

Minutes

Long Range Planning Committee

October 19, 2023

1. Attendance: Rohit, Stacey, David W., Larry, David V., Dedun, Tambra, Ellen, Steve,
Absent: Barney, Adele, Susmita, Jay
2. Minutes: Dedun moved and Steve seconded. The minutes were adopted.
3. Old Business:
 - a. Bethesda Overlay Zone: Dedun presented on the Bethesda Downtown Plan. Planning came up with BOZ so developers could buy density from a pool. Planning decided that 9 million square feet of development would be sustainable in Bethesda. In September, the building across from the FWM came in for review and their site plan was approved. This pushed Bethesda over the soft cap, which is based on approved projects. The developers want the soft cap to go away. The Planners gave a report to the County Council on Bethesda and the next week briefed the Planning Board on their recommendation to get rid of the soft cap. There was a public hearing on Oct. 12th for public testimony. Implementation Advisory Committee (IAC) was not advised in advance and they wrote a letter to the Planning Board. Dedun, Irene, and Barney testified. Today, the Planning Board announced that they will not vote and send a recommendation to the County Council any time soon. There will be an investigation and things will slow down. Dedun asked about the tools that will be used-what are they, where will they be used, and how do they work. Friedson said that he wants to take time and study this issue.
 - i. Question: No distinction between commercial and residential. They subtract old square footage from new square footage.
 - ii. Jay: would urge the committee, and council, to identify what we want to demand in order to support more density across Wisconsin. The reality is that MoCo is going to increase the density cap in Bethesda. It is the economic engine of the county and they need the growth in order to fund the council's progressive social agenda. The County has a massive housing affordability crisis. The units have to be built somewhere and if it isn't in Downtown Bethesda it very may be on our side of Wisconsin. We have already seen CM Jawando and Marc Elrich target places like TOCC for densification. If we don't support greater density somewhere they will use our opposition to justify densifying the town. We should support higher density but in exchange for things we feel we need. Being branded

the town of "no" or NIMBYs will only open us up to worse outcomes within the town.

- iii. LRPC replied that agreeing to density does not protect the TOCC. New construction means loss of naturally occurring affordable housing and new construction only requires 15% MPDUs in Bethesda. There are incentives for going above 15%, but many developers are not going above 15%.
 - iv. Response 2: We want parks, schools, traffic. We were promised those three things and they haven't delivered. Then comes safety, fire and emergency services, libraries, rec center in Bethesda, and bike trails/tunnel. Trade off could be that they could remove the cap but build bigger sidewalks and smaller buildings but do not build bike lanes.
 - v. Response 3: focus on broken promises. TOCC doesn't believe the County's promises any more. The plans are not legally binding. But, we could track all the ZTAs that the County Council votes for an how no parks have been built and bring this up during campaign town halls to hold the County Council's feet to the fire.
 - vi. Response 4: TOCC could propose a ballot initiative to overhaul the MNCPPC.
 - vii. Commercial real estate is suffering right now so not much commercial real estate is getting built.
 - viii. 7M approved. 4M not built yet so the planners argue that we need to be like surfers and catch the wave.
 - ix. Planners argue that if we don't go past the cap then they will go to Virginia. Our response could be to offer incentives to Silver Spring, White Flint, or Shady Grove.
 - x. Parks, traffic, Non-auto driver mode share,
- b. Farm Women's Market: Barney's update is that the County presented a revised General Development Agreement to the developers on Oct. 18th. Larry-Make sure the TOCC is a third party beneficiary to any bilateral agreement so TOCC could sue to enforce if County doesn't enforce. Stacey-if TOCC pays the developer there is an insolvency risk so it might be better to pay into escrow at a bank. Larry and Stacey would be happy to talk to Barney.
4. New Business: County Growth and Infrastructure Policy: They had their kickoff. They have program managers. Do we want to invite Lisa Govoni and Darcy Buckley to our next meeting? Yes.
 5. Adjourn
 6. Next LRPC meeting: Thursday, November 16, 2023 at 7pm in the Town Hall