

Attendance

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

Commissioner John Ham arrived at 12:30 pm

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

Call to Order & Introductions

The Vice Chairperson called the meeting to order at 12:00 pm, welcomed those present, went over the protocols of the virtual meeting and performed a roll call for attendance purposes.

Minutes and Reports

Approval of December 7, 2020 Work Session Minutes

A motion was made by Commissioner Barbee and seconded by Commissioner Watkins to approve the December 7, 2020 minutes. Commissioner Welton asked for a correction to the vote on page 3 of the December minutes in reference to the Charlotte Mobility Task Force to read: 13 – yea, 0 – nae, 1 – present. The vote was unanimous to approve the minutes.

New Business

Mr. Neil Burke shared a slide presentation to provide an overview of the 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan. He informed the commission that the focus of the presentation will be the goal and objectives, financial projections, discuss how scenario planning is being used and the methods they are using to reach the public.

Commissioner Kelly questioned why other adjacent counties would not be included and is there a way to strategically combine those counties. Mr. Burke replied other adjacent counties have MPOs of their own and they are responsible for developing their plans, however, they are all apart of the Charlotte Regional Alliance for Transportation and this group meets every two months.

Commissioner Chirinos asked does this plan intersect with the Charlotte Moves Task Force. Mr. Burke replied he expects this plan will connect with the Charlotte Moves Task Force on several different levels and one of the key themes is they will try to embed some of the recommendations from Charlotte Moves into the recommendations with their planning effort.

Commissioner Watkins expressed concern surrounding the reduction of federal funding due to the pandemic. She asked is there some adjustment for that, will these projects be affected, and what can they expect. Mr. Burke responded that the state had significant reductions due to the gas tax and with the pandemic fewer people are driving, so those reductions are included within their financial projections. They anticipate that revenue will stabilize somewhat and will continue to work with the state to look for alternative revenue sources.

Vice Chairperson Samuel inquired about the timeframe for the submission period and Mr. Burke replied three weeks. He went on to say they were receiving comments during the public engagement period that began in November and ended on December 31st and they will provide those comments to all of their member jurisdiction at the staff level.

Vice Chairperson Samuel asked Mr. Burke to speak on the suite of tools they used during the community engagement period that would gauge their success, establish their targets and were their goals met. Mr. Burke replied the community engagement was all virtual and they had a project website, utilized Facebook, and Geofencing to help target folks within the three-county area. They also held a virtual kickoff meeting that was attended by over 100 residents and elected officials which included a panel discussion. Lastly, he said they are still taking comments even though their engagement period has officially ended.

Charlotte Future 2040 Update

Ms. Osborne shared a slide presentation of where they are in the process and advised she will focus on how someone could comment on the plan, how they are sharing the plan with the community, and review the adoption process. Chairperson Spencer encouraged the commission to pay close attention to the presentation because this will be how their voices will be heard on the Comprehensive Plan.

Vice Chairperson Samuel asked if the columns on the sample table of organizing comments could be sorted and Ms. Osborne replied it is a living document and they update the comments as they are received but she can work on how to make them searchable.

Commissioner Fryday commented on short term goals with goal 3; creating more diverse housing and commercial types and questioned who is responsible for that overall goal and ensuring the UDO gives us that. He asked how is it getting to the UDO team? Also, with goal 9, maintaining our integrity and charm, HDC is given a lot of responsibility and accountability and he does not think they have the capacity to do what is outlined for them to do. He wanted to know if Director Jaiyeoba or someone is looking into staffing or supporting HDC in a way to accomplish that.

Ms. Osborne responded that the Planning Commission has a critical role concerning the equity framework because of the PlaceTypes and the PlaceTypes mapping will have to be approved through this body. In terms of the single-family zoning in the UDO coordination, there have been discussions of how this is operationalized as well and the UDO team has shared with the OAC some very specific goals around single family and broadening those housing types within the single family zoning districts. They are working together to make sure the integration is seamless and they are setting a policy for the UDO to implement.

