

Lawrence Association of Neighborhoods Draft Minutes

Via Zoom video conference

August 18, 2021 7:00 p.m.

Participants:

Accept minutes from July 21, 2021: Thompson moved to approve, Hill seconded, passed by acclamation.

Treasurer's Report (Thompson): \$3562.11 balance, 13 members. 7 representatives present, quorum.

Becky Pepper, Planning Manager, Planning and Development Services (PDS): Planning Commission meets on August 23 and August 25. Carpenter substituted for Pepper. Agenda items include:

August 23:

- A text amendment to add standards for Solar Energy Conversion Systems to the Zoning Regulations. This is an important issue. Developer has been buying options for up to 2-3 square miles of PV solar in the county. Land use, how big, contiguous land or not, setback requirements, location of substations, and more will be discussed. Almon suggested that this should be deferred to allow for valuation of farmland. Entire project is 5.5 square miles in two counties. Sustainability Action Network (SAN) is concerned that this does not happen on prime farmland. City staff would like no more than 1,000 acres.
- Study Session: Metropolitan Planning Organization 101 and Unified Planning Work Program/Environmental Justice.

August 25:

- preliminary plat for Kolibri Addition, located at 1732, 1736, 1744 Tennessee St. Three duplexes are proposed.
- A text amendment to the Zoning and Land Use Regulations for the Unincorporated Territory of Douglas County, Kansas to establish a Land Evaluation Site Assessment (LESA) system and standards

[Follow this link to view the current and previous updates.](#)

New Business:

- Springwood Heights Neighborhood Assoc., and Hills West Homes Assoc. will ask LAN for a letter in support of their opposition to the administrative approval of a site plan at 2300 Crestline Drive allowing the development of a 319-bedroom apartment complex on a 9-acre lot. Pesek from Hills West Homes Association stated the Association is opposed to the complex as proposed. Issues include inadequate fencing and screening, duplexes that are not really duplexes, traffic on Crestline, noise, and other issues. HWA would like LAN to submit a letter to oppose this development. Mills believes the development is not appropriate for the adjacent neighborhood, too dense. Development surrounds Lawrence Child Development Center. Cate representing Springwood Heights asked for a letter from LAN opposing development. The only outreach to the neighborhoods was a Zoom meeting with all participants muted and chat the only question option. She does not believe this this development will enhance the neighborhood. Clinton Parkway and Iowa is the busiest intersection in town.

Almon stated that the code allows duplexes but attached dwellings require an SUP. Harrod explained that without an appeal, the developers could start immediately. Appeal will be heard by the City Commission later. Carpenter stated that prior proposal was stopped because of Plan 2040. Harrod stated that duplexes were defined in the code, but not rigorously. He believes city staff is stretching this definition to make this project possible.

Barrand stated that this is already a high-density area, and that greater density will make it even denser and more crowded. Harrod shared that he believes staff encouraged and enabled administrative approval of this project. Thompson stated that Plan 2040 restricts sprawl, which means density will be

the result in the city. Webber disagreed with Harrod that this was the result of city staff conspiring with the developer. Shurtz stated that the bulk of the buildings were 2 stories, with some buildings at three stories.

Webber moved to write a letter opposing the final approval of the site plan for this development. Joyce seconded; motion passed unanimously.

Carpenter stated that prior to current land use code, all site plans went to city commission. The 2006 land development code placed more power with the Planning Director and away from the Planning Commission. An upcoming review of these planned development code will address these issues.

- **Presentation:** Nick Kuzmyak will present a Concept for Compromise on Infill Development compromise, with benefits for neighborhoods, city, and developers (working title "TIF for neighborhoods") TIF = Tax Increment Funding. Kuzmyak suggested there may be a way to make infill development a win for everyone. He suggested the key issues for three participants are:
 - The City: Plan 2040 calls for density, the city has a maintenance backlog, and property taxes are the primary funding source. Most cul-de-sacs are not sustainable. Affordable housing in the suburbs has high transportation costs.
 - The Developers: Most developers will not build the "missing middle", duplexes etc. Luxury housing is the only development that "pencils out". Zoning laws prohibit most small affordable housing.
 - Neighborhoods: Not all infill development makes sense for all neighborhoods. Land use rules should be context sensitive. Rising property values may cause displacement of renters.

Kuzmyak suggests a possible solution. Tax Increment Financing (TIF) is a development incentive. In Portland, a significant amount of TIF went to building and rehabbing affordable housing. This is not perfect but does build more affordable housing. For Lawrence, development rules could be eased for developers allowing them to build affordable housing. TIF goes to the neighborhoods or NAs for things like rent assistance, parks, police patrols, public art, community centers etc. Of course, there are issues that would need to be addressed, such as amount that might be raised, rich neighborhoods opting out, City could defer services because they now have TIF funds.

Harrod thought this was an interesting idea that should be discussed. He asked for Carpenter's opinion. Carpenter could not comment on TIF but agreed that code requirements are often onerous and should be more flexible. If funds went to NAs, they would all need to be incorporated. Collison stated that many TIFs have cost the city major amounts of money. Also, developments that make money would be larger and would scare the neighborhoods. Kuzmyak would like to unleash the smaller developers. Shipley stated that builders and developers distinguish themselves. Not all builders are developers, and don't like to be characterized as such.

Neighborhood reports: tabled

Harrod moved to adjourn, Almon seconded, passed by acclamation. Adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

Submitted by Gary Webber, Secretary, on July 22, 2021.