



WASHINGTON PLANNING BOARD
Regular Scheduled Meeting
Tuesday, November 24, 2015
7:00 PM

I. Opening of the meeting

II. Invocation

III. Roll call

IV. Old Business

1. Converting single family homes into multi-family homes within the Historical District. Sub-Committee and any others wishing to attend will meet at 6:00 to discuss.

V. New Business

None

VI. Other Business

1. Unified Development Ordinance

VII. Approval of minutes – October 27, 2015

VIII. Adjourn

WASHINGTON PLANNING BOARD

Regular Scheduled Meeting

Tuesday, October 27, 2015

7:00 PM

Members Present

Jane Alligood Dot Moate

John Tate D. Howell Miller

Marie Baber Dan McNeil

Members Absent

All members present

Others Present

John Rodman, Planning Director

Glen Moore, Planning Administrator

Jessica Green, Administrative Support

I. Opening of the meeting

The meeting was called to order.

II. Invocation

A moment of silent prayer was taken.

III. Roll Call

A silent roll call was taken by staff.

IV. Old Business

None

V. New Business

1. Fairfield Inn & Suites Hotel Façade

The proposed hotel located on West 15th Street is located within the US Hwy 17 Bypass Interchange Overlay District. The façade and property layout of any proposed use located within this area requires approval from the Planning Board.

Glen Moore presented the plan and proposed façade to the board. He explained that they are using a cultured stone in conjunction with the stucco material. He stated that the plans do meet all the requirements for the overlay district including parking and landscaping. They also discussed the signage for the hotel.

D. Howell Miller made a motion to approve. His motion was seconded by Dot Moate. All voted in favor and the motion carried.

VI. Other Business

1. Converting single family homes into multi-family homes within the Historical District.

John Rodman came forward and provided the Board members with a copy of the multi-family zoning ordinance. Mr. Rodman explained that they did not want to change anything but tonight he would like to have some discussion and get some feedback from the board on this issue. He stated that he would like to get the Planning Board's okay to present a moratorium to City Council at their next meeting, to give them some time to go through this issue. Mr. Rodman stated that the issue they would be discussing is if a single-family residence can legally be turned into a multi-family residence. Mr. Rodman then went through some definitions which included single-family dwellings and multi-family dwellings. Mr. Rodman stated that they would be discussing structures in the Historic District. He explained that there are two historic districts, a residential district and business historic district. He then gave the definition of each. He explained that the B1H (business historic district) is one of the few districts that allow a mixed use, which means you can have commercial and residential in the same zoning district. Mr. Rodman then explained the different types of uses within the zoning district and the City's table of uses. He stated that in the B1H district Multi-family homes are a permitted use. He then presented a power point presentation with information pertaining to the issue. He also presented a map of the historic district showing all of the current multi-family structures and also the ones that can potentially be turned into multi-family in the future. Mr. Rodman then gave a summary/history of how the City of Washington has gotten to this point in reference to this issue. Mr. Rodman then explained some of the confusion with the wording/language in the zoning ordinance section addressing multi-family structures.

Mr. Rodman explained that the Planning Board needs to have some conversations about what they want to do with the 20 some homes in the B1H district that can be turn into multi-family homes. He then spoke about some of the possible solutions or actions the Planning Board can look at doing. The Board discussed the issue.

The Chairman opened the floor for public comment.

Don Stroud came forward and spoke on the issue. He gave a history of boarding houses in the historic district. He stated that once a single family home is changed into a multi-family

structure it inevitably changes the exterior character of the building and you can see that effect all over town. He stated that out of the 600 homes in the historic district there are only 2 homes that have been converted into multi-family use that are visibly presentable in this town, everything else is in shambles. He stated that converting single family structures into multi-family homes is a model that does not work and this has been reflected throughout history. Mr. Stroud then addressed the City's ordinance and the language. He stated that he feels the ordinance clearly states that multi-family homes should be addressed the same way in both the residential district and the B1H zoning district and should be treated with the same standards. Mr. Stroud then discussed the situation he is currently in where the home beside him is being turned into 11 apartments. He stated that he went to the City Council about issuing a moratorium so that the issue or any confusion could be resolved. He explained that the Council motion that they receive the opinion of the Planning Board on the matter. He then spoke further on the permit that was issued for the home adjacent to him and explained that he has filed an appeal to the Board of Adjustment. Mr. Stroud then addressed items from the City ordinance and his concerns with sub-dividing historic homes. Mr. Stroud asked that the Board clean up the ordinance and to now allow single family residences to be converted to multi-family in the B1H district. He stated that there are many other conforming uses that are available for some of the large homes in the B1H district.

Dot Moate explained that the Planning Board's recommendation will not have any effect on the property next to him, so when they decide to make changes on this issue they cannot include that property. Mr. Stroud asked that the Planning Board render an opinion to the City that 40-302 controls the 20 homes in the B1H district or they issue a moratorium.

Beth Byrd, director of WHDA, came forward. She stated that her concern is about the development and the businesses in the downtown B1H district. She explained that all of the planning documents that the City has endorsed or otherwise recommend density downtown and with that density the downtown will grow. She brought up the Downtown Revitalization Strategy that was done in 2004 and how it addresses the adaptive reuse of existing buildings. She also referenced the parking study that was done in 2006 that found that there is no shortage of parking in the downtown area. Ms. Byrd also spoke about the elements of great waterfront communities and quoted a document that stated: "successful waterfront communities typically incorporate a mix of activities and uses ranging from commercial, residential, sports, and convention facilities. Diversity is increasing key to a viable downtown district. Critical to the diversity equation is the support of mixed use development, development that provides for office, retail, residential, hospitality, and so forth. Mix use also works to create a critical mass of activity in downtown and along the waterfront. Residents and other users of these projects become caretakers of the downtown and waterfront keeping these areas safe and clean and a focus of community interest. For Washington the key will be to continue to promote the downtown development that has multiple components and uses catering to different audiences." Ms. Byrd stated that if they are going to create these planning documents then they need to match their sediment and they need to understand that in the

B1H district exactly what a developer can do. Ms. Byrd stated that she understands that this is area where business and residential property overlap and she knows that it is going to be a difficult quandary to come up with what is right for everyone involved, but she is pleading to the Planning Board to give a clear path so when developers do come to town they know how to take these properties and convert them. She also spoke about the condition of some of the homes that are in the B1H district and the fact that their conditions will stay the same unless they can find an adaptive use situation for them.

Dee Congleton came forward. She stated that as a member of the local historic foundation and preservation North Carolina in the last 15 years they have seen a lot of their multi-family dwellings being converted back into single-family residences. She stated that single family home ownership promotes social, environmental, and cultural benefits of historic preservation. She then spoke about some towns that have been successful in converting multi-family homes back into single-family homes. She stated that they want to preserve the historic integrity and the historic character of the district.

Don Stroud came up and stated that the two strategies that Ms. Byrd referenced are just that and is not City code governing the district.

The Chairman closed the floor and the Planning Board discussed the issue.

Dot Moate made a motion to recommend that a moratorium be placed on any conversions from single-family dwellings to multi-family dwellings in the B1H district effective for at least 90 days. Her motion was seconded by Jane Alligood. All voted in favor and the motion carried.

A sub-committee was formed to look at this issue that included Dot Moate, Marie Barber, and D. Howell Miller with Jane Alligood as an alternate.

VII. Approval of minutes – August 25, 2015

Dan McNeil made a motion to approve the August minutes. His motion was seconded by D. Howell Miller and all voted in favor.

VIII. Adjourn

There being no other business Dan McNeil made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Jane Alligood.