

Austin Neighborhoods Council
General Membership Meeting
Austin Energy Building, 721 Barton Springs Rd.
May 23, 2007
7:00pm to 9:00pm

Minutes prepared by Kevin Lewis and Lorraine Atherton, ANC Secretaries.

President Laura Morrison called the meeting to order.

Modeling Density of Neighborhoods

- Cid Galindo, Planning Commissioner, Chair of the Comprehensive Plan Committee
- Jeff Jack, ANC Vice President and Zilker NA President

Cid Galindo has been working with the city to create a long-term plan for sustainable development citywide. This is called the Sustainable City Initiative.

Austin has been growing its population at an average of 3.5% per year over the last 100 years. If this growth rate continues, by 2035 this would mean a population for the area of 1.6 million, from current 925,287. At current densities of 3.7 persons per acres, we would have to add 450,000 acres to the city limits area to accommodate the increased population. This study assumes that the current growth rate will continue, and is about alternatives to continuing to grow at the same density.

This city divides it's limits and ETJ into 3 zones:
Drinking Water Protection Zone 37% of total area
Urban Watershed Zone is 9.6% of total area.
Desired Development Zone

This plan seeks to encourage growth in the Urban Watershed Zone, while maintaining the character of those neighborhoods.

The target Annual Growth Rate for future growth for each area are:

Protection Zone 1.5%
Urban Zone 2.0%
Desired Zone 5.0%

There are Target Persons per Developed Area

Protection Zone ____
Urban Zone ____
Desired Zone ____

To accommodate increased growth, Compact Development Tools
Transit Oriented Developments (TOD)
Core Transit Corridors (CTC)
Mixed-use Activity Center (MAC)

Example: Zilker Neighborhood

8.7 Persons per Acre

Ranked 22 of 48 neighborhoods in terms of existing density.

Adjusted Target Annual Growth rate is 1.5%

Current population is 6,308.

Estimated future population absorption potential with current zoning is 8,730.

2035 Target Population is 9,859.

So Compact Development Tools would be used to as needed to add capacity to meet the 30-year population absorption goal of 1,129 the amount of additional capacity.

Jeff Jack described an analysis of the Zilker neighborhood that showed existing capacity that would accommodate the expected growth under the existing zoning. His analysis mostly agreed with the example laid out by Cid. The key question he raised was whether decisions by Planning Commission and City Council will truly reflect the implications of this plan, very few or no upzonings would be needed to reflect the expected population growth.

AMANDA Demonstration

- Jim Cook, City of Austin Information Technology
- Leon Barba, City of Austin Watershed Protection and Development Review
- Greg Hand, City of Austin

The City has created a new public interface for its computer system that provides information on developments and the city's permitting process, called AMANDA. It went live in March 2007, and has increased access for both current and archived information on building permits and proposed development plans.

Starting from the City's main Web page, it is accessible through the tabs on the left-side menu. The tabs that get you there are "Development" or "Permits."

See URL at end of minutes.

Town Lake Animal Shelter

- Lorri Michel, Chandra Lewnau, Peggy Jennings, and Harold Daniel, Fix Austin

The city has planned to move the Town Lake Animal Shelter to East Austin, near Hwy 183 and East Cesar Chavez, on Levander Loop.

Lorri Michel pointed out that in recent years the animal shelter has consistently killed approximately 50% of the animals brought in, about 12,000 per year. She said that the planned new site will be harder for the public to access and lead to fewer adoptions. She stated concern that the city's planned move will contribute to decrease adoptions and worsen the ratio of animals killed.

Daniel Llanes of Riverbluff NA, the neighborhood of the planned new site, said that he would prefer not to have the center located there.

Neighborhood Plan Amendment Process

- Donald Dodson, Dawson Neighborhood Association President

The Dawson Neighborhood recently went through a neighborhood plan amendment process. City planning staff in this process greatly exceeded their authority given by city code in recommending changes. In some instances properties were proposed for zoning changes whose owners had not applied for a change, and in some proper notice was not given.

After much work by neighborhood volunteers and consultation with city staff and City Council, many of the improperly processed applications were removed from consideration. Dawson highly advises close attention to any NP amendment process.

Announcements

Laura Morrison made an announcement about a process for filing neighborhoods' amended VMU opt-in opt-out applications within 45 days after their filing the initial application June 4. See below for details.

Barton Springs Master Plan

- Laurie Limbacher and Al Godfrey, Limbacher & Godfrey Architects

Al Godfrey is working on the Barton Springs Master Plan at the direction of the City of Austin. He described the process they are undertaking. They will be creating options for improvements to the grounds, buildings, and pool. The city would have to be very conservative in moving forward, given the need to protect the endangered salamander habitat.

The website for the master plan is www.bartonspringsmp.org, which will be updated ongoing.

Meeting was adjourned.

For More Information on Tonight's Agenda Items

AMANDA Public Access: www.ci.austin.tx.us/devreview/a_queryfolder_permits.jsp

Fix Austin: www.FixAustin.org

Barton Springs Master Plan: www.ci.austin.tx.us/parks/bartonspringsmp.htm

City Notice, May 22, 2007

Proposed Change to the Schedule for Vertical Mixed Use Opt-In/Opt-Out Applications

On Thursday May 17, 2007 the Austin City Council directed City staff to amend the Vertical Mixed Use provisions of the Design Standards Ordinance (Chapter 25-2, Subchapter E, Section 4.3.5). This amendment would allow a neighborhood that files an opt-in/opt-out application on or before June 4, 2007 to file an amended application on or before July 19, 2007.

In order to qualify for the additional 45 days all neighborhoods must file an opt-in/ opt-out application by June 4, 2007.

Submittal of an opt-in/opt-out application by June 4, 2007 will allow neighborhoods additional time to evaluate VMU and to file an amended application on or before July 19, 2007.

If you have questions please contact any of the following:

VMU Help Line: 512-974-2150

VMU E-Mail Questions: http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/connect/email_vm.htm