



MINUTES OF THE PLANNING BOARD

December 14, 2021

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairperson Paul Ritz, Board Member Grundhoefer, Board Member Powell, Board Member Sampson, Board Member Van Hoose, Board Member Villegas

MEMBERS ABSENT: Vice Chairperson Larson

STAFF PRESENT: Assistant Planning Director Cannon, Historic Preservation Planner Harding, Assistant City Attorney Lindsay, Senior Planner Statler, City Surveyor Odom, Director of Development Services Morris, Deputy City Administrator Forte, CRA Administrator Gibson, Assistant CRA Administrator D'Angelo, Urban Design Specialist Parker, Help Desk Technician Russo

STAFF VIRTUAL: Inspections Supervisor Weekley

OTHERS PRESENT: William Van Horn II, Paul A. Battle, Todd H. Snyder

AGENDA:

- Quorum/Call to Order
- Approval of Meeting Minutes from November 9, 2021
- **New Business:**
 - Grove Park Townhomes Preliminary Plat Application
 - CRA Urban Design Overlay Amendments
 - Open Forum
 - Discussion
 - Adjournment

Call to Order / Quorum Present

Chairperson Ritz called the meeting to order at 2:00 pm with a quorum present and explained the procedures of the Board meeting including requirements for audience participation.

Approval of Meeting Minutes - Board Member Powell made a motion to approve the November 9, 2021 minutes, seconded by Board Member Villegas, and it carried 6 to 0.

New Business –

2. Grove Park Townhomes Preliminary Plat

Rebol-Battle & Associates, LLC is requesting preliminary plat approval for Grove Park Townhomes located at the 2300 Block of Toni Street, near the intersection of Tippin Avenue and Toni Street. This property is located in the C-1 Commercial zoning district. One (1) parcel will be subdivided into twenty-two (22) lots to accommodate townhomes.

Chairperson Ritz indicated the property was surrounded by the county. He pointed out C-1 allowed townhomes by right, and they were also allowed in the adjacent R-1AA. Also, the preliminary plat would return to the Board for final approval. He advised the purpose of the meeting was to allow public input. City Surveyor Odom stated his comments were technical and involved meeting Chapter 177 of the State Statute and a couple of small items which were easily addressed to accommodate and approve. The implementation of those corrections would return in the final plat. Mr. Battle presented to the Board and explained there was an existing parking lot on the property which could be used for excess parking, and the condos would be front loaded units. The stormwater pond would be adjacent to the commercial properties and discharged at Toni Street.

Board Member Grundhoefer made a motion for preliminary approval, seconded by Board Member Villegas, and it carried 6 to 0.

3. CRA Urban Design Overlay Amendments

The Urban Design Overlay was adopted by the City Council in 2019 to provide development standards for the CRA neighborhoods not covered by a special design review board. The intent of these design standards was to preserve and maintain the traditional walkable, urban pattern and character of Pensacola's community redevelopment area neighborhoods.

Chairperson Ritz stated the culmination of the overlay district was a task where the City had worked with an outside consultant, DPZ, to establish the criteria before the final implementation. Some of the issues had been the additional costs to housing in the overlay district, and how citizens, developers, and others might address the requirements – whether they helped or hindered projects on their properties. One of the efforts was to address and allow these issues to be vetted for modifications. The first item to be addressed was:

- Creation of a modification process through abbreviated review. (This would not be performed by the Planning Board.)

Assistant CRA Administrator D'Angelo presented to the Board and advised they had been tracking some of the issues which returned time and time again, and they decided to bring an amendment for consideration in two phases. The first phase was an immediate response to commercial development. A new Urban Design Specialist had been added to the CRA staff, and with that in mind, they recommended holding off on the major changes and implementing the modification process first to address these issues. They did think glazing should be addressed, but they wanted to take more time with the fenestration. At the last CRA meeting, there were comments addressing heritage trees and ways to preserve them. They had allowed further setbacks to address that preservation; because it was an urban design district, they wanted to see buildings closer to the street, but they also wanted to consider the heritage trees and desired to allow modification to this area. In staff's review, they felt this should not only apply to the CRA district but should be citywide and should be placed in the citywide section for heritage trees.

Board Member Grundhoefer asked if the changes had been considered by DPZ or just staff, and Ms. D'Angelo advised it was a feeling from the staff level that these observations should be addressed. Some of the common concerns on commercial development were

on glazing – the frontage occupation for certain uses; gas stations might need more consideration. Some of the commercial projects back up to residential, and those sides needed to be addressed. She explained the majority of the other areas already have some type of preservation or aesthetic district in place, so this would address those areas which did not have that protection. Staff explained DPZ had been involved with some of the aesthetics, and Ms. D'Angelo indicated DPZ had been retained to assist in the process and implementation of amendments to the overlay in response to stakeholder feedback. Chairperson Ritz explained whatever the vote of the Board, this item would proceed to Council for consideration.

Ms. D'Angelo stated essentially the Board was considering 1) the glazing table as recommended with the exception of the fenestration requirement, 2) the modification process in its entirety would remain, and 3) an adjustment to the City's overall code for heritage trees to allow additional setbacks in order to preserve heritage trees. The other items were to be reviewed by the Urban Design Specialist.

Under the modification process, 1) the Urban Design Specialist would be involved with the project to make sure it qualified, how it might be modified to be consistent with the intent of the Code, 2) it would be presented to an advisor/architect appointed by the Council (there would be two appointed in the event of a conflict of interest), and 3) the chairperson for the redevelopment board of the specific district would also have the opportunity for review. She advised this differed with variances in that it would be tied to uses rather than site specific and would not be required to go before a board; the intent was to have it streamlined with a quick process and at a lower cost.

For the glazing for the most common commercial, single-unit, single-use, it would be a reduction from 70% down to 50% with a substantial reduction on the third or fourth sides. For heritage trees, the CRA had suggested this modification be citywide. Chairperson Ritz indicated the agenda item was for the CRA overlay district, but the desire was to make this citywide. Assistant City Attorney Lindsay explained the only thing that would return to the Board would be a change in the LDC, and the Board was only voting on the item being presented pertaining to the CRA.

Chairperson Ritz was supportive of something which allowed the process to be reviewed by three persons to ensure that the project followed the intent but allowed some flexibility for the applicant. He pointed out glazing costs were high, and with the reduction in glazing, we would still maintain the appearance that's intended but allow developers to save money.

Ms. D'Angelo clarified the amendments being voted on were the first two bullet points:

- Creation of a modification process through abbreviated review.
- Single unit commercial building glazing set at 50%, limited to the primary and second street-facing building side.

The last two bullet points considered would be:

- Reduction in glazing on a second street-facing side for single-family and two-family residential buildings from 20% to 15%.
- Provision to encourage preservation of heritage trees by permitting, by right, additional setbacks for the purpose of preservation.

Ms. D'Angelo explained they did not want to remove the stormwater element but limit what could be developed, allowing for other designs which could accomplish that purpose and be aesthetically pleasing and limited in size. She indicated the city engineer was involved in the language of the amendment.

There were no other speakers.

Board Member Villegas made a motion to approve, seconded by Board Member Powell, and it carried 6 to 0.

Staff advised this item would proceed to Council's January 2022 agenda. Chairperson Ritz asked staff to investigate the Code changes for citywide tree preservation, and other Board members agreed. Staff suggested this as a discussion item on the January 2022 agenda.

Open Forum – None.

Adjournment – With no further business, the Board adjourned at 2:43 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Cynthia Cannon, AICP
Assistant Planning Director
Secretary to the Board