



Lawrence Association of Neighborhoods

Monthly Meeting

April 17, 2024, 6:30 PM

Lawrence Fire Station #5, Jayhawk Room

Draft Minutes

Participants: Michael Almon, Vice President, Brook Creek Neighborhood Association; Jim Carpenter, Resident, Barker Neighborhood; Nate Clark, Resident North Lawrence Improvement Association; Phil Collison, Representative, East Lawrence Neighborhood Association; Gene Dorsey, Resident, Schwegler Neighborhood Association; Jane Eldredge, Resident, Springwood Heights Neighborhood; Sheri Ellenbecker, Representative, Sunset Hill Neighborhood Association; Mandy Enfield, President, University Place Neighborhood Association; Phil Englehart, Resident, Pinkney Neighborhood; Brad Finkeldei, Lawrence City Commissioner; Tonda Hill, Candidate Douglas County District Attorney; Holli Joyce, LAN Chair, President, Schwegler Neighborhood Association; Courtney Shipley, Resident, Dad Perry Park Neighborhood; Dustin Stumblingbear, Representative, Pinkney Neighborhood; Kyle Thompson, LAN Treasurer, Representative, Oread Residents Association; Gary Webber, LAN Secretary, President, Sunset Hill Neighborhood Association;

Tonda Hill, introduction: Her career history includes teacher, attorney, currently working for the state of Kansas as prosecutor. She is a candidate for District Attorney and would appreciate our votes. Learn more at <https://letdouglasdecide.com>.

Presentation: Brad Finkeldei, Land Development Steering Committee report: Finkeldei attended to talk about the Land Development Code Update. He encouraged all residents to get involved in the update. The Steering Committee hopes to implement the revisions in June of this year. He reviewed Plan 2040 and mentioned major goals. The Dev. Code is an important way to realize these goals. The third step is to revise the building codes.

The city hired a national consultant to help with the update. He reviewed trends in LDCs nationwide including eliminating zoning, greater density, parking changes. They have worked through 2 of 3 modules. The committee hopes to present to the Planning Commission in May or June, then to City Commission.

Zoning subdivides the city into zones. Residences are separated from commercial properties. Current trends are for traditional neighborhoods, with more mixed use. The committee wants to shrink the number of zones from 9 residential to 5, make every commercial district except the largest mixed use, and allow more mixed use in industrial. More multi-family dwellings will be allowed in residential zones. RM12 and RM24 will allow duplexes by right.

Current plan calls for removing all parking requirements for all zones, which would allow unused parking lots to be infilled with residences. Obviously, this is a major overhaul. The revision should be simpler than the current LDC. Everything will be in one place, easier to use, searchable. The revisions are also proposing changes in square footage, setbacks. Revised code should be more flexible to minor variances.

Module 3 is about the procedure for implementation of the revised code. It will be addressed next.

Enfield asked if zoning charts were ready, reply was yes. She asked if the steering committee planned to schedule meetings to explain current progress, overview, etc. Finkeldei stated there would be public outreach sessions. Enfield stated this did not seem like much time for additional feedback. University Place is concerned about density in their neighborhood. Since they are adjacent to campus, property would not be affordable. She believes there should be a discussion of who benefits by zoning changes. Finkeldei stated that neighborhood character would be considered, and that discussion would be possible at Planning Commission and City Commission. Enfield stated that she measured her lot and stated she could build 6 units on it. Finkeldei doubted that this was true. Enfield stated there has not been enough opportunities for comment.

Englehart stated that there were parts of module two that were not sufficiently comprehensive and needed additional work. Carpenter stated that the prior LDC was reviewed line by line and encouraged the city to adopt this on the current review.

Enfield asked about parking requirements. Finkeldei stated there were different impacts in different neighborhoods, and that a parking permit system might be a solution. Collison stated that he believed the idea of getting rid of parking would be that parking would be so bad that students would not bring cars.

Englehart stated that “permitted by right” will have a major impact on neighborhoods. This reduces the amount of time the Planning Commission spends on permitting development. He believes we need a firm set of guidelines to allow city staff to fairly administer development.

Ellenbecker attended a meeting last March and asked this question; most recently (before 1970) built subdivisions have covenants that restrict how neighborhoods are built. This revision will create two Lawrences, the older parts wide open to increased density and the newer parts protected from density. Finkeldei responded that city cannot invalidate covenants, but states can. He stated that the philosophical debate in the country addressed this, and we need to think about how we want to see how our neighborhoods look.

