does have those standards.

Ms. Kahn asked if there were other places that the Commission might want to put parking to which Commissioner Motts said that there was some discussion in the report of offsite parking. Ms. Kahn said that there is a possibility of doing shared parking and offsite parking typically in a more urban area or close to an area that has commercial uses. That maybe a mixed use on a parcel can share parking.

Chair Sanderson clarified that no formal motion is needed.

Ms. Kahn said that they are proposing amendments to existing provisions showing those sections where proposed amendments are adding some basic requirements. That they are proposing expanding the types of projects that are eligible for parking reductions and have looked at reducing standards for those developments based on what they hear from the Commission and from architects and that it is actually easier to work with a situation where they can get modifications without going through a variance where it is necessary to reduce parking standards. She said that they would propose that these situations be eligible for a parking reduction and asked if there was any other situations to grant a parking reduction that were not covered.

Commissioner Baatrup said that he can't think of any others and asked if this is allowing private developers to utilize public parking. Ms. Kahn said that this would be a discretionary process. She referenced the slide and said that the application would include a parking demand study and whatever else was deemed necessary. That if it were for shared parking, a study would be needed to show demand at different times of day and findings would be based on information in the record that may require monitoring. She discussed the slides with requirements for shared, off site and tandem parking. Ms. Kahn said that if housing is a mixed use and very close to things, then it may be more reasonable to expect people will walk but that there may be areas where walking is not attractive.

Chair Sanderson said that there is one thing that she has a problem with which is offsite parking facilities and that she is concerned that a developer comes in and presents facts, studies are done, findings are made, and then 20 years later surrounding area has changed and then there is no way now to add parking; that this may be letting developers off too easy to not incorporate reasonable parking in their plans and to not plan for onsite parking facilities. She said that even if there is an adjacent parking garage the owner of that parking garage can sell that property to be developed and the parking is wiped out.

Commissioner Miller agreed and said that they can't let developers off on parking.

Ms. Kahn asked the Commission if proposing requirements for what should be in the application and what the findings would have to be, could some parking reductions be approved at staff level or should everything come to the Commission.

Chair Sanderson said that with the exception of offsite parking she thinks the remainder of the special circumstances could be evaluated by staff.

Commissioner Motts said that this might be connected to the size of the development but if looking at something larger, the Commission may want to weigh in on that.

Commissioner Azevedo said that the impact on the surrounding community should be taken into consideration if staff is making the decision or whether it makes sense to come to the Commission and get public input.

CDD Wehrmeister said that she thinks staff would be comfortable with a provision that

allows administrative reviews but if controversial and should have a hearing, then it can come back to the Commission, similar to the administrative design review provisions.

Ms. Kahn said that they can make it clear that staff maintains authority and if one is controversial and has a bigger impact, then it can be taken to the Commission. She said that regarding the standards for offsite parking for non-residential uses that she believes the consensus is that it not be allowed for residential uses

Commissioner Azevedo said that he had experiences with the Rivertown District, that there was an example of that recently, and that this should be decided on by a use by use basis.

Commissioner Baatrup and Chair Sanderson discussed with Ms. Kahn mixed use development and tandem parking arrangements. They discussed attended tandem parking using valets. In response to Ms. Kahn's question if there was any other circumstances where this would be appropriate for non residential, Chair Sanderson said that this could be used for a hotel situation.

Commissioner Miller said that a hotel would be the only situation appropriate for a valet with tandem parking.

Ms. Kahn said that some cities have approved projects with a City valet where there would be a charge and the valets will come take your car to an offsite location and then bring it back to encourage restaurants in the area where there is no parking.

Ms. Kahn asked if there should be an option for guest parking for a visitor to someone in the building where the guest can park behind them in tandem parking.

Commissioner Motts said that this could be a workable situation and that he has seen it for events where people go in and leave at the same time.

Chair Sanderson stated that she has personal experience and that the danger is that parking is used by tenants who have more cars than they have spaces and the property owner utilizes tow companies to patrol which can be difficult.

Ms. Kahn went over the next steps with the Commission.

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

CDD Wehrmeister reminded the Commission about the meeting on Monday and said that she also sent the Commissioners an invitation by e-mail for the ribbon cutting for the turf fields.

She said that three applications were received for the three Planning Commission positions.

She said that no appeals were received on the Kelly's item and that this item may be taken to City Council on the 24th.

WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

None.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

None..

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Sanderson adjourned the Planning Commission at 8:23 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Cheryl Hammers