



PLANNING BOARD

WORK SESSION

Monday, November 13, 2017 6:00 PM
Council Chambers, City Hall

MINUTES

Approved 11/27/2017

I. Roll Call

Present: Marilyn Harris, Bruce Kolenda, Marlene Jordan, Richard Wahrlich, David Putnam

Absent: Nick Koloski William Greenrose, James Short, Charlene Lovett, Allen Damren

City Staff: Michael McCrory, City Planner

II. Review of Minutes

- October 23, 2017

Motion: To approve the minutes as presented

Made by: Mr. Putnam **Second:** Ms. Jordan

Vote: Unanimous in favor

III. Master Plan

- *Housing Chapter*

This is the last chapter for the Master Plan update. Mr. McCrory provided staff assistance for this chapter; Mr. Putnam chaired the subcommittee. There was a conscious effort to make the language of this chapter acceptable and to avoid “buzzwords. It contains fundamental information about the housing stock in Claremont, demographics about its residents and future development strategies.

Census data provides the most consistent set of data over long periods of time, so census data was used in this chapter. American survey data are estimates with a margin of error and are not always comparable to the decennial census data.

The term “work force housing” can be avoided by addressing housing availability and affordability.

There was a question regarding the sentence: “*Claremont cannot dictate a resident’s choice in housing type, location, or cost; except through neglecting to enforce its regulations and lack of planning to would meet its residents’ housing needs.*” Mr. McCrory said this sentence had been corrected in a later draft of the chapter. He explained what the sentence was intending to say. Mr. Putnam wanted the language to more clearly explain why enforcing the City’s regulations is so important in this regard.

The chapter contains maps that show the analysis of the existing housing stock. 80% of the housing stock was constructed before 1980 (lead-paint cut-off date); 40 % of the housing stock was constructed before 1940. With an old housing stock, maintenance takes on significant importance.

There is a 60/30 ratio of renters to owners, which is not unusual in the state.

Multi-family housing tends to be concentrated in the City Center. Renting head-of-households tend to be ten years younger than owner head-of-households. The median age of Claremont residents is getting older. Income levels of the rental population is lower than that of the owner population.

The housing cost burden is the sum of the mortgage (or rent), insurance, taxes, etc. It is expressed as a percentage of one's income. A high housing cost burden is 30% or greater. There is a spike in the level of high housing cost burden for lower-income (renting) cohorts. High housing cost burden among owners is spread across all income levels.

This could be based on market values, which are in turn based upon supply. We need to increase the supply of rental units, but must also ensure they are good quality units. The actual number of units needed will require a deeper analysis.

We need to recognize that there are segments of the population – both renters and owners – that are paying too much for their housing needs. Affordability is a function of availability and quality. Claremont currently has a “ridiculously tight” rental market. We also have a tight housing market. There is a lack of housing units in the \$150,000 - \$250,000 price range across the state. The profit margin is tight for affordable housing, so incentives must be offered to encourage builders to build it. – e.g. density bonuses where there's water and sewer available.

The future housing needs projections were based on population projections. Future population projections are published by the state office of strategic initiatives through 2040. They anticipate that Sullivan County will have very little growth. That translates into Claremont having a level population over the next 20-30 years. This translates into a need for replacement units rather than adding new units. Claremont will need 250-300 units over the next 20 years.

The Land Use chapter talks about hitting a population of 20,000 in 25 years. That would require an additional 3,000 housing units.

It will be important to understand what type of housing units those should be.

The first goal focuses on existing housing; the second goal focuses on encouraging new housing development.

Mr. Putnam asked to have the first bullet in Goal #1 changed to two bullets to put more emphasis on the Healthy Homes Initiative. Mr. McCrory said he could modify the language somewhat, but recommended not changing it to two bullets.

Mr. Putnam suggested repeating the Healthy Homes Initiative integration under the section that calls for developing a strategic housing plan.

Ms. Harris asked about the wording in the sentence that reads, “*Review tax incentives allowing aging residents to remain in their homes.*” She suggested adding the words, “*with a goal toward*” after the word incentive. Mr. McCrory agreed to work on it.

A strategic housing plan is different from the housing chapter in that it is more in-depth and detailed. Mr. Putnam suggested creating a strategic housing plan subcommittee. Mr. McCrory agreed, but said it didn’t need to be in this plan as the strategic plan probably won’t be started for another couple of years.

Due to the time, it was agreed to table the discussion until after completion of the public hearing.

[Upon conclusion of the public hearing and a conceptual discussion, the Board returned to the discussion of the *Housing* chapter.]

Mr. Putnam stressed the need for neighborhood engagement such as that seen in the Pearl/Walnut Street neighborhood project underway through Don Derrick and Habitat for Humanity.

Motion: To approve the Housing chapter with the minor changes discussed.

Made by: Mr. Putnam **Second:** Ms. Harris

Vote: Unanimous in favor

- IV. **Rules of Procedure**
- V. **Reports from Boards and Commissions**
- VI. **Other**
- VII. **Correspondence**
- VIII. **Adjournment**

Respectfully submitted,
deForest Bearse