



MINUTES

Carbondale Planning Commission
Wednesday, April 5, 2017
Room 108, 6:00 p.m.
City Hall/Civic Center

Ms. Litecky called the meeting to order at 6:09 p.m.

Members Present: Hamilton, Burnside, Love, Lilly, Litecky, and Bradshaw (ex-officio)

Members Absent: LeBeau and Sheffer

Staff Present: Taylor and Lawrence

1. Approval of Minutes:

Mr. Love moved, seconded by Ms. Lilly, to approve the minutes for February 22, 2017.

The motion to approve the minutes passed with a unanimous voice vote.

2. Citizen Comments or Questions

There were none

3. Report of Officers, Committees, Communications

There were none

4. Public Hearings

PC 17-15, 6:11 pm- The City of Carbondale has proposed a text amendment to Title 15 of the Carbondale Revised Code in order to expand the building design standards for the BPR, Primary Business, District.

Ms. Litecky declared Public Hearing PC 17-15 open and asked Mr. Taylor to read the legal notice.

Travis Taylor, Senior Planner for the City of Carbondale, read the legal notice.

Ms. Litecky asked Ms. Lawrence to present the staff report.

Sarah Lawrence, Planner for the City of Carbondale, was sworn in and read part A of the

staff report. Mr. Taylor stated that City Planning staff had received one letter that included notes about the proposed design standards and Mr. Taylor then read the letter into the record.

Ms. Litecky asked if there were any questions of staff.

There were none.

Ms. Litecky asked if the applicant wished to present evidence in support.

They did not.

Ms. Litecky asked if anyone wished to speak in favor.

Jane Adams of 606 West Elm, came forward to present her letter in favor to the Commission. Please see attached letter as Exhibit A.

Ms. Litecky asked if any of the Commission had questions for those in favor.

There were none.

Ms. Litecky asked if anyone wished to speak in opposition.

There was no one.

Ms. Litecky asked Ms. Lawrence to read the analysis.

Ms. Lawrence read Parts B and C of the staff report for PC 17-15, with a recommendation of approval for design standards as shown in Exhibit D.

Ms. Litecky asked if the Commissioners had questions for staff.

Dr. Hamilton stated that he had a few comments and concerns about the design standards as presented. He felt that second story requirements might be a drawback for development and he wanted a little clarification from City staff about those standards. Mr. Taylor stated it was more of a height requirement, than to actually have a built out second story. There was then discussion between Ms. Lawrence and Mr. Taylor as to what requirements must be met for the second story developments in the downtown area.

Dr. Hamilton also asked if the City staff has done any research as to what business owners and developers would like to see come into Carbondale and if they would be alright with these different design requirements. Mr. Taylor stated that there has been no formal research done but he has seen in his experiences that companies and developers, for the most part, expect to build to a city's required design standards. Dr. Hamilton then

questioned the Planning Division's latitude with regards to requirements for the downtown area. Ms. Lawrence stated that the City encourages developers to have creative designs for developments in the downtown areas but there are certain building material requirements that would need to be met. Ms. Lawrence also stated that with community input they are trying not to make the downtown area appear cookie cutter in design but be unique and creative while following certain design standards.

Dr. Hamilton also questioned if anyone were to purchase these properties would they be required to meet these requirements. Mr. Taylor stated that if the property owner were to modify the structure they would have to adhere to the standards.

Ms. Litecky then questioned if there were special requests made to modify some of the design standards, what would the process be and who would be involved in that process. Ms. Lawrence stated that there are portions of the code that would leave the judgement to the City staff and she then discussed previous designs being used in recent developments such as color schemes and how they would meet the proposed standards.

Dr. Burnside then expressed his concerns about the possible cookie cutter standards versus the unique charm of differences in designs in the downtown areas and the possibility of losing some of the uniqueness by placing too many design standards on developers. He also expressed concerns with placing certain special requests to modify the codes in the hands of the City Planning staff and if exceptions might be made for certain people versus others.

Dr. Hamilton then expressed his concerns with the lack of parking in the downtown area. Mr. Taylor discussed the parking requirements in the downtown area and the City's future plans to increase some of the parking in that area. Ms. Lawrence and Dr. Hamilton then had a discussion about the visibility of the parking located in the downtown area and the signage in those areas.

