



City Council Worksession

Meeting Minutes – Planning Conference Room – 1st Floor

September 19, 2023

I. CALL TO ORDER

5:00 PM

Acting Mayor Michael A. McFee

Members of Council in attendance - Neil Lipsitz, Michael McFee, Mitch Mitchell, Josh Scallate.

II. DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Beaufort Development Code Changes regarding Zoning changes and Missing Middle Housing.

Curt Freese, Community and Economic Development Director went over several areas and their issues within the Code that dealt with Zoning and Missing Middle Housing. He stated that these are concerns from citizens, developers and staff. Amendments will be brought back in future worksessions for review.

Scott Marshall, City Manager, stated that some of these requests relate to the Beaufort Housing Trust to help streamline costs for affordable housing.

Lack of Missing Middle Housing

Mr. Freese stated that housing such as Townhouses, Duplexes and Cottages, structures that are a little cheaper to build, are missing. He stated that 2-3 unit dwellings are conditional use in the T3-N district. He stated that these type of structures are not permitted in the T4-HN district and is conditional use in the T4-N district. He mentioned that these are all transect districts. Staff recommends that these structures be permitted use instead of conditional in these areas. Permitted use means by right. If someone has a property and they wanted to build they would just apply for a permit. Conditional use means that you have to follow a set of standards that are specific to that district.

Live/Work

Mr. Freese said that Live/Work units are not permitted in the T4-HN district and is conditional use in the T4-N district. He does not know if there is any justification for it not being allowed as downtown areas are usually higher in value and where you would typically see a more urban use. Any building that is proposed for construction in the Historic District would go before the Historic Review Board for approval. The recommendation is to add Live/Work as permitted use.

There was discussion about limiting this to certain uses like artist studios and offices in the T4-HN district.

Retail/Restaurants Urban Districts

Mr. Freese stated that Retail and Restaurants are not permitted in the T4-HN district and are a conditional use in the T4-N district. There has been some interest in having these types of

establishments in these districts, but they have been told they are not permitted due to the restrictions in place. He feels that if we want to create a more walkable, thriving district, we will need to remove the restrictions and add them to permitted use or at least conditional use and eliminate the retail overlay.

Staff will explore possibly adding limited conditional uses for retail/restaurants like bakeries or cafes.

Live/Work

Mr. Freese said that the issue here is the prohibition of 2-3 dwelling units, rowhomes, and apartment houses in the T3-S district. This district only allows single family homes. The recommendation is to add the allowance for 2-3 dwelling units as permitted use, and apartments as a special exception.

Council is supportive of Staff moving forward with allowing 2-3 dwelling units and apartments as a special exception in this district.

Rowhomes and Apartments in T3-N and T4-HN

Mr. Freese stated that there is a prohibition of rowhomes and apartment houses in the T3-N district and the T4-HN district. He said T3-N is supposed to be more neighborhood than suburban. Such a prohibition makes these more urban zones and a barrier to attainable housing. The recommendation is to add rowhomes and apartment houses as permitted use and consider height requirements.

Council is supportive of staff moving forward with allowing rowhomes and apartment houses in the T3-N district as conditional use and with special exception in T4-HN.

Cottage Courts in Historic District

Mr. Freese stated there is a restriction of cottage courts in the Historic District and lot requirements. He said there is no reason to exclude these from the Historic District and it allows for creativity. These are highly encouraged in other areas of our code. The recommendation is to add these as a permitted use in the Historic District.

Council is not supportive of adding cottage courts in the Historic District.

Modular Homes

Mr. Freese started off saying that this item is more for clarification purposes. There was discussion about the differences between a Modular Home and a Manufactured Home. The issue is that Modular Homes are prohibited in all but the Mobile Home Zone. He stated that Modular Homes are now viewed under similar standards as stick-built homes and have the same characteristics. They also may be cheaper to build.

Council is supportive of staff moving forward with allowing Modular Homes as a permitted use in all residential transects.

TND Floating Overlay

Mr. Freese mentioned that the City has a Traditional Neighborhood Development Floating Overlay that no one has used to date. He stated that it is in our Code but not very well defined. There is potential to provide incentives/regulations for diversity of housing types and styles. This would be considered a rezoning. It would be required to go in front of the Planning Commission and Council for approval.

Mr. Freese inquired if it is worth the extra work to create a district that someone might be able to use.

Mr. Freese will develop new district standards for Council to review.

Fill Requirement

Mr. Freese stated that this is a suggestion from the Housing Task Force. He stated there is a two foot minimum ground floor elevation for 2-3 unit buildings. It is 3 foot for Multi-Family homes. He said that the requirement creates better design, yet also produces an additional cost.

Council is supportive of leaving the elevations as they are, and developers can ask for a variance.

Accessory Dwelling Unit minimums

Mr. Freese stated that staff has fielded requests to eliminate the 240 square foot minimum, and a 1500 square foot maximum for carriage houses. The proposal is that this requirement is a barrier to affordable housing. Staff recommendation is to not make any changes.

Currently two accessory dwelling units are allowed in all districts except T3-S. This district only allows one.

Staff will explore adding an additional accessory unit in the T3-S district to make it align with the other districts.

The following interacted with Council on the issues discussed:

Cynthia Jenkins, Historic Beaufort Foundation

Jeremiah Smith, Historic Review Board Chair

Lise Sundrla, Historic Beaufort Foundation

Graham Trask, 68 Fiddlers Bridge Road, Staatsburg, NY, Secondary address 1211 Bay Street

Maxine Lutz, Historic Review Board

James White, 521 New Street

Libby Anderson, 107 Grayson Street

Sue Derrenbacher, 1212 Duke Street

Judy Berry, 1307 Washington Street

Dan Blackmon, 1010 Duke Street

Grant McClure, Coastal Conservation League

Paul Trask, 610 Bladen Street

Disclaimer: This document is a summary. All City Council Worksessions and Regular Meetings are recorded. Live stream can be found on the City's website at www.cityofbeaufort.org (Agenda section). Any questions, please contact the City Clerk, Traci Guldner at 843-525-7024 or by email at tguldner@cityofbeaufort.org.

In accordance with South Carolina Code of Laws, 1976, Section 30-4-80 (a)(d)(e), as amended, notification of regular meetings was given at the beginning of the calendar year. A copy of the agenda was posted on the City's bulletin board and website www.cityofbeaufort.org twenty-four hours prior to the meeting. A copy of the agenda was given to the local news media and requested public on file.