Director Jaiyeoba added the city is also developing its budget and they are working with folks from the CIP. The city also knows about the policies in the Comprehensive Plan that talks about making sure that equity drives our public investment for the next 20 years, so for this budget and the subsequent budget cycles, the Comprehensive Plan policies around public investment will be driving the city's investment decisions. This could happen within a shorter timeframe than they envisioned. He thinks the Planning Commission could really help by continuing to hammer on the fact that our

budget going forward should continue to pay attention to this when they are sending in their comments. He stated it would be good for Council to hear this from the Commission as the premier organization that is driving the Comprehensive Plan. Lastly, concerning HDC, he said that currently, there is not enough staff and the budget does not allow additional staff this year but as the plan moves forward, they will be hiring an implementation person for Ms. Osborne and part of their responsibility will be to look forward for the next 2 – 3 years on how do they staff not just HDC but other relevant divisions within the department in order to help them carry through implementation.

Commissioner Kelly commented the only tool that the community thinks that would prevent gentrification is historical designation and we know that historically, that has not been an effective tool. He then asked what are the overt tools that are envisioned by the 2040 plan to help implement that change. Ms. Osborne replied there is no one goal in the plan that would address displacement but there are a couple of different ways they are looking into such as identifying where those areas of vulnerability are because you can mitigate displacement. Their partners are looking at equitable TOD and being proactive at looking into affordable housing and how might they help with mitigating small businesses going forward.

Commissioner Watkins commented that the City of Charlotte's budgeting is finite, and she wonders when these projects begin, will we have the commitment to be able to continue and not start and end up not meeting the goal. She also questioned the coordinating and managing of education with City Council and others. Ms. Osborne responded that they are meeting with Council regularly and also with the strategy and budget office. Moving forward, with the Comprehensive Plan, they plan to have a dashboard with all of the goals and actually start to do an annual report as to where they are. This will help them begin to understand what adjustments needs to be made, what types of additions needs to be had on a broader policy scale and also from an investment perspective as well.

Commissioner Chirinos asked does our equitable growth framework address accountability for situations like tent city, if we are talking about housing, evictions and affordability. She wants to know who is accountable for that and how do they address this; is that a part of their responsibility as a Planning Commission. Ms. Osborne answered they can all agree that what they see in tent city is symptom of a larger and multi-layered complex problem that we have not just with affordable housing but with jobs. The Comprehensive Plan provides policy guidance for projects and programs and policy guides for how we grow and develop. A lot of the targeted programs are administered through our Housing and Neighborhood Services department in coordination with our county partners.

Chairperson Spencer added that the County Commission is going to have their annual budget hearing tomorrow and the best thing that they can do is to petition the County Commission to devote more resources for that. Director Jaiyeoba agreed with Chairperson Spencer and said that the County is responsible for social issues such as homelessness; having said that, the City has a major role to play in that especially with regards to affordable housing.

Other Business

Chairperson Spencer addressed how both individual members of the Planning Commission and the Commission as a whole make comments on the plan. Chairperson Spencer shared the Planning Commission Charlotte Future 2040 Comprehensive Plan Comment Form and schedule. He went on to say they are giving the Planning Commission a chance to share proposed comments and to look at comments they have received to date to make their recommendation to edits which is going to be one part of what the Commission does in this process and the other part of what the Commission is going to do in this process is making a recommendation. The goal by the end of the public comment period is to have a final list of proposed revisions from the Planning Commission as a whole.

Commissioner Fryday commented if you go to the website, at the bottom of each page you have the ability to give comments directly to staff so they can have it ahead of time so you don't have to wait until the meeting to do that. He also asked for the status of where they are with the Zoning Committees recommendations; did it ever go to council with a letter and have they heard anything back in terms of the discussion with the ways they saw the Zoning Committee could be modified. Chairperson Spencer replied that his is not sure that it formally went outside of their process but he will say that later this month he has been asked to give their update to the full Mecklenburg County Board of Commissioners and he is more than happy to present on that topic if he has something prepared. Additionally, since they all agreed on that, if they want to formalize it as a letter, and send it to both TAP and the full council, he supports that idea 100 percent.

