

Assembly Title 21 Meeting Notes – March 22, 2006

Pg. 133 General Provisions Table 21.04-1

Committee: How do you translate these zoning districts into areas already established? It is difficult to see how this fits without matching the proposed zones to specific areas for comparison. It seems like some areas could be dramatically impacted.

Planning: These are proposed zoning areas. Some have boundaries we can match now and some do not. Chapter 5 has further clarification.

Pg. 134 Residential Districts

Committee: After some discussion with the community, it seems like you had put in rural and urban descriptions and now you've taken them out.

Planning: We tried to describe these areas more specifically and differently because these terms, especially "rural" have confused people.

Pg. 135 2. L 1

Committee: What is a reserve area, why not say "designate areas"?

Planning: That may be clearer.

Pg. 136-7

Public: You are putting R7 & R8 into RL4. Are you decreasing lot size? R8 was specifically created for areas with sensitive environmental concerns. If you make it smaller you can create problems.

Planning: Clarion recommended we eliminate R8 because there is so little of it.

Committee: I've heard complaints about this decreasing lot size. Why are you changing it?

Planning: The current system is confusing to the public. Current code says one half of the area of an abutting dedicated right of way is included in lot size calculation. But that one half of a dedicated street does not belong to the individual. That area is public domain.

Public: It does confuse the general public. I have seen people defend street right of ways with force.

Planning: We have changed the lot size requirements for zones to reflect the more accurate approach.

Committee: (mixed response) I believe this will cause public outcry. You can't write law based on people's misperception of the law.

Committee: The Large Domestic Animal Ordinance was recently written to link certain rights to 40,000 square foot lots. If lot sizes change why won't that change people's rights?

Planning: There will be no impact. This is only in relation to zoning.

People have never gotten a piece of paper that says they could use part of the ROW as part of their lot.

Committee: Doesn't this include a utility ROW?

Planning: This is only for street ROW.

Committee: What's wrong with a range of permitted residential lot sizes in a zone?

Planning: These are minimum lot sizes in an area. Larger lots would be legal.

Committee: Won't we be making non-conforming lots?

Planning: I don't think there will be too many no-conformities. I don't think putting in a maximum size is appropriate.

Pg. 135 L 30

Committee: You should call RS2 the almost half acre district.

Pg. 136 District Specific Standards L 30-32

Public: We would like to see consistency. Here you list the limit of the number of units. Other places different information is listed.

Planning: There's a minimum listed of 3 in order to have a multi family unit. No maximum is listed.

Public: You mean that you can stack 1 million people on a 6,000 sq. ft. lot?

Planning: Yes, (laughter) but it has to be viable.

Pg. 136 L 33

Public: In RM3 and RM4 do you allow site condos?

Planning: That's addressed in Chapter 5.

Pg. 136 RM-4: Residential Mixed-Use District L 40-44

Committee: I'm confused with Residential & Commercial Mixed-Use Districts. There seem to be at least seven different types of mixed use zones. This is a vast sea change difference in how we deal with zoning in Anchorage.

Planning: They are differentiated more clearly in later chapters. RM4 is not really a true mixed use zone. It is residential.

Committee: But you are allowing non-residential uses in these areas.

Planning: But only in a limited sense.

Pg. 137 L 1 and L 24-38

Committee: Consistency in language would be helpful between this document and in the 20/20 Plan. City center should be defined.

Planning: There are several different kinds of centers.

Committee: Town center or city center or employment center – just be consistent. You are using terms that haven't been defined before and it could cause problems.

Pg. 137 L 9-23

Committee: These size restrictions are so specific that they will cause us problems. For example it could prohibit a health club in an apartment

building, if the size wasn't exactly correct. Is it the larger of 3,000 sq ft. or the 20% that is the control?

Planning: We are trying to limit commercial in residential areas. We have been asked by the development community to provide specific limits.

Pg. 138 f. L 27-31

Public: If you put in a house pad and a driveway, it will increase the drainage. It is unavoidable.

Planning: This is current language.

Committee: To say this and follow it, means you won't be able to build.

Public: You could delete the last sentence.

Committee: Check to see how the departments handle this now and put that standard in the User's Guide. This section is wasted words. When you pave, you increase drainage.

Public: I think there's a push for drainage ponds in subdivisions.

Pg. 139 Table 21.04-2

Committee: Are we requiring lot sizes to have to be bigger?

Planning: Steep slopes are more fragile. The intent is that a bigger lot will have less impact.

Committee: On a lot that has both a steep slope area and flat ground, is there a way to put in language where just the buildable area concept is used?

Planning: This is looking at the average slope of the whole area being subdivided.

Committee: But it says the "average slope of the lot".

Planning: So it does.

Public: The problem is that when you go to zone an area they don't look at the actual ground. There's a formula to determine this for the overall area.

