

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission

Work Session Summary Minutes

June 6, 2022

Hybrid Meeting

Attendance

Commissioners Present: Keba Samuel (Chairperson), Phillip Gussman (Vice Chairperson), Douglas Welton, John Ham, Elizabeth McMillan, Erin Barbee, Peter Kelly, Andrew Blumenthal, Sam Spencer, Courtney Rhodes, Melissa Gaston, and Wil Russell

Commissioner Absent: Ronnie Harvey

Planning Staff Present: Alyson Craig (*Interim Planning Director*), Candice Rorie, Shavon Davis, Kathy Cornett, Yolanda Jones, Alan Goodwin, Sandy Montgomery, Mariah Wozniak, Tim Porter, Kevin May, and Laura Harmon

Call to Order & Introductions

The Chairperson called the meeting to order at 12:10 pm, welcomed those present and went over the protocols of the hybrid meeting.

Minutes and Reports

Approval May 2 Work Session Minutes

A motion was made by Commissioner Welton and seconded by Commissioner Barbee to approve the May 2, 2022 minutes. The vote was unanimous to approve the minutes from the Commissioners that attended the meeting. Commissioner Spencer abstained due to absence.

New Business

Leadership Nominations

Chairperson Samuel began by saying at the last meeting, the nominating committee presented their slate of recommended candidates for chair and vice chair of FY22-FY23 which was Keba Samuel for Chairperson and Phillip Gussman for Vice Chairperson. She opened nominations from the floor as she and Commissioner Gussman have accepted the nominations at the May monthly meeting.

Hearing none, a motion was made by Commissioner Spencer and seconded by Commissioner Blumenthal to close the floor for nominations for chair of the Planning Commission. The vote was unanimous to close the floor for nominations for chair of the Planning Commission.

A motion was made by Commissioner Spencer and seconded by Commissioner Welton to elect the sole nominee Keba Samuel to serve another term as chair by acclamation. The vote was unanimous to elect Keba Samuel as chairperson of the Planning Commission.

Chairperson Samuel asked were there any nominations from the floor for vice chair of the Planning Commission. Hearing none, a motion was made by Commissioner Ham and seconded by Commissioner Welton to close the floor for nomination for vice chair of the Planning Commission. The vote was unanimous to close the floor for nominations for vice chair of the Planning Commission.

A motion was made by Commissioner McMillan and seconded by Commissioner Rhodes to elect Phillip Gussman to serve another term as vice chair by acclimation. The vote was unanimous to elect Phillip Gussman as vice chairperson of the Planning Commission.

Chairperson Samuel and Vice Chairperson Gussman both expressed their gratitude and look forward to continuing to serve in leadership position for the 2022-2023 fiscal year.

Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) Planning Commission Comment Discussion

Mr. Alan Goodwin, Ms. Laura Harmon, and Ms. Yolanda Jones shared a slide presentation and provided an update on the UDO 2nd draft release, key changes from the 1st draft, public input and processes, schedule and key dates. Mr. Tim Porter shared a slide presentation concerning the Land Development Heritage Tree protection.

Chairperson Samuel addressed the Commission and noted in terms of the timeline, she will send an email sometime this week with the committee assignments for the next fiscal year. She went on to comment in the virtual updates, which are the first pieces of the public engagement, in the last round of those that they did, there were some feedback received that folks were somewhat disappointed that there wasn't more of a Q&A type of format and sometimes questions don't come to people until they're looking at something. As they are advertising for the public engagement sessions, particularly the virtual updates, she asked is it possible that they include a note about offering your questions in advance if there's not going to be an opportunity for Q&A. She thinks if they could add some clarity there, that could probably eliminate some misunderstanding.

Commissioner Ham asked have they identified where the June 15th open house would be held in the building and Ms. Jones replied that the open house will be in the rotunda of the Charlotte Mecklenburg Government Center and responded to Chairperson Samuel's suggestion by saying when someone signs up for the virtual session, there is a block that asks for questions.

Vice Chairperson Gussman encouraged all of the Commissioners to talk about this within their communities over the next three weeks because they are near the finish line and they want to hear from the community on all of these topics. He asked staff if they could have a pdf copy of the presentation or something that they could easily spread or share on social media, etcetera, and Ms. Jones replied she would send it to them. Ms. Harmon added they also would also like to hear from the people that feel like they have been heard from and liked the changes so that they're really getting a broad input.

