



*A place where families and businesses thrive.*

Planning Commission  
Community Auditorium  
1915 Main Street, Forest Grove, OR  
Monday, July 16, 2018, 7:00 pm

**1. CALL TO ORDER:**

Chair Tom Beck called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Roll Call:

**Planning Commission Present:** Tom Beck, Chair; Phil Ruder, Vice Chair; Commissioners Dale Smith, Lisa Nakajima, Sebastian Lawler, Hugo Rojas, and Ginny Sanderson.

**Planning Commission Excused:** None.

**Staff Present:** CD Director Bryan Pohl; Dan Riordan, Senior Planner; Cassi Bergstrom, Planning Commission Coordinator.

**2. PUBLIC MEETING:**

**2.1 PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD FOR NON-AGENDA ITEMS:**

**Ron Thompson, 1728 C Street, Forest Grove 97116:**

Mr. Ron Thompson inquired about the status of Gales Creek Terrace. City staff gave an update, stating the developers are working through a development and public improvements agreement for the improvements required. The project is set to expire on December 2018 if the work has not begun with no extension available.

Chair Beck gave a summary of the Gales Creek development project to the audience.

**Kathy Corey, 1815 D Street, Forest Grove 97116:**

Ms. Kathy Corey stated that she has contacted the city several times to set up a meeting with city staff and neighbors in order to remain up to date on what is going on and voice the concerns regarding the public improvements required within Gales Creek Terrace.

Senior Planner Dan Riordan said that a meeting is to be scheduled, but still working on coordinating with other city staff on when that can occur.

**2.2 PUBLIC HEARING:**

**A. File No. 311-18-00014-PLNG –Proposed changes to Development Code Article 3 Residential and Commercial and Mixed Use Zones and Article 7 Residential Density Incentive above Base Requirement to allow higher**

**residential densities in the RMH and CC zoning districts for affordable housing.**

Prior to opening up the public hearing, Chair Beck explained to the audience what the Planning Commission will be discussing to give background information and explained the hearing is for land use only, no building is occurring at this time.

Chair Beck opened the public hearing at 7:09 p.m., reading the legislative hearing procedures.

Chair Beck stated that there was a joint meeting with City Council on May 29<sup>th</sup>, 2018 to discuss the proposal of increasing the density within the Residential Multifamily High (RMH) and Community Commercial (CC) zones and staff had different understanding as to the result of that meeting. Chair Beck called for the staff report.

Bryan Pohl, Community Development Director, gave a presentation regarding the proposal of increasing the density within the RMH and CC zoning districts. The city is proposing to increase the bonus residential density for the purpose of affordable housing, up to 30 dwelling units per acre in the RMH zoning district and up to 50 dwelling units per acre in the CC zoning district. The density increase and overview of the amendments was explained, as well as the adoption process. Director Pohl noted that the Planning Commission is not the deciding body, but will be making a recommendation to the City Council.

Chair Beck inquired about the need in Washington County for 14,000 units. Mr. Riordan gave the demographics of Forest Grove compared to Washington County, stating a conservative estimated need of 1,400 units is forecasted for Forest Grove.

Chair Beck inquired about the area median income (AMI), and Mr. Riordan stated the median income in Forest Grove is \$65,000 compared to the median income in Washington County being \$85,000. The city could set a lower percentage to set a different standard more compatible with Forest Grove's data. Commissioner Sanderson reminded the Commissioners that Councilor Val Valfre recommended the AMI for Forest Grove be set at 50% of the county income at the joint work session. The Commission discussed and agreed with the 50% income level.

Commissioner Nakajima wonders why an additional density is needed when there is no market for it currently. Commissioner Ruder agreed, and inquired about the land available currently. City staff is currently working on collecting the data on available land. Commissioner Rojas agreed with the city's proposal. Commissioners discussed the feasibility of 50 units per acre and how this will make units more affordable.

**CORRESPONDENCE:**

Mr. Pohl received a correspondence via email from Ms. Jayne Cravens about what she has been hearing from neighbors on the affordable housing proposal.

