BRISTOL TENNESSEE MUNICIPAL REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES AUGUST 19, 2019

Members Present:
Kelly Graham, Chairman
Mark Webb, Vice-Chairman
Joel Staton, Secretary
Scott Gaynor
Kevin Buck
Mahlon Luttrell
Tekai Shu
Margaret Feireabend

Staff/Others Present:
Tim Beavers
Danielle Smith
Cherith Young
Ross Peters
Heather Moore
Steve Blankenship
Steven Mott
Brittany Fleenor

Members Not Present
Mark Byington

Mr. Kelly Graham called the Bristol Tennessee Municipal Regional Planning Commission meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. on Monday, August 19, 2019. Mr. Joel Staton performed roll call and a quorum was declared present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:
There being no changes to the July 15, 2019, meeting minutes, Mr. Mark Webb made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Mrs. Margaret Feierabend seconded the motion; the motion carried unanimously.

UNSCHEDULED COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC:
None

OLD BUSINESS:
A. Text Amendment Recommendation – Electronic Message Boards
Mrs. Cherith Young presented information on the electronic message board text amendment recommendation. This item went to the July 30, 2019 City Council work session and was sent back for Planning Commission’s consideration with a request of removing the B-2 District from the allowed districts for use. This is because the City just received the grant for the Historic Design Guidelines, and City Council would like staff and the Commission to be able to review those regulations before making decisions on electronic message boards for the historic downtown district (B-2). Council suggested that staff speak with Believe in Bristol
and the Bristol Historical Association and to verify Bristol, VA’s regulations on electronic message boards.

Staff spoke with Bristol, VA, and they only allow electronic message boards in their B-3 District, which is not downtown. They do allow schools and churches to have electronic message boards, regardless of where they are located. Staff also spoke with the Believe in Bristol Executive Committee who stated their apprehension about what electronic message boards would look like, and what role they would play, in the historic district. The Committee echoed City Council’s sentiments on waiting until the historic district regulations are in place before making a decision about electronic message boards in the B-2 Zone.

Mr. Kelly Graham asked, since electronic message boards are not allowed in the B-2 Zone currently, if that would prohibit them from being allowed in this zone if it becomes historically designated. Mr. Beavers stated that it all depends on how string the Commission would like to make the historic regulations. Mr. Graham stated that he believes an electronic message board could be an important tool for the Paramount in the future, and he is strongly against placing restrictions on them in that regard. Mrs. Margaret Feierabend stated that she believes there are ways that the Commission could work it out to allow electronic message boards for special use.

Mr. Kevin Buck stated that the Central Business District has a flavor about it that would be affected by electronic message boards, so he would defer to Council’s recommendation on this matter. Mr. Webb agreed that he would also submit to Council’s recommendation.

Mrs. Young updated the Commission on the process of getting a consultant to look at the historic regulations. Ms. Young stated that staff would get moving as quickly as possible to get the RFP out because the grant runs from October 1, 2019 to October 1, 2020. Part of the consultant’s process would be to help us figure out our historic flavor. For example, the role signs play in making downtown special. The goal is to be talking about the final product this time next year.

Staff proposed that the Planning Commission send a favorable recommendation to City Council to amend the Bristol Zoning Ordinance Section 216.D.5 - Electronic Message Boards, as proposed on the attached draft provided to them and Section 203, Definitions, to update associated terms, as shown on the draft as well.

Mr. Buck made a motion to amend the Planning Commission’s previous ordinance recommendation as requested by City Council by removing the B-2 District. Mr. Webb seconded the motion. Mr. Graham stated that he would vote against this if it would permanently bar the Paramount from having an electronic message board, but from the conversation, knowing that the Paramount would be considered when making future regulations for the historic district, he would vote for the amendment. The motion carried with all in favor, with the exception of Scott Gaynor who voted against the amendment.
NEW BUSINESS:

A. Text Amendment Recommendation – B-2E Use List and Landscape Revision

Mrs. Young shared information on the text amendment recommendation. At the conclusion of the B-2E creation, City Council asked staff to refine the use list included in the Ordinance. The Planning Commission spent the summer of 2018 revising this list.

