



City of Richmond

Work Session Minutes

900 East Broad Street
Richmond, VA 23219
www.rva.gov/office-city-clerk

Monday, February 8, 2021

2:00 PM

Council Chamber, 2nd Floor - City Hall
Virtual Meeting

Councilmembers Present

The Honorable Cynthia Newbille, President
The Honorable Ellen Robertson, Vice President (late arrival)
The Honorable Michael Jones (late arrival)
The Honorable Katherine Jordan
The Honorable Ann-Frances Lambert
The Honorable Stephanie Lynch (late arrival and early departure)
The Honorable Reva Trammell

Absent

The Honorable Andreas Addison
The Honorable Kristen Larson

Council President Cynthia Newbille called the work session to order at 2:02 p.m., and presided.

ELECTRONIC MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT

City Clerk Candice Reid, in accordance with Ordinance No. 2020-093, adopted April 9, 2020, as most recently amended by Ordinance No. 2020-232, adopted December 14, 2020, announced the work session would be held through electronic communication means. Ms. Reid stated notice of the work session was provided to the public through a public information advisory issued on February 3, 2021, and through Legistar on the city website in accordance with usual practice. She also stated there would be no opportunities for public comment at the work session.

REVIEW OF PROPOSED MASTER PLAN AMENDMENTS

Assistant City Attorney Neil Gibson reviewed and provided analysis of proposed amendments to the Master Plan requested by Councilmembers. Mr. Gibson and members discussed the desired objectives of the requests, and Mr. Gibson also provided additional information regarding potential impacts of certain amendment requests.

Councilor Michael Jones joined the meeting at 2:08 p.m.

Councilor Stephanie Lynch joined the meeting at 2:09 p.m.

Vice President Ellen Robertson stated that even though the Master Plan does not set the legal requirements for development in the city, it should still be viewed as a significant component of city planning and zoning. Vice President Robertson also addressed her amendment request to create an overlay Smart Growth Priority Node in certain neighborhoods to address gentrification and the need for increased density.

Kevin Vonck, Department of Planning and Development Review acting director, addressed questions raised by Vice President Robertson regarding Smart Growth Priority Nodes and stated that appropriate changes could be made to certain nodes throughout the city to promote greater density.

President Cynthia Newbille stated she wanted to ensure that all proposed amendments would stand up to legal scrutiny.

Interim City Attorney Haskell Brown stated Council would need to determine if the potential legislation regarding the suggested amendments should be broken down by district or in chronological order as referenced in the Master Plan.

Councilor Michael Jones stated his appreciation for city staff's efforts over the past year with addressing B-3 zoning and its impact on the city.

Councilor Katherine Jordan addressed auxiliary dwelling units and inquired if the Department of Planning and Development Review and Councilmembers were comfortable with the Master Plan allowing for the establishment of such units by right. Councilor Jordan stated her concerns with how commercial enterprises might use the by right allowance and informed member she wanted the special use permit requirement for auxiliary dwelling units to remain in effect.

Councilor Ann-Frances Lambert expressed her support for the use of auxiliary dwelling units and stated that many in the city use the units to supplemental additional income.

Maritza Pechin informed members that requests to allow the auxiliary dwelling units by right was a consistent suggestion made by citizens during the Master Plan community outreach sessions. Ms. Pechin stated that certain requirements and stipulations on the units could be implemented through zoning ordinances. Ms. Pechin also stated that though the Master Plan was adopted, current zoning requirements had not changed.

Kevin Vonck, Department of Planning and Development Review acting director, informed members that any proposed zoning amendments to allow for auxiliary dwelling units by right would require the adoption of an ordinance that must be reviewed by the City Planning Commission and Council, which would provide opportunities for public input.

Councilor Stephanie Lynch left the meeting.

Interim City Attorney Haskell Brown informed members he was hopeful additional information regarding the necessary legislation to implement proposed Master Plan amendments would be provided by the February 22, 2021 Formal City Council meeting.

President Cynthia Newbille recommended that members reach out to the Office of the City Attorney and the Department of Planning and Development Review to work through any issues with submitted requests for amendments to the Master Plan.

A copy of the material provided has been filed.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the Council, the meeting adjourned at 3:41 p.m.

CITY CLERK