**PROPOSERS:**

**Garren Ingram, PO Box 842, Sherwood 97140:**

Mr. Garren Ingram stated he owns a 40,000 square foot lot in the Community Commercial zone for the last 18 years and has been laid back as to what has been going on there, anticipating a developer wanting to purchase the land for development. Mr. Ingram welcomes anything that improves the viability of these properties to be developed.

**OPPOSERS:**

**Kathy Corey, 1815 D Street, Forest Grove 97116:**

Ms. Kath Corey came to the front, and read a prepared statement in front of the Commission. Ms. Corey is opposed to the increase in the density, and would recommend a zone change to decrease the density within the area of D Street from Pacific to 18<sup>th</sup> and the "Gales Creek Terrace". Her neighborhood has been fighting the overly dense zoning within this area over the last several years. Many neighbors own homes with ¼ to ½ acre single family lots, and Ms. Corey believes that this density increase will damage their basic right to happiness and diminish property values.

Ms. Corey stated that the RMH zone is generally applied near transit streets and adjacent to commercial districts, which is not the case with the area being proposed.

Ms. Corey went on to say that the incentive density is a Metro plan, and Forest Grove should not be taking on Portland's population issues. Ms. Corey gave the high percentages of low income and poverty level residents within Forest Grove from data she found, stating that the incentive should be given to existing low-income properties and not increase density on more properties. Along with the overwhelming poverty level, there is also no infrastructure to support the congestion that will be created by increasing the density.

The people who are in Forest Grove currently need to be taken care of instead of building for more low income residents.

Commissioner Sanderson asked what the rent is currently in the multifamily neighborhood.

Ms. Corey stated there are only single family homes within her neighborhood, but behind there are multifamily units and she is unsure of the current rental rates.

**Debbie Rogers Bianchi, 2204 D Street, Forest Grove 97116:**

Ms. Debbie Rogers came forward, stating that she lives within the Walker Naylor historical district and that she agrees with everything Ms. Kathy Corey said. She

does not believe that there is a need for higher density. The neighbors enjoy living within a historic district, and already high density homes have been added for the Habitat for Humanity project off 22<sup>nd</sup> Place. When concerns were brought to the city regarding that project, they were dismissed. Ms. Rogers Bianchi brought up examples of where they are already demolishing homes and building dense structures.

Ms. Rogers Bianchi stated that by increasing density in the historic district it will keep taking the history out of Forest Grove, providing the example of the AT Smith home being relocated. High density needs to be kept within downtown Forest Grove and toward the east side where transit and grocery stores are available. Old farm houses and big lots are what make Forest Grove, and keeps people here.

**Anne Wellington, 2537 18<sup>th</sup> Ave Street, Forest Grove 97116:**

Ms. Anne Wellington came to the front, and state that only one side of 18<sup>th</sup> Avenue received notices regarding the public hearing. Most of the homes in the area are owner-occupied homes and already have affordable housing with their low mortgages. In looking through property records, the density was increased in September 2014 to 20 units per acre. She does not agree with another increase in density.

Ms. Wellington brought up a transportation report for 2014-2035 that recommends \$100 million to update the transportation from Forest Grove to the east, with \$31.4 million being invested by Forest Grove. In addition, Cornelius is adding 1,000 single family homes, along with the new apartments next to Ace Hardware in Forest Grove. Ms. Wellington thinks that Forest Groves needs to discuss how to increase the infrastructure with the population, and an environmental impact report is needed as well. Increasing the density in the historic districts destroys the character of the town.

**Gisele Guatimea, 1555 21<sup>st</sup> Place, Forest Grove 97116:**

Ms. Gisele Guatimea came to the stand, and agreed with what those before her. Forest Grove is a diverse community, and she lives within an older area. The city is already where they should be, and there is no need for change. Starter homes for families are needed. Traffic is becoming an issue, along with parking within apartment complexes. The schools are overcrowded. Chair Beck clarified that schools are independent.

**Eva Knierim, 1521 21<sup>st</sup> Place, Forest Grove 97116:**

Ms. Eva Knierim came to the stand, and stated that after the Habitat for Humanity home was built it became a "monstrosity" and she is looking at a junk yard every day. Parking is a huge issue when building townhomes and apartments. Ms. Knierim agrees with what everyone else has said.