Englehart stated this is good densification and bad densification. The code should be written to incentivize good densification, and not overly-incentivize large scale redevelopment. Collison stated that a significant amount of the city will be protected from new land development code by covenants. Almond stated that covenants should be addressed at the state level. Finkeldei stated that politically, many groups are in favor of eliminating covenants.

Collison asked if a developer could buy four lots, combine them, and build multifamily housing. Answer was perhaps. Webber stated combining lots would require replatting and would entail Planning Commission and City Commission review.

Clark stated that he served on the board of zoning appeals and thinks that the administrative approval is a good thing for the city and its residents. Collison stated that he hopes the code could ensure that parking will not become a problem for neighborhoods. Englehart stated that if the city is administering development, the code should spell out what conditions parking will be required. Shipley appreciated Finkeldei's comments on how the code will be interpreted contextually. Shipley encouraged participants to engage with other commissioners. Enfield requested input sessions for neighborhoods.

NOTE: Commissioner Finkeldei provided additional information in the following email:

Holli, Gary, Michael and Phil,

I have a few updates about the new development code that came from our great discussion the other night. Please share with your board and anyone who was at the meeting.

(1) After more discussion with the consultant and staff, we have decided the complete consultant draft will be released on May 28 (after receiving feedback from the steering committee this Thursday). The Planning commission will have a presentation at their May meeting (as well as their May mid-month), but they will take no action. Anyone will be able to express opinions or ask questions at the May meeting, even though no action will be taken (both PC and steering committee can react to those comments to suggest changes at the June meeting). The plan, at the moment, is to have the new code on the agenda for the June planning commission meeting, with City commission taking it up in July.

(2) The consultant will make times available to meet with any neighborhood group one on one. They will have a sign up coming out in the coming weeks - with times during the day, evenings and weekends for sign up.

(3) The consultant will soon have a handout that helps explain context-based density by right - hopefully it will answer some questions people have about "what might happen next door to me."

(4) The attached link will take you to a zoning conversion explanation and map that shows you the current zoning compared to the proposed zoning. You can go parcel by parcel to see the changes:

<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/c845921d2ff94a78bca2e60df2cd6109>

(5) Phil pointed out I made a mistake in my presentation when I stated that you would not have triplexes or fourplexes in the new R2 (only duplexes). It is possible, if the lot has enough space and it fits within the context based requirements, you could have a triplex or fourplex. Sorry for any confusion I created.

I will continue to stay in touch (and I am sure Phil and Michael will as well) as we continue through this process.

Brad

Brad Finkeldei
City Commissioner
Lawrence, KS

Changes/Approval of March 20, 2024, minutes: tabled.

Treasurer's Report: \$4, 0722. 28 balance, five of eighteen members/officers present. 2024 Members currently are Oread Residents, Sunset Hill, Heatherwood Heights, Schwegler, East Lawrence, Centennial, Pinkney.

New Business:

- Representation at City Commission meetings: presentations are in progress
- Zero Steering Committee report: Shipley will report at next meeting.
- Land Development Code meeting report: Almon will report at next meeting.
- Downtown Transit Site Selection Committee report: Stumblingbear reported they are working on downtown boundaries with plans to expand. He encouraged all neighbors to comment on Lawrence Listens survey.
- Stadium Expansion Neighborhood Team report: Thompson reported that constructing proceeding. Next stage will be much more critical. Shipley asked who was involved. Thompson replied that the University was the primary entity negotiating with the committee

Neighborhood Reports:

- Heatherwood Heights – No report.
- Brook Creek – No report.
- Heatherwood Heights – No report.
- Old West Lawrence – No report.
- Pinkney – No report.
- Sunset Hill – No report.
- East Lawrence – Fill out brick street survey.
- Schwegler – No report.
- Oread Residents – No report.
- Barker – No report.
- Springwood Heights – No report.

May Meeting topics: James Chiselom, Executive Director, Lawrence Community Shelter.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, May 15, 2024

6:30 PM, Jayhawk Room
Fire Station #5
1911 Stewart Avenue
Lawrence, KS, 66045

Adjourn: meeting adjourned by acclamation at 8:10 PM.

Submitted by Gary Webber, Secretary, on April 20, 2024.

<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/c845921d2ff94a78bca2e60df2cd6109>