Commissioner Fryday said he was fine with sending it to TAP and the Council, as they have done that in the past, but he is a little concerned about it going to the County Commission before the city Council has heard it. He thinks the Executive Committee could discuss the best way to present this. Chairperson Spencer agreed and believes that is one of the many things that the Executive Committee will be comfortable with doing.

Vice Chairperson Samuel said that she is in complete agreement with Commissioner Fryday's comment, she thinks her only point of pause would be to afford the zoning manager the opportunity to reply to some of the questions that she asked at the Planning Committee meeting in which he has already wrote several topics of some changes in light of what Council has asked him to do.

Commissioner Fryday responded that he forgot that was brought to their attention in the Planning Committee meeting. He wonders if Mr. Pettine could update them at the next Planning Committee meeting and they could bring it back to the full commission on the 1st. Chairperson Spencer asked staff to add this topic to the Planning Committee agenda for January.

Deputy Director Craig commented that she knows that Mr. Pettine is working with some of the fellow departments because there are some things that they want to do that involves corporate communications for example, so they have been developing some plans and ideas. She thinks that Mr. Pettine could certainly present an update to the committee on where he is and give an update on the 19th.

Chairperson Spencer addresses Commissioner Fryday and asked if he wanted to help in preparing a letter for the meeting for him and Vice Chairperson Samuel to sign to send to TAP, that would be appropriate, and they could make sure that TAP and the City Council gets it first.

Commissioner Fryday agreed and asked Deputy Director Craig if it would be okay for him to call Mr. Pettine to find out where he is on some of the specific items and Deputy Director Craig agreed to it. She mentioned there are some things that they have not had a chance to meet about and discuss how it could be implemented and there is still some internal work that they have to do as well.

Commissioner Watkins said when they did the environmental piece, one thing that they saw that worked very well in Portland and some of the other cities that they used as models was the recycling and recycling can cause jobs and improve what they are doing. She does not think Charlotte seems to be competitive in that area. She does not know where we could put this but hopefully there is a plan for this, especially when it effects the environment. Chairperson Spencer responded absolutely, and any additions in terms of the environment are going to be well received, especially by this chair.

Commissioner Kelly asked if there will be a formal comparison of the work programs that they approved last year and how they would be measured against the 2040 plan. He went on to say that they have these policies and it seems the Commission should review them against the 2040 Plan stated goals and make sure they have an explicit understanding of how they are and are not being met.

Ms. Osborne replied when she started, she received the work program and went through all of the policy goals related to the work in the 2040 Plan and Ms. Rorie shared this at the Planning Commission retreat. They have looked at those policy statements to determine whether the plan addresses it or not or if there is something that they need to discuss. She thinks the discussions at the retreat were focused on those things that they thought the plan did not address and how they plan to address them moving forward. However, they will be happy to look at those things again to confirm as a part of their comments in the Comprehensive Plan to whether they addressed those policy statements or not and how might they move forward to make sure they are addressed.

Commissioner Kelly also wanted to know in terms of submitting comments, how do they make sure that their comments as Commissioners does not get lost in the volume. Chairperson Spencer made it clear that the public comments are just as important as theirs but where their comments will be prioritized is speaking as one body.

Ms. Osborne added not to prioritize but they will be categorizing the comments in four different ways and one of those ways is determining how they receive those comments; from the community, staff, non-governmental partners, or elected and appointed officials.

Commissioner Kelly clarified that he was not implying that their opinion was more important and he has no problem with the way that it is categorized. He wanted to know if they would be discussing this as a Commission prior to the April 4th meeting and Chairperson Spencer replied yes, at every meeting going forward they would be updated frequently and explained the vision of the process.

Ms. Rorie shared a form that the Commissioners could submit their comments to the Executive Committee and is organized in a similar fashion as the form that Ms. Osborne is using online. She said this form would consolidate the comments and would make it easier to be discussed at the various Planning Commission meetings. She said that she would send the form to all of the Commissioners along with the calendar.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 2:13 pm.