

# Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission

## Work Session Summary Minutes

April 5, 2021

Virtual Meeting

Approved

May 3, 2021

### Attendance

**Commissioners Present:** Sam Spencer (Chairperson), Keba Samuel (Vice Chairperson), John Fryday, John Ham, Phillip Gussman, Douglas Welton, Cozzie Watkins, Erin Barbee, Peter Kelly, Andrew Blumenthal, Astrid Chirinos, and Courtney Rhodes

**Commissioners Absent:** Commissioner Victoria Nwasike

**Planning Staff Present:** Alyson Craig (*Deputy Planning Director*), Candice Rorie, Shavon Davis, Alysia Osborne, and Kathy Cornett

### Call to Order & Introductions

The Chairperson called the meeting to order at 12:00 pm, welcomed those present and went over the protocols of the virtual meeting.

### Minutes and Reports

#### **Approval March 1 Work Session Minutes**

*A motion was made by Commissioner Barbee and seconded by Commissioner Welton to approve the March 1, 2021 minutes. Vice Chairperson Samuel requested an amendment to the minutes on page 5. The sentence should read "Chairperson Spencer commented it is important to have a true definition of equity in the plan." The vote was unanimous to approve the minutes with the amendment.*

### New Business

Chairperson Spencer announced that it is time for Planning Commission elections. He said the manor of elections and the offices that are up for elections are governed by the Interlocal Agreement and their bylaws and require him to appoint a nominating committee that would present a slate of officers at the next meeting in May. He informed the commission that the nominating committee for this year would be Commissioner Fryday, Commissioner Watkins, and Commissioner Chirinos. The committee will email the Commission this week with a deadline for nominations so if there are any nominations or self-nominations, please submit them to the committee. Lastly, he reminded the commission that the chairs and vice chairs of the Planning and Zoning Committees will be elected at the July meeting.

### Other Business

#### **Charlotte Future 2040 Comprehensive Plan Update and Comment Review**

Chairperson Spencer advised there is a list of comments that the Planning Commission have recommended included in their agenda packet. The comments were recommended to Planning staff, TAPE committee, and the City Council with their endorsement. He advised after the presentation, motions will be in order and if there is a comment that any member of the commission objects to sending on, they can pull it for review and discussion.

Ms. Cornett shared a slide presentation, focusing on where they are in the process. She gave a brief overview including the ways that the comments were received, key topics from public comments, and the next steps.

Commissioner Kelly commented that he is still advocating for a publication of a revised draft sooner rather than later. He feels the conversations in the public are limited by confusion over what has already been suggested and accepted by council or staff as changes and he thinks it will behoove communication with the public with a public draft sooner rather than later.

Commissioner Welton asked if the information was posted for the feedback sessions that council will be hosting. Ms. Osborne answered the feedback sessions are scheduled to happen every Thursday at 5:30 and that information should go out later today or tomorrow.

### **Charlotte Future 2040 Comprehensive Plan comments for discussion**

Chairperson Spencer opened the floor for discussion on the comments that were submitted as well as the two comments that were approved and forwarded by the Planning Committee at the March 23 meeting. He informed the commission that the process is, if there are any comments that they would like to pull for discussion, make them known now and each comment in the packet has been numbered.

*A motion was made by Vice Chairperson Samuel and seconded by Commissioner Blumenthal to approve as a commission to support sending all of the comments to staff, TAPE committee, and City Council for further exploration in terms of edits for the Comprehensive Plan. Vice Chairperson Samuel thinks that they are all appointed, have different processes, and different points of value to bring to the table and all of the comments have value.*

*Commissioner Gussman commented, under item CC of Commissioner Kelly's comment, he wanted to know if it was acceptable to Commissioner Kelly and the commission if under one of the metrics, specifically the one referring to the proximity current/proposed mass transit corridor; maybe focus a little more in on adjacent to those TOD areas. Just to be a little more explicit and highlight so that it's not used as a catch all. He asked if Commissioner Kelly would consider that a friendly amendment and Commissioner Kelly agreed.*

*Chairperson Samuel determined that to be an amendment from Commissioner Gussman and seconded by Commissioner Kelly. The vote was unanimous to accept the amendment. The original motion was unanimous to approve as a Commission to support sending all the comments to staff, TAPE committee, and City Council.*

### **Other Business**

Commissioner Welton inquired about the future agenda topic which included a presentation from the Charlotte Sustainability and Resiliency office. Ms. Rorie advised that it has been extended to May or June.