Ms. Bradshaw expressed concerns with certain City lots and the accessibility to those lots because of narrow entries and exits them. Mr. Taylor stated that the City Council would soon be discussing the possibility of eliminated at least one curb cut in the downtown area with the planned streetscape improvements and that may help with certain parking access issues. Ms. Lawrence discussed the plans that are in place to make those certain changes.

Ms. Litecky asked if there were any questions from anyone to anyone.

Ms. Adams came forward to ask for more wording in the Code to inspire more innovation in design in the different parts of the downtown area and maybe have some different

standards in the entertainment district of the downtown area versus the businesses in the Town Square area. Ms. Adams suggested to have a line regarding standards south of Elm Street and having more flexibility in those areas. Ms. Lawrence stated that there are certain state required standards in the historic downtown area.

Ms. Bradshaw questioned in regards to the letter that was written to the Commission could there be requirements for buildings to be LEED certified. Ms. Lawrence spoke about areas in the Code that might waive fees for LEED certified buildings and discussed what some of these Codes are.

Ms. Litecky declared PC 17-15 closed and asked for a motion on the findings of fact.

Mr. Love moved that the Commission accept as findings of fact Parts A and B of the staff report for PC 17-15, the applicant was present, one person spoke in favor, and one letter was read in favor, seconded by Ms. Lilly.

The motion was passed with a unanimous voice vote.

Mr. Love moved to accept City Planning staff's recommendation to approve PC 17-15, seconded by Ms. Lilly. Dr. Hamilton asked for an amendment to be put in place for Planning Staff to have more discretion on the South end of the downtown area with regards to Innovative designs. Mr. Love accepted his proposed amendment.

Roll Call Vote:

Yes – 5 (Hamilton, Burnside, Love, Lilly, Litecky)

No – 0

Mr. Taylor stated that the motion to recommend approval has passed and that the item would be on the City Council agenda for discussion at their meeting on April 11, 2017.

5. Old Business

There was none.

6. New Business

A. Mr. Taylor discussed the property where the Horizon Inn Hotel had been located, 800 East Main Street and the possibility of rezoning the property from AG, General Agriculture, to SB, Secondary Business. Mr. Taylor asked the Commission would make a motion to initiate the rezoning.

Mr. Burnside moved for the initiation of the rezoning at 800 East Main Street, seconded by Mr. Love.

The motion was passed with a unanimous voice vote.

B. City Council Agenda from March 7, 2017 and March 21, 2017.

Ms. Bradshaw reviewed the City Council meetings as they related to Planning.

7. Adjournment

Ms. Litecky adjourned the meeting at 7:05 p.m.

Exhibit A

Planning Commission Meeting

5 April 2017 - PC 17-15

Comments - Jane Adams

To Members of the Planning Commission and Development Services Personnel,

I'm pleased to see design standards established for the BPR that will encourage the development of a more coherent streetscape as the area is redeveloped. I do, however, have some concerns.

I am particularly concerned about pages 2 and 3. building materials, colors, and details:

Under the language in this section, well-designed, interesting buildings like Hangar 9 would appear to be prohibited. I don't believe it has any brick in its facade, nor meet other required standards.

The proposed standards require a minimum 25% clay brick/ natural stone exterior; they require that "a minimum of 75% of a structure's exterior surfaces shall have muted colors with a light reflectance value (LRV) of 50% or less. Bright, brilliant, intense, or saturated colors should be used as accents only and comprise not more than 25% of the overarching color scheme", and the structure "must provide visual interest through the incorporation of three of the following or equivalent architectural details." These standards are appropriate for the area north of Elm Street or thereabout - the old, traditional Downtown, of which the area north of Walnut/Monroe is still relatively intact. (Revised Code Amendment Title 15.2.24.3.E.3.(b), (c), (f), (g), possibly 4.(b) and (c))