Commissioner Kelly commented they need to focus on the replacement trees and the type because if they continue to let people plant small trees, they are never going to get the benefit that people assume they'll get by replacing a tree. Lastly pointing out obviously, if you replace a 50 foot tree with a 10 foot tree, that's not going to give you the same coverage. Mr. Porter advised they are working on a replacement strategy and it's an ongoing battle to ensure they get more than just the flowery, pretty trees that are small, but that is a primary focus of this requirement.

Several members of the Commission advised they will have questions at the OAC (Ordinance Advisory Committee) meeting scheduled for the next day. Vice Chairperson Gussman wanted to highlight and encourage the Commissioners to spend time getting familiar with the UDO redline and Chairperson Samuel wanted to point out to the Commissioners that will be moving on to the Planning Committee to become well versed with the documentation summary prior to the recommendation meeting because they will be charged with knowing what's in there and they will be called upon to provide their input.

Envision My Ride Bus Priority Recommendations

Mr. Bruce Jones shared a slide presentation and provided a brief update on some of the recommendations that have come from their bus system redesign also known as Envision My Ride.

Chairperson Samuel referred to the gps application that Bank of America sponsors that assists those that are blind or partially sighted with navigating in particular cities and asked what type of similar technology might CATS already have in this update or are there any partnerships with those types of apps that may do something similar. Mr. Jones acknowledged that he may have to consult with their marketing team to better answer that question. Chairperson Samuel advised she will follow up with him via email.

Commissioner Barbee commented she was hoping to hear they have a specific call out around special transportation for older adults and she asked that he speak on that; specifically older adults that fall into that lower/moderate AMI level that have a lot of challenges with bus transportation and access. Mr. Jones replied any time they expand any of their fixed route services they do provide the STS (Special Transportation Services) service as well within $\frac{3}{4}$ mile of the route. He went on to explain for individuals that can't access traditional fixed route services they have this option, so with all of the expansion they have and planned, they will also expand the STS service. Lastly, he shared the other key component is the micro-transit piece; this is more of a flexible service as well so if senior individuals aren't able to easily access the bus stop via walking, the micro transit could be a more flexible option.

Commissioner Barbee wanted to know as this plan is finalized and a community member has a question or a concern about the transit lines, what is the best way to go about expressing a concern or even to advocate on behalf of the community that thinks more transportation needs to be in their neighborhood. Mr. Jones shared a good start is to contact customer service at 704-336-7433 (RIDE), and they will send the feedback to the appropriate department.

Vice Chairperson Gussman expressed he was very excited to hear what was outlined in the presentation. He went on to say some of the graphics were representing bus lanes and asked for the status on that. Mr. Jones replied initially they did a pilot on a street in 2019 and another on Central Avenue which concluded last year, so based on what they've reviewed with that data and examples, they are not recommending bus only lanes at the moment just because of thresholds but it is something that is still under consideration as a viable solution to improve service.

Chairperson Samuel also conveyed her appreciation for the presentation and shared there will be a few Commissioners that may have follow up questions; one of hers will be particularly around the

micro transit zone and the data they used to evaluate where those zones lie, and how often do those get evaluated.

Commissioner Russell told Mr. Jones that he will also have follow up questions around micro transit and some of the other connection points that he made during the presentation.

Other Business

Chairperson Samuel reviewed the future work session agenda topics and meeting dates. She wanted to highlight July 19th will be the Planning Committee's date to recommend adoption or not, the UDO to council.

Chairperson Samuel recognized Commissioners John Ham, Elizabeth McMillan, and Sam Spencer and wanted to identify that this meeting would ordinarily be the last meeting for these 3 Commissioners. She has made a request earlier this year to extend their service for an additional 30 or 60 days and had hope to have had that answer today. She explained to the body the reason for the request was for the UDO recommendation. The chair went on to thank the 3 Commissioners for their contribution and service to the Planning Commission followed by Commissioner Barbee.

Commissioner Ham and Commissioner Spencer reflected on their time spent on the Commission and expressed words of gratitude.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 2:10 pm.