Commissioner Fryday asked what happens next with all of the comments received and is the draft still expected in May. Chairperson Spencer added he will join the chorus in asking if there was any

possibility of beating the May 17<sup>th</sup> deadline and seeing a draft before then. Ms. Cornett replied they could certainly look at it but from a staff perspective, producing another draft is extremely time consuming and explained for whatever revision that might be made to a policy, there has to be a very thorough effort made in going through the entire document and seeing what cascading effects that might have; so there's quite a bit of detailed work that goes into this. She went on to say a mid-May deadline from a staff perspective is kind of tight. Lastly, she advised that staff has gone through the 650 comments and have provided consistent responses to those comments and they will be on the website by the end of business today.

Ms. Osborne explained that council is convening community conversations that they will collect information from until the end of May, so the May 17<sup>th</sup> date is likely pretty firm considering that they will likely continue to receive comments from the community until the end of April which give them roughly two weeks to produce another draft of the document. They will have a two-week review period and then produce another draft prior to adoption; so that's two drafts in less than 6 weeks. She went on to explain that at the end of the day, there is a technical exercise to this process and they want to make sure that they understand the cascading impacts of one revision to the entire plan document, so this takes quite a bit of internal review because there is an inter-departmental team that reviews the plan as well which includes CDOT, Economic Development, HNS, and the Environmental teams which are Stormwater, Charlotte Water, Fire, etc. These teams along with their partners at the county still have to review the document to make sure that whatever revisions they are recommending are feasible and technically sound. Lastly, she said they are still planning to have those indepth discussions about the broader set of those 600 plus comments at the Planning Committee meeting.

Commissioner Gussman wanted clarity in how the comments will be answered on the website. Ms. Osborne shared that the comments would be placed on the website; they will not be individual emails. They will first receive an automatic reply in which they will either be given an opportunity to meet individually with staff to discuss those comments or an opportunity to participate in a community conversation. She wanted to caution the commission that a response does not necessarily say what the revision will be; that's another round of discussion and it will say that they will consider a change.

Commissioner Kelly inquired about the two revisions and asked going forward, if there are more comments made, will they be responded to respectively. Ms. Osborne replied they will be answered in the same manner as the first set of comments.

Chairperson Spencer reminded the commission that the second draft will be digital only and the final draft will be printed. Ms. Osborne replied that both will be digital print because there could be recommended revisions up until the night of so more than likely, it will be printed afterwards.

Chairperson Spencer said one of the most important comments that he received from the Planning Commission was from Commissioner Welton comments concerning the readability and accessibility of the text and asked if there was some sort of 2-5 page comprehensible document that they can get before May 17<sup>th</sup>. Ms. Osborne answered there is a greater opportunity to address Commissioner Welton's concern's about document layout, design, wording, and just the whole

document design with their community aerial planning template approach. That will be the process where they will have the more intimate dialogue with their neighborhoods, and they can definitely think about that on the front end during the process when they start to think about what that process may look like. She enlisted the help of the commission in figuring out other tools to communicate the plan and make it more accessible. She went on to explain what they currently have which is a trifold document that summarizes in a very quick way what is in the plan, a video that describes why they are doing the plan, the process, and the next phases of the process. They also have an ambassador toolkit and executive summary. Lastly, she advised on the e-plan, there is a search tool where you can put in keywords to find out about specific topics.

Commissioner Welton said that he has the trifold document and executive summary; the one thing both of those documents needs that he thinks would make them more workable is a stronger “why”, particularly the trifold which takes pieces of the material and says “here’s some stuff”. He thinks if there is simply a succinct three sentence “why” then the trifold could probably stand a great deal much more so on its own. He said the executive summary does head in that direction, but he thinks it could be stronger.

Vice Chairperson Samuel asked Ms. Osborne to clarify if there will be two revisions or will there be a total of two drafts prior to council. Ms. Osborne said there will be a revised draft in mid-May which will appear on the website and track changes. There will then be another round of review by the community, the commission, and council which will include another round of conversations, then they will produce another final draft. In her experience, that final draft could likely be revised which is why they wouldn’t want to print it because that is expensive. If all things are a go, that becomes the final document for council to adopt.

Vice Chairperson Samuel commented whomever has been assigned by staff that has been posting information on the Planning Design and Development’s website has been doing a phenomenal job and has been very responsive to some of the dialogue that’s been happening in the community and this has been extremely helpful. It helps to dispel some of the myths and misinformation that’s out there; she would like for them to please keep that up. Ms. Osborne thanked the vice chair and advised it was a team effort and their consultants.

Commissioner Rhodes expressed her appreciation for the search bar tool along with instructions. She thinks it would be helpful to have a section that provides some key terms which suggests additional information for a particular topic or a topic similar to what they’ve searched for. She went on to say that it would be helpful to teach people how to use the search tool as well as the keywords that they can search.

Chairperson Spencer thanked Ms. Osborne, Ms. Cornett, and everyone involved with the Comprehensive Plan saying they have been doing an incredible job for an impossible job and all of the member of the commission appreciates the hard work that they’ve put into this. They are really proud of the Planning Department.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 12:49 pm.