However, the area known as "The Strip" has a very different character. It should be an area where inventiveness should be encouraged — appropriate to a college town. It's an area where materials, colors, and architectural details not on the approved list could add a lot of character to the streetscape. The area is currently characterized by vacant lots/parking lots, small, one-story commercial properties that were on the periphery of the old downtown and around Holden Hospital, some newer commercial blocks built on a strip mall design during the expansion of SIU in the 1960s, run-down commercial properties created out of cheap workers' housing (converted to student rentals and then converted to commercial properties), along with pole barns thrown up to house bars and eateries. The only notable features are the Varsity and the Dairy Queen. The new structures - Evolve and Bombay Olive - are compatible with a wide variety of buildings. With creative, innovative architecture, the current hodge-podge of building types might take on a more engaging and interesting character than it currently has.

The proposed design standards make liberal use of "shall" and "must", as well as the less stringent "should." As I read the proposed standards, any variance from the stated materials and colors is entirely subject to approval by Planning Department staff. Members of the current staff have participated in the numerous planning discussions and exercises held by the DAC and consultants. They are aware of the desire of the public and of City Council members to enliven the Downtown and make it a much more vital place. A Planner I spoke with assured me that a structure comparable to Hangar 9 in its innovative use of design and materials could be permitted under the proposed

language. And perhaps, despite the “musts” and “shalls”, staff would have that discretion and, as important, have the vision and imagination to encourage innovation.

However, staff and City Councils come and go, while things like design standards tend to be durable. Future staff are likely to read “must” and “shall” as meaning just what they say. Developers have often wrung their hands at what they view as the rigidity of our Planning (and Engineering) staff. While I hear that that has changed for the better, it would not take much to go back to the recent past when “shall” meant “shall” and “must” meant “must”. Period.

I also have concerns about the following:

Page 1 of the proposed standards states, under building placement and orientation, “At least 70% of the front of the building shall be constructed to a point not to exceed five feet (5’) from the front lot line.” (Revised Code Amendment Title 15, 2.23.6 and 2.24.3.E.1.(a))

I may not understand this clearly, but I was told by a Planner that the Standards considered that a building whose roof met the 5 foot minimum setback requirement (like Hangar 9) would be allowed under this code. The language here sounds as if 70% of the front wall of the building must meet that requirement. The Planner stated that we wish to encourage patios in front of eating establishments to allow greater vitality — something both the DAC and the City Council desired. Please clarify this language so that the intent is to allow covered patios within this setback requirement.

I am also concerned about the sign section of the ordinance. Again, the sign standards are appropriate for the old Downtown roughly north of Elm Street. But south of there it seems entirely appropriate that greater vitality and exuberance in signage is allowed, indeed encouraged. Specifically, the requirement that signs not jut above the roof line (taken from earlier amendments to the code) makes many of the existing signs along The Strip illegal. They are, in fact, classified as legally non-conforming. These include the Varsity, Sam’s, Wise Guys, Fat Patties, Melange, Stix, Old Town Liquor, and of course our beloved Dairy Queen. When that many long-standing businesses are deemed “legally non-conforming”, something is wrong with the standards - not with the businesses. An “entertainment district” needs lights; even garishness. (Revised Code Amendment Title 15.4.10.7.B.2), maybe 4.10.7.D. and H).

As I read the design standards, the frontage shown below would not be allowed, and I’m not sure about the lights strung everywhere along the street. It’s Delmar Blvd’s St. Louis Walk of Fame. The area is being revitalized based in large part on the Delmar Loop. This commercial/residential redevelopment project combines resurrecting the old trolley line and laying new fiberoptic technologies. This entertainment area builds off of St. Louis’s history as a center of blues music.



Carbondale, in the heart of "Egypt", is a designated "Gigabit City," a historic hub of the Mainline of Mid-America, a meeting place of North and South, the home of a major research university and regional medical center, the northern terminus of Southern Illinois' historic (and reviving) fruit and vegetable industry, the entrance to the Wine Trail and the Shawnee National Forest....

We need design standards that allow Carbondale to strut its stuff, to display its uniqueness - as we discover and develop it. City code should not bind development - at least along The Strip - by standards that tend to homogenize the streetscape into one literally "from anywhere."

The most interesting and iconic buildings on the Strip all violate the proposed Design Standards:

