

A. CALL TO ORDER:

A Special Joint Meeting of the Troy City Council and the Planning Commission was held on Monday, April 18, 2016, at City Hall, 500 W. Big Beaver Rd. Mayor Slater called the meeting to order at 6:01 PM.

B. ROLL CALL:City Council Members

Mayor Dane Slater
Edna Abraham
Ethan Baker
Jim Campbell
Dave Henderson
Ellen Hodorek
Mayor Pro Tem Ed Pennington

Planning Commission Members

Chairman Don Edmunds
Ollie Apahidean
Karen Crusse
Carlton Faison
Michael Hutson
Tom Krent
Padma Kuppa
Philip Sanzica (Absent)
John Tagle

C. DISCUSSION ITEMS:**C-1 Introduction – City Manager Brian Kischnick**

City Manager Brian Kischnick introduced the evening's topic for discussion, Cluster Developments, and explained that the Planning Commission has discussed this topic and welcomed this opportunity to have a joint discussion. Mr. Kischnick introduced Planning Director Brent Savidant to present the topic.

C-2 Cluster Development Presentation – Planning Director Brent Savidant

Planning Director Brent Savidant began his presentation by defining the term, Cluster Development. He continued by providing illustrations of existing site condominiums, as well as various samples of cluster developments. Mr. Savidant shared that there are various benefits for creating cluster developments – some benefits include preserving some open space by clustering the units and reducing infrastructure; thus, allowing developers to maximize cost savings. Mr. Savidant added that there is provision for cluster developments in the City of Troy Zoning Ordinance and there is one cluster development, Cedar Pines Woods, located in Troy.

Mr. Savidant shared that the Planning Commission discussed cluster developments and came up with three goals: 1) Remove barriers to cluster development; 2) Incentivize; and 3) Permit design flexibility and creativity.

Mr. Savidant explained that the existing Zoning Ordinance requires a minimum of 30% open space, and he would like to reduce that to 20%. Mr. Savidant added that to obtain a density bonus requires 50% preserved as open space, plus meet one of three additional requirements, which is difficult to achieve.

Mr. Savidant further explained that another goal is to encourage design flexibility and provide opportunities for the developer to be creative provided they maintain existing setbacks. He added that granting Planning Commission permission to waive internal setback provisions, provided specific provisions or standards have been met, will help achieve this goal. Lastly, he explained the importance to incentivize by considering attached dwellings to maximize the footprint of the development and density bonuses to maximize the preservation of natural features.

Mr. Savidant continued by providing additional illustrations of cluster developments involving various percentages of open space and involving density bonuses.

Mr. Savidant summarized by posing the four discussion questions to determine the path going forward:

- Approval authority by Planning Commission or City Council?
- Maximum square footage of alternative housing types to achieve density bonus? Is 1,500 square feet too small?
- Density Bonus – 50% Hard Cap OR Sliding Scale?
- Permit attached units in R-1A and R-1B?

C-3 Questions/Discussion

Mayor Slater recommended discussing each question in order.

- *Approval authority by Planning Commission or City Council?*

Ms. Crusse began by stating that she feels City Council should be the final approval authority, especially pertaining to the density bonuses and the potential of holding public hearings regarding cluster developments.

Chairman Edmunds concurred, and he expressed the importance of public input.

Mayor Slater agreed explaining that City Council often received phone calls and emails regarding developments.

- *Maximum square footage of alternative housing types to achieve density bonus? Is 1,500 square feet too small?*

Mayor Slater began by stating that the maximum square footage is only to achieve the density bonus. It does not require maximum square footage for the development.

Ms. Kuppa indicated that she feels 1,500 square feet is an adequate maximum size.

Council Member Abraham agrees this is a realistic and feasible size in that many empty nesters are seeking to downsize, as well as for a starter home.

Mr. Hutson agreed that this square footage is more than adequate.

Mr. Apahidean feels the square footage is acceptable, but he questioned whether the bonus should be more than 10%. He further suggested increasing the incentive to 15% if you desire this product and square footage to make it attractive for developers.

Mayor Slater agreed that if the goal is to encourage developments for empty nesters or starter homes, then the incentive percentage should be increased.

Mr. Krent said many people approach him seeking smaller, quality homes in Troy. He suggests creating reasons or incentives for developers to meet the demand by building good quality, smaller homes in Troy.

Chairman Edmunds indicated that larger homes are not prohibited, they just would not receive the density bonus.

Council Member Campbell clarified that the attached homes would each be a maximum of 1,500 square feet, so it would be a 3,000 square foot building per lot. He agreed that 1,500 square feet maximum is acceptable.

Mayor Slater asked Mr. Savidant if his intent is to bring in some developers to hear their point of view and what would incentivize them to bring their developments to Troy. Mr. Savidant replied that the next step is to take tonight's discussion and firm up a draft to present to the Planning Commission. Once the Planning Commission is happy with the draft, he will present it to the development community.

- *Density Bonus – 50% Hard Cap OR Sliding Scale?*

Mayor Slater asked Mr. Apahidean to share his findings on cluster developments.