Planning: This table is more for subdividing. We haven't changed how we figure lot area.

Committee: Won't this exclude people from building on certain lots, especially in R10? There are lots of steep, but terraced lots on Hiland.

Pg. 139 L 2-8

Committee: I understand that the bedrock is shallow on the hillside and in parts of Eagle River. The second sentence there is new, isn't it?

Planning: Yes, but the general approach follows what we do now.

Committee: It means if you don't have 16 feet of material over the bedrock then you go up to the next lot size category.

Public: It's to make sure there is adequate provision for water and septic.

Pg. 139-147 Commercial and Office Districts

Committee: Do any of these commercial districts apply to rural areas?

Planning: We looked at this and know they won't be appropriate everywhere.

Pg. 140 NC: Neighborhood Commercial District

Committee: I think it may be impossible to use that size limitation for the neighborhood commercial district consistently.

Pg. 140 Gross Floor Area Limitations L 30-35

Committee: Have you talked to a grocer about how many sq ft he needs here?

Planning: We calculated this using the City Market's square footage.

Committee: Is everyone else (all other businesses) limited to 3,000 sq. ft?

Planning: Yes

Committee: I don't like how prescriptive you are here. We need to have commercial PUD's (planned unit development). When you are transitioning to a new code you should be less specific and allow for what will happen. You could say that it should be primarily residential but could have something else.

Planning: What we heard from the development community is that they wanted to have the specific language. They didn't want things to be open ended.

Committee: Could we add the language that if they were willing to do a major site plan review that their project might be considered? We can't hypothesize as to what might happen here.

Pg. 141 AC: Auto Commercial Corridor District L 4

Committee: All I could think of here, is this Peter's Creek? What area of town are you describing?

Planning: The plans call for creating some pedestrian friendly community areas. We realize some commercial strips aren't going to change and don't fit into one plan. We are trying to provide for the stripped areas of town like International Airport and the Old Seward.

Committee: What about Northern Lights, Benson and Tudor?

Planning: Those are mixed use transit corridors, as are Arctic, Fireweed and Spenard.

Committee: What are we trying to do?

Planning: We are trying to create areas that have complimentary uses. In an employment center you would have higher buildings. In other areas you need places for car lots and lumber yards.

Pg. 144

Committee: We will skip the section on the downtown zone, because there is a group working on language for this in conjunction with the downtown planning effort. I am putting in a plea though for more points for bathrooms.

Pg. 147 OC: Office Commercial District L 9-11

Committee: You need to define overnight lodging. We have hostels, motels and hostels.

Planning: Maybe we should change it to visitor accommodations.

Pg. 147 District-Specific Standards L 14-21

Committee: Does this prohibit hot dog vendors?

Planning: I wrote no, but I think the answer should be yes.

Pg. 148 NMU: Neighborhood Mixed-Use District L 31

Committee: I'm thinking about the 4 – 30 acres and how to overlay that in a workable way in rural areas.

Pg. 149 L 1

Committee: What's a nodal center?

Pg. 149 District-Specific Standards L 4-7

Committee: The reference to 21.04F is used over and over. It's redundant. Why say it 5 times in 3 pages?

Pg. 151 F. 2. b. L 12

Committee: What is one gross acre? Isn't an acre an acre?

Planning: It's saying you can count the road right of way.

Pg. 151 Public Focus Areas L 11-19

Committee: We've got mixed use development that's 1 ½ acres and may accommodate 2 stores. Will they have to do a town square? It seems like an awfully small development to have to develop a plaza.

Planning: That might be the wrong term but we are trying to provide public space.

General Discussion

Committee: We are trying to understand what you want to accomplish with mixed use districts. We have 8 mixed use areas in the document now. This is such a new approach for Anchorage. Why not approach it a little differently, with fewer zones and more flexibility. Why not allow the alternative in all these districts of using a PUD (planned unit development) approach or of allowing the option of going for a major site plan review if the standard is exceeded?

Planning: There is a growing demand for infill development in the Bowl. We are running out of vacant land. We need to plan for a city that has livable, workable and walkable neighborhoods. Separating commercial and residential in the old manner cuts us off from the way modern cities grow. We need to have mixed use districts, but with clear standards. We also need to make distinctions in these mixed use zones. Development should

occur where it makes sense and benefits people. We are trying to describe the way we want our city to grow. We recognize that we want to see residential development but when, where and how do we encourage compatible commercial development. It's a real issue in this town.

General consensus reached that as we look more closely at the different mixed use zones, we will examine where we really need to differentiate zones and what specifics need to be listed.

**Next meeting: March 29, 2006 9:30 – 11:30 AM Planning Dept.
First floor Conference Room
We'll start with Pg. 151 Public Focus Areas**