



Town of Vienna

Charles A. Robinson Jr.
Town Hall
127 Center Street South
Vienna VA, 22180

Meeting Minutes Town Council Conference Session

Friday, March 31, 2023

1:00 PM

Vienna Police Department Community Room,
215 Center St. South

Code Create

1. Regular Business

Council Present: Council Member Chuck Anderson; Council Member Ray Brill, Jr. (Remote); Council Member Nisha Patel (Remote); Council Member Steve Potter; Council Member Ed Somers; Council Member Howard J. Springsteen and Mayor Linda Colbert.

Staff Present: David Levy, Director, Planning and Zoning; Kelly O'Brien, Deputy Director, Planning and Zoning; Andrea West, Zoning Administrator; Allison Riddle, Attorney (on behalf of Town Attorney Steve Briglia); Gwen Riddle, Acting Deputy Director, Finance; Dorothy Baker, Planner, Planning and Zoning; Natalie Monkou, Director, Economic Development; Marvin Lawrence, Water and Sewer Supervisor, Public Works; Andrew Jinks, Traffic Engineer, Public Works.

AUDIO UNAVAILABLE FOR VARIOUS COUNCIL MEMBERS

A. [23-3714](#)

Mayor Colbert called the Conference Session to order at 1:00 PM explaining that Paul Layer, Architect and 20-year member of the BAR will not be present today. David Levy, Director, Planning and Zoning, will, in his absence, present the power point for Council consideration.

Director Levy noted that recurring language throughout the presentation referenced terminology such as vernacular (architecture concerned with domestic and functional rather than public or monumental) and indigenous (originating or occurring naturally in a particular place; native); terms used to explain what makes Vienna distinctive. In particular, even in the commercial zones, there exists a residential theme to the architecture, especially with regard to roof design. With respect to the issues of height, if Council wants to allow three story buildings, heights must be allowed to reach a 42 feet minimum. Additionally, to achieve a distinctive architectural style across the commercial zone consideration must be given to permitting parapets, turrets, and other decorative features. The issue then becomes how to draft the code to allow for this necessary height and variable architecture and how to incentivize builders to embrace this.

Council comments are summarized as follows:

- Results of the 2018 MAC Visual Preference Survey suggested residents approved of three stories but with the caveat of greater and varied front setback;*
- Establishing sufficient setback will at least assure space is available – true for Zone three; Zones one and two are more difficult and involve property rights;*
- Suggest setback measurements be taken from the curb as it allows visual understanding; Some risk of change over time; Property line measurement more*

difficult to visualize distance;

- Need to address Council's desire for bike lanes; Difficult to do this on Maple Avenue as it would require use of private property for a public use; Currently bikes are allowed on sidewalks in Vienna;
- Must find means for achieving walkability without providing incentives;
- Sidewalk width must be stated in comprehensive plan for it to be implementable by law in Ohio – must confirm with Attorney for Virginia laws; Used proffers in past;
- Minimum width (per VDOT) for shared sidewalk is eight feet; Zones one and two do not have eight feet available for sidewalks.

Director Levy moved on to present the findings for the study requested by Council of the impacts of model development scenarios for upper stories in the Maple Avenue corridor. He noted the assistance of the Departments of Finance, Economic Development and Public Works including Water and Sewer for the compilation and analysis of data.

The core question of the analysis related to the impacts of potentially raising the maximum permitted height limit of 35-feet along Maple Avenue. The 35-foot height maximum has, in recent history, resulted in the development of single-story buildings.

The analysis assessed those impacts along the following parameters: Traffic, Water/sewer, Fiscal costs and benefits. The study also included one-hour interviews of three Vienna business owners.

Results indicated that a continued regulatory approach limiting maximum heights to 35 feet (plus rooftop amenities) is likely to continue to yield 1-story buildings, especially if the requirements remain for both ground-floor commercial uses and for more than 50% of overall space as non-residential. Raising the maximum heights to 42 feet (plus space for rooftop features) and eliminating the 50% requirement would lead property owners to consider investing in 3-story buildings.

Traffic Impact:

- Doubling the square footage of space doubled the number of daily trips; Office space generated greater numbers of trips than did residential; Anecdotally, new retail in Vienna does generate more traffic than what is shown in study results;
- Important to know impact of these multiuse developments over a ten-year period of time;
- Multiuse development along Maple Avenue has the potential to double traffic;
- Additional trips generated by second and third residents has little impact;
- Any commercial development must be able to park itself.

Water and Sewer

- Vienna's infrastructure can easily manage the volumes for 10,000sf or 20,000sf. Assessing overall capacity would take outside expertise
- An average consumer uses 300 gallons of water per day (EPA); Increases in single family residential has not greatly affected usage because of greater efficiency in the replacement utility features of a new build.

Financial

- Net fiscal impact will be higher for rentals for both office and residential;
- Consider value of younger renters in Vienna;
- Cannot dictate type of occupancy (owner vs. renter or form of payment);
- Consider incentivizing less costly housing for both buyers and builders.

Interviews

- *Consider incentivizing property owners to combine parcels along Maple Avenue to allow for greater overall square footage;*
- *District designations help to identify uses; Concern with height restrictions in Avenues East and West – poor ROI for two story buildings will result in all one story redevelopment;*
- *Restricting three story development to Avenue Center will assure the evolution of a core;*
- *Due to MAC, now have four new four story builds in Avenue West; Allowing three stories in Avenues East and West would balance these taller buildings;*
- *Consider no change in rear setback language for one story structures; additional stories abutting residential which would require rear setback tapering or setback;*
- *Caution against revising the Code in such a way that no one wants to build in Vienna.*

2. Meeting Adjournment

Mayor Colbert closed the Conference Session at 4:20 PM

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