The key elements of the proposed draft were editing for clarity, adding Artisan/Technical Production definition and use (under 10,000 square feet as permitted use and over 10,000 square feet as Special Use Permit), adding Daycare to the permitted use list, adding Dry-Cleaner to the permitted use list, and eliminating Miniwarehouse and Self-Storage Units.

Staff recommended that the Planning Commission send the following recommendations to City Council to amend the Bristol Tennessee Zoning Ordinance, Chapter 2, Section 203 Definitions; Chapter 4, Section 404, B-2E District – Central Business Expansion; and Chapter 11, Section 1109:

1. Add the definition of “Artisan/Technical Production” to Section 203 of the Zoning Ordinance.
2. Delete Section 404 B-2E District – Central Business Expansion from the Zoning Ordinance.
3. Add the revised Section 404 B-2E District – Central Business Expansion to the Zoning Ordinance.
4. Delete Section 1109 – Commercial Standards from the Zoning Ordinance
5. Add the revised Section 1109 – Commercial Standards to the Zoning Ordinance.

Mr. Graham asked if anyone has shown interest, since this zoning went into effect, and been turned away because what they proposed didn’t fit the code requirements. Mr. Beavers stated that there has been expressed interest, but no one has been turned away. Mr. Graham requested that staff inform the Planning Commission if they ever have to turn someone away because what they want to do doesn’t fit in the code. Mr. Beavers agreed.

Discussion ensued on how often the Zoning Ordinance is examined. Mr. Beavers stated that typically the Zoning Ordinance regulations are addressed as issues arise.

Mr. Buck made a motion to recommend that City Council adopt the text amendment as presented by staff. Mr. Gaynor seconded the motion; the motion carried unanimously.

OTHER MATTERS:

A. Parking for Educational Use

Mrs. Young presented information on parking for educational use. The current parking requirement is 1 parking space per 5 students. Educational uses are classified under NAICS code 61, which includes all uses within the educational services sector (the same parking
requirement for kindergarten up to college or technical schools). The parking requirements for the new middle school would be astronomical if we used this same standard. Mrs. Young showed the Planning Commission a comparison between Bristol, TN parking requirements and other surrounding cities. Every other city differentiates between elementary and intermediate to everything above that in some fashion. Staff requested direction from the Planning Commission on parking requirements because our current requirement are on the heavier side. With the City’s current scale, the new middle school would be required to have 180 parking spaces. Staff would like to bring this item back for the Planning Commission’s consideration to follow more closely Johnson City’s parking regulations, which is 1 parking spot per 25 students. The school system is estimating 900 students at the new middle school, and staff believes that 160 parking spaces would be sufficient for staff and parent parking.

Mrs. Feierabend asked if the school’s special events would be taken into consideration when determining the number of parking spaces needed. Mr. Beavers stated that the City must determine the minimum number of spaces required, but the school could add more if they wish; however, the special events would be difficult to regulate, and there would be a lot of empty spaces the majority of the time.

Mr. Tekai Shu recommended that research be done on the ratio for handicap spots. Mr. Beavers stated that the City currently uses the International Building Code - 2012 version for handicap ratio standards, which is 1 per 25 spots. Mrs. Feierabend stated that more may be needed because the baby boomers are aging. Mr. Beavers stated that the Planning Commission could make a recommendation to City Council to change the handicap ratio if they wish. Mr. Shu stated that if the Planning Commission has the opportunity to be more proactive on handicap accessibility, especially with the new middle school, they should take advantage.

Mr. Buck asked if this is a time sensitive issue. Mr. Beavers stated that staff would like to bring this item back as a recommendation to City Council at the next meeting, if not, the school is going to have to find more parking spaces to meet the current parking standard. The Planning Commission agreed for staff to bring this item back for consideration at the September meeting.

B. Design Standards
Mr. Steven Mott presented information on Design Standards. The concept of Design Standards was initiated with the B-2E project. Current Design Standards that exist are related to the prohibition of materials within certain zoning districts and all overlays (B-1A, B-1B, B-2, B-2E, Volunteer Parkway Overlay, and Highway 394 Overlay). At the July meeting the Planning Commission supported the Design Standards being in all of the Business Districts, including PBD and B-3.

