

**Gastonia Planning Commission
Special Workshop
May 1, 2019 Minutes**

Chairperson Goode declared a quorum and the Gastonia Planning Commission Special Workshop opened at 5:30 pm on Thursday, May 1, 2019, in the 1st Floor Conference Room at City Hall.

Present: Commissioners Jerry Fleeman, Pamela Goode, Bob Cinq-Mars, Jim Stewart, Rodney Armstrong, and Kristie Ferguson

Absent: Commissioners Mark Epstein and Bob Biggerstaff

Staff Members Present: Charles Graham, Assistant City Attorney; Jason Thompson, AICP, Planning Director; Jana McMakin, AICP, Senior Planner; Quentin McPhatter, Assistant City Manager, and Chrystal Howard, Secretary

Item 1a: Role Call / Sound Check

Item 1b: Calls/Contacts to Planning Commission Members

Commissioners stated there were no contacts.

Mr. Thompson introduced Quentin McPhatter, Assistant City Manager. Mr. McPhatter shared a brief background of his work history and family.

Mr. Thompson provided an update on Commissioner Biggerstaff.

Item 2: Discuss Draft of Residential Development Standards

Mr. Demetri Baches and Mr. Jason Thompson briefed the Commission on the residential development standards and options for integrating new standards into the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO).

Mr. Baches briefly explained a four year expansion plan and three components; social platforms, small area plans, and text. He commented that the website and social media will be involved. The first year will include an illustrative plan per City Council. As a result seven to ten sites will need to be determined to illustrate the tools of the ordinance for a better understanding. Images and diagrams will be embedded within the ordinance to show a pictorial view what the ordinance can do reinforcing intent and clarity. Sections will be completed incrementally and passed along for City Council to approve. Training will be conducted on how to use this throughout the learning process. In the end, Gastonia will have a new and updated ordinance with illustrations for certain areas of the city, a social platform for input and data, and a way to incrementally update the comprehensive plan.

Tasks of the Commission:

- Create a master list of seven to ten places
- Think about next item to tackle
- Review and recommend approval of final draft of the residential development standards

Mr. Thompson expressed his excitement and the importance of this effort as it moves forward for the City of Gastonia. He commented that the community has aging nonresidential/commercial development. Potential redevelopment is not accommodated very well with commercial zoning with very dimensional based restrictions. Examples given were Akers Center, Dixie Village and Eastridge Mall and offered these areas as consideration for the next priority option. Commissioner Cinq-Mars commented on limited housing. Mr. Thompson also briefly explained a separate effort being undertaken is the possibility of establishing a new urban redevelopment area on the west side.

Mr. Baches commented that this group is not rezoning the city but is writing text and giving the tools to apply. The zoning map will stay the same, the components will change, but the zoning will be modified. He provided an example.

Commissioner Fleeman briefly talked about investing in a housing code and better development since land will go away. The group agreed that it is time to move on this. Commissioner Fleeman stated that we do not have time to be very incremental and we have to do something with our subdivision code now. Mr. Baches stated that if this is something that needs to be polished and moved quickly for approval process, then it can be done.

Discussion ensued on water and sewer price point change.

**Gastonia Planning Commission
Special Workshop
May 1, 2019 Minutes**

Commissioner Stewart stated he'd like to see the UDO easier to read and understand, such as figuring out what is required for a project. Mr. Thompson stated one of the trends is a movement to simplification and it is a goal of the City. Mr. Baches stated graphics, illustrations and pictures will provide help and text will be next to the images.

Mr. Thompson directed the Commission to item 2 of the agenda packet. Staff needs to hear ideas about priority areas from the Commission. His example was at the I-85 / US-321 interchange as a development opportunity; however, the interchange improvement project has scared opportunities away because of uncertainty. There is vacant land around this busy interchange that will probably be an intensive development.

Commissioner Fleeman mentioned the construction on I-85 and travelers trying to avoid the construction. He suggested doing something with Highway 7 coming from Lowell. Mr. Thompson stated a portion of this corridor was reviewed by Gaston County Economic Development and the City of Gastonia Economic Development. Mr. Thompson noted the amount of municipalities Highway 7 touches.

Mr. Thompson stated the priority is to finish the Residential Development Standards. Mr. Baches and Mr. Thompson recapped the master list of seven to ten places tasked to the Commissioners. Mr. Baches described different types of development. Regarding rezoning, large and small scale projects were briefly explained. Ward Map was displayed for the Commissioners to view to help with their upcoming project.

Item 3: Other Business

There being no further business, Chairperson Goode adjourned the meeting at 6:29 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chrystal Howard, Secretary

Pam Goode, Chairperson