

Lowry Community Advisory Committee Meeting Summary for May 7, 2013

Committee members in attendance: Nadine Caldwell, Mary Carr, Gwendolyn Crenshaw, Gayle Jetchick, Brad Pierce, Kathleen Ruby, Elliott Simonberg, Michael Uhlenkamp, Brian Wert and Chuck Woodward.

Public Attendance: 3

INTRODUCTIONS

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m. by Brian Wert.

MINUTES

A motion by Nadine Caldwell with a second by Michael Uhlenkamp was passed to approve the minutes from the February 5, 2013 meeting as presented with Gayle Jetchick and Elliott Simonberg abstaining due to their absence from the February meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Christine O'Connor expressed the following:

- She has been trying for the past 8 months to discuss zoning with no success.
- All want success for the Buckley Annex and this addition to East Denver.
- There are still parking issues that need to be addressed and prevented from happening again.
- Only 2% ride the bus.
- Paid consultants pick the zoning but don't live here to face the consequences of those decisions.
- Context of the neighborhoods surrounding the areas must be considered with ¾ of those being residential that are either urban or suburban in nature.
- Building forms are all straight up.
- Some setbacks have been eliminated or limited. 6 acres have been added for development by lowering setbacks.
- Don't know uses, for instance will drive-through facilities be allowed?
- No way to protect Mayfair Park, West Neighborhood and Park Heights from overflow parking since zoning has low standards for parking requirements. Why not create a district or add an X to the zone district designation to write in more stringent parking requirements? The LDRC gives variances all the time so that group will offer no protection for parking overflow.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

- Buckley Annex Zoning (Monty Force and Kevin Yoshida)

Monty Force reported that the GDP was approved on April 3 by the Denver Planning Board. With that step accomplished, the next step in the entitlement process is for the applicant (LRA) to commence zoning discussions with the Community Planning Department with the goal of matching the zone districts to the intent of the GDP. Those discussions with Denver have begun with information about those discussions brought to the LRA Planning Subcommittee on April 24 and tonight to the Community Advisory Committee. There is no action being sought at this time. Tonight's presentation is educational about the zoning code and how it is applied and informational about the preliminary assessment of the districts to be applied...

Kevin Yoshida introduced himself as a professional architect who has served on the Lowry Design Review Committee for many years and more recently on the planning team for the Buckley Annex development. The discussions with the City are in a formative stage to find the most relevant zoning match up to what will be executed in the development.

There are key documents that have laid out assurances or limitations for the development.

1. Buckley Annex Redevelopment Plan and Illustrative, which, for instance sets a limit of 800 residential units, 200,000 square feet of commercial/retail space, height maximum at 5 stories.
2. General Development Plan on page 3 gives the written description and characteristics of the sub-areas within the site.
3. LEED-ND has relevance to the rights-of-way, building setbacks in relation to building heights.

Zoning will be next on the list of controlling documents. It is form based and has four major descriptors: 1) neighborhood context, 2) the dominant building form and character, 3) lot sizing and heights and 4) occasionally a last number or letter is used for a special purpose. There are a multitude of variations to best capture the specifics of any given zone district.

Another key document controlling the development will be the Design Guidelines addendum specific to this site. There is an advisory group that has been working on that addendum that is not yet complete.

Mr. Yoshida showed several graphics with examples of the context of the surrounding neighborhoods and their zone districts. Those graphics pointed out that there is no continuity of pattern from one neighborhood to the next but exist side by side with no problem. Mr. Yoshida said that they still want to perpetuate the look and feel that has been created at Lowry.

He also showed graphics of neighborhood patterns that demonstrate each of the neighborhood contexts within the zoning code. With those in mind he explained the districts being considered for the various sub-areas within the development.

First Avenue sub-area U-SU-A1

U (Urban) - Neighborhood Context

SU (Single Unit) – Dominant Building Form and Character

A (Minimum Lot Size) – A = 3,000 sq. ft.

1 (Special Purpose) – Accessory dwelling unit allowed (such as separate living space as “mother-in-law” suite or for a live in caregiver or nanny)

Community Park South Residential sub-area U-SU-B1

U (Urban) – Neighborhood Context

SU (Single Unit) – Dominant Building Form and Character

B (Minimum Lot Size) – B = 4,500 sq. ft.