The proposed Ordinance language states, “Non-residential building elevations shall avoid flat walls through building modulation and the utilization of architectural elements to reduce the mass and bulk of the structure and provide contrast in design. All non-residential buildings shall be designed to incorporate no less than three (3) of the following architectural elements.
Buildings over fifty thousand (50,000) square feet shall include a minimum of five (5). Major renovations, remodels, repairs, and/or rehabilitations that cost over 50% of the structure’s market value must adhere to these standards.”

The proposed Architectural Features Menu includes:

- Arches
- Accent material that differs from the predominate material used for the exposed exterior façade
- Awnings, overhangs, or canopies
- Landscaping trellises
- Dormers, balconies, or porches
- Street level display windows
- Varying roof lines, pitches, and shapes
- Building ornamentation such as columns, pilasters, piers, articulated cornice lines, brackets
- Building façade modulation such as recessed entryways, horizontal offsets, or protrusions
- Building front perimeter landscaping in the area adjacent to the building front façade

Staff requested the Planning Commission’s guidance on breaking the features out that have multiple items. For example, dormers, balconies, porches, to each be their own feature. That way, if a developer chooses each of those, they would count as three of the five features required instead of one feature.

Mr. Graham stated that one could gut the inside of a building and spend more than the 50% of the value just on the inside. He then asked if this would trigger work having to be completed on the exterior. Mr. Beavers stated that, as it is written, yes. Mr. Buck and Mr. Graham stated that they do not like that idea. Discussion ensued on remodel scenarios and meeting building codes. Mr. Graham stated that he wants the Planning Commission to think this through because he doesn’t want to put barriers up for development in Bristol.

Mr. Buck stated that he believes the Planning Commission needs more discussion on this item before they can provide staff with guidance on how to write the Ordinance language. Mr. Graham stated that he would like to see examples of buildings that do not currently meet the code. Mr. Beavers stated that staff could provide them with these examples at the next meeting. Mr. Beavers asked the Planning Commission to consider for the next meeting what would trigger exterior modifications to a remodel.

At the July meeting the Planning Commission agreed that the following materials are prohibited on any elevation:

1. Unpainted unfinished CMU block
2. Single-sheet corrugated or ribbed panel metal siding
3. Wood (except as utilized for a storefront design to include windows, window sashes, trim, doors, bulkheads below display windows, columns, pilasters, and cornices)
Discussion ensued on single-sheet corrugated and ribbed panel metal siding. Mr. Webb stated that he wouldn’t want a building to be 100% ribbed panel metal siding, but he thinks it could be tasteful with other design elements such as stone. Several Commissioners voiced support for single-sheet corrugated and ribbed panel metal as accents only.

Discussion ensued on wood as a siding material. Mr. Gaynor stated that wood deteriorates very quickly without proper maintenance. The majority of the Planning Commission agreed that wood should only be used for storefront design or accents, and material that resembles wood may be used as siding.

C. Tiny Homes
Mr. Beavers presented information on tiny homes. In order to allow the multi-family development of tiny homes, a change could be made to the current multi-family regulations that would eliminate the word “attached” to allow for tiny home multi-family development. The proposed language states a multifamily residence is, “a building containing three or more dwelling units, including units that are located one over another.”

Multifamily residences are permitted in R-3, R-4, R-5, and B-3 and PBD (by Special Use Permit).

Staff will bring this item back to the Planning Commission at the next meeting.

D. Signs
The Planning Commission agreed to discuss signs at a later date. Mr. Beavers asked the Planning Commission to be thinking about electronic billboards.

STAFF UPDATES:
Mr. Beavers updated the Planning Commission on the matters that took place at the August 6, 2019 City Council meeting. A public hearing was held and a second reading was passed by City Council to rezone The Centre from B-3 to M-2, with an effective date of August 23. The abandonment of the street for the new middle school passed on first reading. The item concerning Access Control was passed on first reading, and the public hearing and second reading will be on September 3.

With no other business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Chairman, Kelly Graham