

CITY COMMISSION WORK SESSION
January 28, 2019

The work session was called to order by Mayor Steve Leary at 2:00 p.m. in the Commission Chambers, 401 Park Avenue South, Winter Park, Florida.

Members present:

Mayor Steve Leary
Commissioner Greg Seidel
Commissioner Sarah Sprinkel
Commissioner Carolyn Cooper (arrived 2:30)
Commissioner Pete Weldon

Also present:

City Manager Randy Knight
City Clerk Cynthia Bonham
Kurt Ardaman, City Attorney

Others present:

Bronce Stephenson, Planning Director
Attorney Rebecca Wilson, representing the applicant

Henderson Hotel – Right-of-way and planning discussion

Attorney Ardaman read a letter from Attorney Wilson regarding the work session request. She commented in the letter that the discussion is non-binding on the City and City Commission members and that all discussions are preliminary and can only rely on final effective approvals which will include a comprehensive plan amendment, rezoning, vacation of right-of-way and the final conditional use permit and development agreement.

Applicant Adam Wonus spoke about his wish to build his hotel at that location. He showed a video highlighting the Henderson Hotel site and the opportunity it will bring to the City. He asked that the portions of City ROW that contains Beachview Avenue and a portion of Killarney Drive be vacated because of the walkability of the project, and believed they could help with cut through traffic on Killarney Drive. Mr. Wonus commented about wanting to increase the number of trees on the site.

Ms. Wilson stated Mr. Wonus has directed the architects to move towards a historic style of architecture. She asked that they would like the consideration initially of these roadway vacations so they can include those as part of the applications. Ms. Wilson also pointed out that there are a number of comprehensive plan and zoning policies in place along 17-92 that make this type of redevelopment difficult. She commented that they want to try and understand if the Commission would consider something like this and what are the items most important to the Commission in exchange for any additional intensity or height.

Planning Manager Jeff Briggs summarized the issues that would have to be addressed by the applicant and staff if they decide to move forward with the potential development of the site. Attorney Wilson and Mr. Wonus answered questions regarding utilities, height, and access to the lake. She spoke about wanting to go from a one story restaurant on 17-92 up to the garage, then up to a

portion of the building at five stories then back down as they transition towards the lake. She clarified they are not asking for five stories over the entire property. She stated they have agreed to have a traffic study done to understand what is going on in the neighborhood and what professionals would offer to help with the cut through traffic there.

Mayor Leary commented if this project negatively affects the neighborhood then this is a non-starter for him. He stated if the applicant came forth with the neighbors to help them with the issues they are facing then that will be positive for him. He stated he believes this can enhance the neighborhood.

Commissioner Seidel asked about the process and who is responsible for what in the process. He wanted to make sure the process is fair to the residents, to the City and the applicant. He stated he wants to make sure the residents do not have a negative impact with this project.

Commissioner Sprinkel asked that they think about what could be advantageous for the entire neighborhood affected such as making the properties lakefront with the road being vacated. Attorney Wilson suggested engaging a traffic engineer to meet with staff to determine if they are vacating too much or too little and if there are other things that can be done in the neighborhood to slow down traffic. Mr. Wonus stated this is an opportunity for them to study the entire area.

Commissioner Weldon spoke about the lack of zoning in place for a project like this but did not object to a hotel. He spoke about the need for compatibility with the neighborhood and property owners. He stated the height, density and intensity is too much and that this project is out of sync with what his expectations are.

Commissioner Cooper spoke about process, the project is proposed to be taller than 55', and asked about the FAR. She stated they have many neighbors (cities) that have the zoning they are discussing and that they should start by looking at their existing zoning and see what it has created. She disagreed with using a particular project to drive major changes to our code without looking at what is available. She concluded that the project is too much.

Planning Director Stephenson addressed the process moving forward and that a lot of the project was contingent on the successful closing and vacation of the right-of-way. The applicant wanted this early discussion to see if the Commission was open to the utilization of the right-of-way and without that there is not a lot of incentive for the applicant to move forward. He stated if the opportunity was there for the closing and vacating of the ROW that would be the first part of the process he recommended because the applicant would know and they can start the steps they have to jump through. He commented until they have a real plan that is not conceptual in nature it is going to be difficult to determine the process.

Mayor Leary expressed approaching this from a more global perspective in the City and that as it relates to vacating property, he did not have a problem with it depending on what the City receives for it. He stated if there is a benefit to the neighborhood such as a park, and helps with traffic flow through the neighborhood, he would appreciate that. Attorney Wilson stated they do not want the road if they do not have the project and suggested to begin the transportation study and have a community meeting to listen and see what they could support or would like or not like to happen regarding the lake. She also suggested looking at the sub area policy in the comprehensive plan for 17-92 where they talk about uses north of Fairbanks and that neighborhood and how redevelopment north of Fairbanks should be compatible with the adjacent neighborhood. She suggested to develop these standards within that sub area policy for this hotel so it is allowed in a specific place or create a hotel district.

Commissioner Sprinkel addressed the need to determine what the City will get in exchange for the vacation of the ROW. He spoke about the possibility of looking at a hotel zoning district that they could re-establish standards that may remove a lot of the steps that would be necessary for a project such as this to go forward and would allow the Commission to look at the appropriate FAR.

Commissioner Cooper concluded that she wants City staff to take the lead on the process and reviewing standards currently available within a driving distance so they can see what the code they are considering creates. She addressed the importance of the visibility across the lake of the hotel and that this may be the time to look at the treatment of the parking garage. She stated she is not inclined to vacate property on the lakefront, however, if that happens she will expect a quid pro quo based on the value, not square footage.

Attorney Ardaman addressed the lack of a process at this time so until they know what the project will entail it would be premature to establish a process. He suggested further exploration by the applicant if they want to speak with the neighbors and obtain feedback, speak with staff and bring back a larger project or a bigger picture that addresses concerns that will then allow staff to look at what items need to be addressed.

Attorney Wilson addressed height and the allowance under our code of 55' plus 10' for architectural embellishments. She stated she did not believe the height of their project is going to be significantly more than what is allowed but that the difference is you have a height map in the comprehensive plan that does not express height in feet but expresses it in stories. She clarified that the ROW is not on the lakefront, there is currently private property on that lakefront and private docks. She stated they would reduce the number of docks across from there now and discuss with the neighbors as to the kind of activities that would or would not be allowed there. Mayor Leary stated whatever height they end up with has to fit within the scale and character of the neighborhood. He stated staff needs to do work on the zoning and the applicant needs to further develop their plans and speak with neighbors to

determine what makes more sense for the neighborhood. Over the coming weeks they will get back together to see if there can be a path forward from a feasibility standpoint and determine the path forward from a process standpoint in order to get it back to the Commission.

The meeting adjourned at 3:07 p.m.



City Clerk Cynthia S. Bonham, MMC