**Dinah Sackett, 1603 22<sup>nd</sup> Ave, Forest Grove 97116:**

Ms. Dinah Sackett came to the stand stating that she agrees with what everyone before her has said. She can speak first-hand experience regarding the Habitat for Humanity homes, as when it was first under city consideration the neighbors and she wrote letters but were responded with a form letter. Heavy equipment shakes their homes, and are concerned about the integrity of their homes. Many safety concerns regarding 22<sup>nd</sup> Place and how narrow the street is for the amount of homes going in the area.

Chair Beck interrupted and stated that this meeting is not related to the project she is referring to.

Ms. Sackett says it does relate to the rezoning and neighbors have legitimate concerns regarding the safety. She does not feel like her concerns have been validated at all.

**John Anderberg, 2527 18<sup>th</sup> Ave, Forest Grove 97116:**

Mr. John Anderberg came to the front, stating that he was born and raised in Forest Grove and has watched a lot of development over the years. Mr. Anderberg works at the high school and understands poverty. He believes it is our responsibility to help our neighbors out by creating affordable homes, but doesn't think increasing the density in the RMH zone is the answer. The traffic has picked up, and speeding has become a problem in his neighborhood and higher density will make it worse.

Mr. Anderberg has seen run down properties in the CC zone that could be transformed into affordable housing, and encouraged the city to be imaginative and "think outside the box".

**Steve Fieden, PO Box 131, Forest Grove 97116:**

Mr. Steve Fieden came to the stand, and stated that he owns the apartment buildings along 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Mr. Fieden would find it difficult to build with 50 unit per acre density and questions the need. Rents have now stabilized, and now that new apartments are being built, it makes his units considered to be affordable housing. Mr. Feiden believes 30 units per acre, as it is stands, is acceptable.

Chair Beck asked for Mr. Fieden's opinion on how tall a building would need to be for a 50 DUA. Mr. Fieden answered he does not know the height, but it would be tough to build.

Commissioner Nakajima inquired Mr. Fieden about his current rental rate. Mr. Fieden answered that a one bedroom is \$925/month, and a two bedroom is \$1,125/month. Vacancy rate is at 30%. The new units built have decreased rental prices.

**Melissa Moore, 2326 B Street, Forest Grove 97116:**

Ms. Melissa Moore came to the front, and stated at the beginning of the meeting she didn't know where she stood but listening in she is in opposition. She has been to prior city meetings, and has found out that the vacant lot behind her home could not be purchased and a single home be placed on the lot because of the zoning and increased density.

Ms. Moore and her husband own a second home, and rent it at a low market rate to independently support affordable housing.

Commissioner Nakajima inquired about the rental rate, and Ms. Moore answered the rate is \$1,300/month for a 3 bedroom home.

**Greg Gritton, 2806 Knox Ridge Terrace, Forest Grove 97116:**

Mr. Greg Gritton came to the front and stated that there is a need for affordable housing in Forest Grove, but the numbers proposed seem high. Mr. Gritton has a rental and rents it out for \$1,500 for a single family home. Increasing the density does not make sense because only 20% of the housing meets the needs for low income.

**Roy Adams, 2326 B Street, Forest Grove 97116:**

Mr. Roy Adams came to the front, and requested the zoning map be brought up. Mr. Adams stated that in single family housing situations, a 3 bed/2 bath home can occupy 7 people and not be in violation of Oregon statute. Mr. Adams wants to preserve the historical character of Forest Grove and believes changing the area's density will not benefit the neighborhood.

**OTHER:**

None.

Chair Beck closed the public hearing at 8:27 p.m. and thanked everyone for addressing the Commission.

**COMMISSIONER DISCUSSION:**

Chair Beck opened up the floor, and Commissioner discussed the proposed density increase.

Commissioner Ruder stated that all along he was not in support for increasing density in the RMH zone, and still feels that way. He did miss the joint work session meeting with City Council. Commissioner Ruder supports the increase of density within the town center and community commercial zones.

Commissioner Lawler stated he would be against an increase of density within the RMH historical district, but otherwise agrees with city staff recommendation.

Commissioner Ruder reminded his fellow Commissioners that their job is to look out for the external values of the community and how it affects them.