1 (Special Purpose) – Accessory dwelling unit allowed

Row House Boulevard sub-area G-RH-3

G (General Urban) – Neighborhood Context

RH (Row House) - Dominant Building Form and Character

3 (3 Stories) - Maximum Building Height

South Residential sub-area G-MU-5

G (General Urban) – Neighborhood Context

MU (Multi Unit) – Dominant Building Form and Character

5 (5 Stories) – Maximum Building Height

Neighborhood Center West and Community Park Mixed-Use sub areas C-MX-5

C (Urban Center) – Neighborhood Context

MX (Mixed Use) – Dominant Building Form and Character

5 (5 Stories) - Maximum Building Height

Questions and Comments (Responders - MF = Monty Force, KY = Kevin Yoshida)

Elliott Simonberg – **A sea of visible parking is unappealing to him. Will there be less visibility of parking here?**

MF: The Quad business area on the east side of Quebec was zoned under the old code of B3, which had an approximate parking ratio of 3 per 1000 sq. ft. of building space. The financier wanted up to 7 spaces per 1000 sq. ft. in case any of the buildings became a call center. This might be one example of extreme over-building of parking and the zoning requirements might be seen as an example of under-requirement. To more specifically answer the question, the intent is to wrap buildings around parking or have parking interior to any particular site.

KY: Part of the discussions with the Design Guidelines group has been how to structure the Guidelines giving latitude to the design review committee on a case by case review to analyze the use and appropriately gage the parking requirements. The zoning requirements would only be a minimum starting point for that analysis.

Chuck Woodward – **If there is a maximum five stories will every building within that district be five stories?**

MF: This does not mean that all buildings will be five stories. There will probably only be a total of three or four buildings with five stories. If all buildings were five stories it would exceed the total number of residential units and square footage for commercial/retail space specified in the Redevelopment Plan. The five story maximum designation only offers flexibility for the final placement of buildings within those sub-areas.

Michael Uhlenkamp - For the record he has been an advocate for more heights and density. **Why not designate in the zone district the differences for three and five stories?**

MF: The GDP dictates those different areas, for instance there are sections along 1st Avenue and Quebec that are restricted to three stories.

Brad Pierce - **Are there minimum parking requirements for single-family and row houses?**

MF: Yes, there are tables associated with each zone district that gives minimum parking requirements along with other pertinent information.

Elliott Simonberg – **Are parking requirements in the multi-family areas affected by ownership as opposed to rental?**

MF: No, the zoning code uses the same parking requirement whether it is owned or rented. The condominium market is non-existent. Town houses and apartments are still strong.

Gayle Jetchick – **Could a note be added to the GDP for more parking requirements?**

MF: That would require an amendment to the GDP and CCD is not supportive of this type of restriction.

Brad Pierce – **Isn't parking requirements a part of the site plan review by CCD?**

MF: Yes, it is and can also be part of the LDRC review process.

Kathleen Ruby – **It can't be assumed that overflow parking will occur. As a resident of Mayfair Park with multifamily units and the library very close in Lowry's West Neighborhood, there is no overflow parking problem within her neighborhood.**

Christine O'Connor – **Shouldn't the First Avenue and Community Park South residential areas be designated as Urban Edge or Suburban with front loaded garages?**

KY: There could be a mix of urban edge and suburban styling with front and alley loaded garages to fit the street layouts and support the grading in the area of the berm along Monaco and First Avenue. Urban district will also allow front or alley loaded homes.

Elliott Simonberg – **What was once suburban became urban and is now urban. Context has changed as the city grew and became land locked. Now suburbs are mainly outside the city limits of Denver.**

Audience member – **I don't see this mixed use as perpetuating the look and feel of Lowry.**

MF: There is a mix of land uses existing as can be seen in most areas of Lowry.

Christine O'Connor – **The GDP is not binding and an amendment can be done without any public knowledge. Only zoning is binding so it is important that this be done correctly.**

MF: GDPs and zoning can be changed but both would go through the same public process that is required by the City. Only minor administrative changes can be done without a Planning Board Public Hearing. The purpose of zoning is matching the districts to the plan and what the GDP says will be executed.

Elliott Simonberg – **There was a recent article in the Cherry Creek Chronicle claiming that the process is rigged and that there is a conflict of interest with the executive director's contract. Any comment or clarification?**

MF: Rule 106, as mentioned in the article, are appeals directed to decisions made by the City and the LRA has no control over those actions. The best option for the LRA is to stay focused on our task to finish the redevelopment of the former Lowry Air Force Base. We have to move forward with that task and take it as it comes.

The City Attorney and LRA attorneys have reviewed the executive director's contract and stated there is no conflict. The contract does not incentivize density. The bonus clause is an incentive to make land sales to fund the project and to complete the assigned task of the LRA.

Michael Uhlenkamp – Was it intended to show the Rowhouse Boulevard sub-area combined with single-family.

KY: The Rowhouse Boulevard sub-area was defined by the GDP and is based on the limit of blocks surrounded by streets, rather than partial blocks that change character at mid-block alley. As a result, the blocks in Rowhouse Boulevard will have both row house and urban house building forms, whose disposition is guided by the character descriptions from the GDP for Lowry Boulevard and the illustrative plan for Buckley Annex.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 6:40 p.m.