Mr. Apahidean described some exercises he performed creating hypothetical cluster developments that would likely happen in Troy. Instead of a 60, 70 or 80 unit development, he created a 10, 15, 20 unit development to determine the maximum density based on the bonuses. He found it fairly easy to achieve 50% with good open space and a good layout. He offered the sliding scale would allow the developers the flexibility to be creative.

Mayor Slater agreed that the sliding scale would be beneficial; however, he questioned whether developers would sacrifice the profit of building 60 homes vs building a handful of homes to create the open space.

Ms. Padma compared the density of a conventional development versus the density of a clustered development with attached units.

Mayor Pro Tem Pennington recommended talking with developers that have created clustered developments.

Mayor Slater asked if the current cluster development section of the ordinance is keeping developers from creating these types of developments.

Mr. Savidant said lack of incentives are road blocks for developers.

Mayor Slater indicated that in his personal situation, it would cost him more to downsize at this time. It is important to make it financially rewarding for people to downsize.

Council Member Hodorek asked if there is a developer that expressed interest in revising the ordinance. Mayor Slater confirmed that the developer has a parcel that lends itself to the development. Council Member Hodorek said she feels it would be a great achievement to meet the needs of residents, developers and the City.

- *Permit attached units in R-1A and R-1B?*

Mayor Slater expressed that this may be a sensitive question to answer.

Mr. Hutson explained it may not be desirable to existing residents for a cluster development to be placed in between homes on large lots.

Ms. Kuppa provided an example of a potential economic benefit to the City in that many parishioners of the temple may seek to live close to their house of worship.

Mr. Krent indicated that he does not feel that attached units should be in R-1A and R-1B districts.

Mr. Tagle shared concerns with integrating attached homes within those districts and feels there should be additional studies and discussion before moving forward.

Mr. Apahidean spoke about side yard setbacks and the potential for cluster developments even without attached units in the R-1A and R-1B districts.

Mr. Savidant explained that cluster developments are located in R-1A, R-1B, R-1C, R-1D and R-1E. He clarified that attached homes are being proposed in the R-1A and R-1B districts.

Council Member Henderson posed questions about setbacks and abutting properties.

Mr. Tagle asked whether one of the requirements for cluster development is that one of the borders must occur on a major thoroughfare. Mr. Savidant confirmed that a cluster development with attached housing would require access to a major thoroughfare.

Council Member Henderson asked about backyards or back lots. Mr. Savidant responded that existing setbacks would be respected and maintained.

Chairman Edmunds explained that the map is very telling that attached homes are permitted in R-1C, but not in R-1A and R-1B.

Council Member Henderson questioned attached housing without regard for what surrounds the property. Mr. Savidant clarified that attached homes would be a significant change to the neighboring properties, so the ordinance was written to mandate developments with attached units to access or abut a major thoroughfare.

Council Member Baker clarified that attached housing is permitted without regard to what exists on the property provided it accesses a major thoroughfare. Mr. Savidant indicated that there are control mechanisms to determine the number of units.

Council Member Hodorek went back to the question – do we permit attached housing in R-1A and R-1B. She expressed that she is not in favor of attached housing in those zoning districts.

Council Member Baker asked the reasoning for prohibiting attached units in R-1A and R-1B.

Council Member Hodorek indicated that the intention is to protect property owners in that area.

Mr. Apahidean discussed property values and the effects cluster developments would have on property values.

Council Member Abraham asked why limit cluster development to the east side of the City.

Council Member Henderson expressed that there are properties in R-1A and R-1B districts where these types of housing options would fit.

Ms. Crusse asked whether the language could provide discretion in permitting cluster developments with attached homes in those districts.

City Attorney Bluhm responded that there could be language that would limit the areas within the R-1A and R-1B districts; however, her concern is the language would have to be carefully crafted, applied equally to everyone, and have articulated standards to form the basis for the limiting where they are permitted.

Mayor Slater explained that it is a touchy subject in that developers are purchasing lots in older homes, tearing down the homes, and building monster houses. There are people who will object to building large homes, and there are people who will object to cluster developments.

Mr. Tagle explained that the dynamic is changing that will drive the value for cluster developments. He shared that studies show that large homes will be vacant and will not be attractive to homeowners.

Mr. Faison agreed with Mr. Tagle. He shared concerns with having different cluster options in different areas of the City. He recommended obtaining input from the developers that will be helpful in moving forward with any changes.

Mayor Slater indicated that the language addressing cluster developments as it currently stands needs revising. He recommended that some language be drafted to provide City Council and the Planning Commission some leeway with regards to cluster developments within all of the R-1 districts.

Mr. Krent shared that the dense zoning on the east side of the City will actually provide more green space for future developments.

C-4 Next Steps

City Manager Kischnick stated that this is still in the very early stages. He will have City Administration develop something to present for the Planning Commission.

D. PUBLIC COMMENT:

Jim Werpetinski	Spoke in favor of cluster developments.
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E. ADJOURNMENT:

The Meeting **ADJOURNED** at 7:01 PM.

Mayor Dane Slater

Cheryl A. Stewart
Administrative Aide