

WORK SESSION SUMMARY
November 4, 2020

Chairwoman Springowski called the Work Session to order at 5:37pm

7 Present: Messrs. Springowski, Henley, McFarland, Carter, Moon, Thornsberry, Fallis (Arrived at 5:44pm)

5 Absent: Messrs. Dimacchia, Argenti, Carrion, Shawver, Arredondo

Guests: Mayor Bradley, BHP Director Upton, BHP Neighborhood Development Specialist Drew Crawford, Chief Building Officer Richard Klinar.

The following topic was discussed during the Council Work Session: **Chapters 6 through 10 of the proposed Zoning Code.**

Chairwoman Springowski called the Work Session to order and turned the microphone over to the representatives of the Building, Housing and Planning Department. BHP Director Upton started off with reading an executive summary into the record (attached to this summary). Tonight's work session covered chapters six through 10.

Chapter six covered Industrial Districts. BHP Dept representatives went over the description of the districts, the schedule of uses and what is permitted and conditional and explained that what is currently I-2 and I-3 have been combined in the proposed code, as there was a lot of repetition of uses between the two. Mr. Klinar reminded Council that any existing businesses will be grandfathered in at what they are currently zoned. If a business closes for one year it will lose its existing classification and revert to the current zoning. Mr. Upton noted that the Comprehensive Plan passed in 2018 and the proposed Zoning Code work hand in hand and complement each other.

Chapter seven is a mixed use district; this chapter is a completely new section that does not currently exist in the zoning code. The mixed use district is the Broadway area, from the waterfront to 21st Street. A great example of a nearby mixed use district is Crocker Park in Westlake and is what our downtown area has the potential to eventually be with the mixed use district. Chairwoman Springowski and Mr. Fallis both raised concerns about it extending all the way to 21st St, they feel that ending it at the Nardini underpass or the Health and Dentistry office would suffice. A main concern about extending to 21st Street is the industrial businesses and buildings from 14th Street down, the old Morning Journal building being a prime example. Mr. Fallis feels that the Morning Journal building is an asset but changing the zoning could hinder the future sale of the property if it is not zoned as it was constructed. Councilman McFarland would like to see more connectivity throughout the entire Second Ward. In addition to this new chapter, a new process will be implemented for "Review Procedures". All requests for approval of a mixed-use zoning shall be subject to review and approval process. A lot more information will be required from developers, which will result in a lot more work for BHP Dept staff. "Development Conditions" will also be required, which is essentially a developer's agreement, which Council usually asks for or suggests when an item is presented to them, which is currently very

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late in the process. Councilman Fallis asked that Council be included in the review and approval process so that they are aware of proposed requests. Chairwoman Springowski raised concerns about the size. The goal of mixed-use is walkability and from the waterfront to 21st street is of tremendous size, certainly not walkable.

Chapter eight is Planned Unit Development District. Mr. Klinar stated that the minimum site size has changed from what is currently “lot sizes” will be acres in the proposed zoning code, there are also new parameters regarding density, or the number of people per lot. PUD application process is much more extensive than what is currently required.

Chapter nine covers Special Purpose Zoning, primarily a Design Review Overlay (DR-O) With the potential for Broadway to be listed as a Historical District on the national registry this will allow for tax credits and a world of possibilities.

Chapter 10 covers general provisions; this is a new chapter which is similar to the current area regulation chapter. Proposed changes to this chapter include clear vision at corners, illegal dwellings (using basements for dwelling) and recreational vehicle parking allowed from April 1 through October 31. Councilman Thornsberry strongly opposes the idea of recreational vehicles being parked in driveways. He feels that it takes us away from what we have been trying to accomplish in cleaning up the appearance of the city. Councilwoman Moon stated that there are already too many junk boats and Chairwoman Springowski noted that in the yard requirement section (10.28 C, 2) that play equipment not being allowed in the side yard may be unfair, especially for those families that the side yard serves as the backyard.

In addition to the discussed chapters, Councilwoman Carter asked where food deserts would be addressed. BHP staff noted that they will be addressed along with community gardens in chapter four. (Community gardens were previously discussed during the first Work Session.) Councilwoman Carter also asked if there is enough livable space in the City of Lorain. Mr. Crawford stated that the housing stock is in better shape than one would assume. Mr. Upton noted that there is a lot of “affordable housing” in the City but there is a shortage of quality affordable housing. There is a huge difference between privately developed, quality, new affordable housing and cheap, unsafe housing. Cleveland State University recently completed a study which provided a lot of data in terms of housing stock in every ward. There is also an updated Western Reserve Land Conservancy study from 2013. Both studies will be submitted as correspondence on the next regular City Council agenda with the hopes of holding work sessions to discuss them both in great detail once the zoning code has been completed.

The work session was adjourned at 7:34pm.


DEPUTY CLERK OF COUNCIL



TO: Max Upton
FROM: Paul LeBlanc, AICP
DATE: November 3, 2020
SUBJECT: Zoning Code Executive Summary

The City's current zoning code is more than three decades old and, like many older codes, is in need of a significant overhaul to address current challenges and new opportunities. Much has changed in the City since the code was originally adopted, necessitating a set of new regulatory tools, as well as a more user-friendly document.

At first glance, the proposed code is easily distinguishable from the current regulations. Its format is intended to be easier to follow. Graphics, color, and tables are used to facilitate understanding and readability. In some cases, entire paragraphs of text have been reduced to a few sentences or completely replaced with a table.

Zoning districts have been completely revised both in number and content. New districts have been added, while existing districts that were not being used or were near duplicates of others were removed. Distinct "Purpose" statements were included for each district to provide a specific framework for the allowed uses within the district and to establish parameters for where and how the districts would be applied within the City. In concert with the revised districts, the zoning map was modified.

Standards and criteria necessary to guide decisions have been reworked to avoid subjectivity where possible, replacing them with more objective guidance. Arbitrary terms such as "suitable", "sufficient", "hazardous or disturbing" and "interference" have been replaced to give both the decision-maker and applicant more comfort in knowing what is expected.

Some changes have been made to streamline and clarify review procedures to make administration of the code more user-friendly. Site plan review, for example, has been revised to allow staff to review and approve minor projects and give the Planning Commission authority over all others. Similarly, the scope of review authority by the Design Review Board has been defined more clearly.

Zoning regulation is one of the primary tools available to support implementation of the City's comprehensive plan. Many revisions to the zoning code are intended to strengthen the relationship between the City's recently adopted comprehensive plan and the tools available to implement the plan. A prime example of this is the addition of a mixed-use district in the proposed code. Several areas of the City have been designated for mixed-use development in the plan, but the current zoning regulations don't provide for this option.

Overall, there are many other differences between the current and proposed zoning codes. Those highlighted here are among the most significant.