Commissioner Nakajima stated that in Community Commercial there will be parking issues with an increase of density. She does not believe increasing the density is the answer, and the city needs to be more creative with ideas to battle the affordable housing issue.

Commissioner Rojas stated that there is a need for increase of density, but still protect historic housing.

Commissioner Lawler agreed with Commissioner Rojas, and stated that there is a lack of representation for young professionals with low wages.

Chair Beck stated that increasing density is the least effective solution, and made a proposal to not raise the density within the RMH zone, raise Commercial zone by 10 units, and all 10 shall be affordable as well as a target AMI income of 50%. Chair Beck agreed with Commissioner Lawler that young professionals are struggling with housing needs.

Commissioner Smith and Sanderson agreed with Chair Beck's proposal. Commissioner Sanderson believes the density numbers need to remain the same as proposed by staff.

Commissioner Phil stated the Council wants the density increase, and he doesn't believe it is likely to fix the affordable housing issue.

In a preliminary vote, the Commission voted on the following conditions:

1. To use 50% Washington County AMI as the benchmark for incentive density. **All Commissioners were in agreement.**
2. A 10 unit increase in the RMH zone. **AYES: Commissioners Rojas, Lawler. NOES: Chair Beck, Commissioners Ruder, Smith, Sanderson, Nakajima.**
3. Keeping the staff recommendation for the Community Commercial zone at a 20 unit increase. **AYES: Commissioners Rojas, Lawler, Ruder, Smith, and Sanderson. NOES: Chair Beck, Commissioner Nakajima.**
4. A requirement of 20% affordable units. **All Commissioners were in agreement.**

Vice Chair Phil Ruder moved a motion to recommend the file number 311-18-00014-PLNG with the conditions made by Planning Commission to City Council. Commissioner Lawler seconded.

**Roll Call Vote: AYES: Chair Beck, Commissioners Ruder, Smith, Rojas, Lawler, and Sanderson. NOES: Commissioner Nakajima. ABSENT: None. MOTION CARRIED 6-1.**

Commissioner Nakajima stated that she does believe in supporting affordable housing but this is not the answer.

**2.3 ACTION ITEMS:**

None.

**2.4 WORK SESSION ITEMS:**

None.

**3.0 BUSINESS MEETING:**

**3.1 APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Commissioner Lawler moved a motion to approve the minutes of the June 4, 2018 meeting. Commissioner Smith seconded. Motion passed 7-0.

**3.2 REPORTS FROM COMMISSIONERS/SUBCOMMITTEES:**

Chair Beck asked why the gas meters at Stonewood Center were exposed on Pacific Avenue and were not covered. Mr. Pohl stated he was not aware of a condition requiring them to be covered, but will look into the issue.

**3.4 DIRECTOR'S REPORT:**

Director Bryan Pohl reported that a low income tax credit will be going up to the City Council on August 13<sup>th</sup>.

A land inventory study is underway which is being worked on by Senior Planner Dan Riordan.

The vertical housing development zone will be discussed by City Council July 17<sup>th</sup>.

A tentative \$132,000 grant from ODOT was gifted to the city for Tualatin Valley Highway, or the Pacific Avenue corridor plan.

Chair Beck inquired about the movement on the dentist office on Pacific Avenue. City staff has not seen anything yet.

Commissioner Ruder inquired about the paint colors on the Stonewood, and city staff required them to compliment the surrounding buildings. Commissioner Ruder asked about the masonry requirement, and Mr. Riordan stated it will be discussed with the owner.

Chair Beck asked about the dying cedar trees at the Forestplace Apartments. Mr. Riordan stated that the trees are under warranty and will be replanted when weather permits.

Mr. Riordan informed the Commissioners about inquiries on a retail marijuana facility at Oak Street/Pacific Ave. This will require a Planning Commission review.

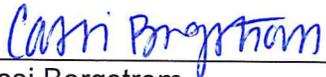
**3.5 ANNOUNCEMENT OF NEXT MEETING:**

The next meeting is to be determined.

**3.6 ADJOURNMENT:**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:59 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:



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Cassi Bergstrom  
Planning Commission Coordinator