

**MINUTES
CITY OF ST. CHARLES, IL
PLAN COMMISSION
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, 2015**

Members Present: Chairman Todd Wallace
Vice Chair Tim Kessler
Jim Holderfield
Tom Pretz
Michelle Spruth
Dan Frio
Brian Doyle

Members Absent: Tom Schuetz, Laura Macklin-Purdy

Also Present: Russell Colby- Planning Division Manager
Ellen Johnson-Planner
Court Reporter

1. Call to order

Chairman Wallace called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. Roll Call

Vice Chair Kessler called the roll. A quorum was present.

3. Presentation of minutes of:

- a. August 10, 2015 meeting with Planning & Development Committee
- b. August 18, 2015 Plan Commission meeting

Motion was made by Mr. Kessler, seconded by Mr. Frio and unanimously passed by voice vote to accept the minutes of the August 10, 2015 and August 18, 2015 meetings.

PUBLIC HEARING

4. General Amendment (City of St. Charles)

Ch. 17.04 "Administration", Section 17.04.230 "Design Review" and Section 17.04.250 "Residential Architectural Consultation" and Ch. 17.06 "Design Review Standards and Guidelines" (Design review standards and guidelines for one and two-family dwellings in the RT and CBD-2 zoning districts)

The attached transcript prepared by Planet Depos - Chicago Area Real Time Court Reporting is by reference hereby made a part of these minutes.

Motion was made by Mr. Kessler, seconded by Ms. Spruth and unanimously passed by voice vote to close the public hearing.

Item # 6 on the agenda was moved to be the next item for discussion.

MEETING

6. General Amendment (City of St. Charles)

Ch. 17.04 “Administration”, Section 17.04.230 “Design Review” and Section 17.04.250 “Residential Architectural Consultation” and Ch. 17.06 “Design Review Standards and Guidelines” (Design review standards and guidelines for one and two-family dwellings in the RT and CBD-2 zoning districts)

The attached transcript prepared by Planet Depos - Chicago Area Real Time Court Reporting is by reference hereby made a part of these minutes.

Motion was made by Mr. Kessler, seconded by Mr. Holderfield and unanimously passed by voice vote to approve the application for General Amendment for Ch. 17.04 “Administration”, Section 17.04.230 “Design Review” and Section 17.04.250 “Residential Architectural Consultation” and Ch. 17.06 “Design Review Standards and Guidelines” (Design review standards and guidelines for one and two-family dwellings in the RT and CBD-2 zoning districts), with the condition that the following edits be made to the design standards and guidelines: 1.that lot coverage be added as a standard under Section C; 2. that “simple building massing” be defined under Section C; 3. that reference to standard E1 be added under Section G.

PUBLIC HEARING

5. General Amendment (City of St. Charles)

Ch. 17.12 “Residential Districts” Section 17.12.030 “Bulk Regulations” and Ch. 17.14 “Business and Mixed Use Districts” Section 17.14.030 “Bulk Regulations” (Residential lot size requirements in the CBD-1, CBD-2, and RT-4 zoning districts)

The attached transcript prepared by Planet Depos - Chicago Area Real Time Court Reporting is by reference hereby made a part of these minutes.

Motion was made by Mr. Kessler, seconded by Mr. Holderfield and unanimously passed by voice vote to continue the public hearing to September 22, 2015 at 7:00 p.m. in Council Chambers.

MEETING

7. General Amendment (City of St. Charles)

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Tuesday, September 8, 2015

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Ch. 17.12 “Residential Districts” Section 17.12.030 “Bulk Regulations” and Ch. 17.14 “Business and Mixed Use Districts” Section 17.14.030 “Bulk Regulations” (Residential lot size requirements in the CBD-1, CBD-2, and RT-4 zoning districts)

No Action; public hearing was continued to September 22, 2015.

8. Weekly Development Report

Mr. Colby said that at the joint meeting with Planning and Development Committee, the Plan Commission discussed wanting to go over the Weekly Development Report during meetings. It will be included in the meeting packet moving forward.

9. Meeting Announcements

a. Plan Commission

Tuesday, September 22, 2015 at 7:00pm Council Chambers

Tuesday, October 6, 2015 at 7:00pm Council Chambers

Tuesday, October 20, 2015 at 7:00pm Council Chambers

b. Planning & Development Committee

Monday, September 14, 2015 at 7:00pm Council Chambers

Monday, October 12, 2015 at 7:00 pm Council Chambers

Monday, November 9, 2015 at 5:30pm Century Station Training Room – Joint meeting of Plan Commission and P&D Committee

10. Additional Business from Plan Commission Members, Staff, or Citizens.

Ms. Johnson informed the Commission that an informational session on employer-assisted housing will be held on October 7 at 4:00 p.m. at the Baker Community Center. The event is sponsored by the City of St. Charles, the *Homes for a Changing Region* partner communities, the St. Charles Chamber of Commerce and other area Chambers, and CMAP.

11. Adjournment at 8:43 p.m.

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BEFORE THE PLAN COMMISSION

OF THE CITY OF ST. CHARLES, ILLINOIS

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IN RE THE MATTER OF: :
General Amendment (City of St. Charles) :
Chapter 17.04 "Administration," :
Sections 17.04.230 and 17.04.250; :
Chapter 17.06, "Design Review :
Standards and Guidelines." :

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Public Hearing

St. Charles, Illinois

Tuesday, September 8, 2015

7:00 p.m.

Job No.: 91301A

Pages: 1 - 43

Reported By: Paula Quetsch, CSR

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Public hearing held at the location of:

CITY OF ST. CHARLES COUNCIL CHAMBERS
2 East Main Street
St. Charles, Illinois
(630) 377-4400

Before Paula Quetsch, CSR and Notary Public in
and for the State of Illinois.

Public Hearing
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PRESENT:

- TODD WALLACE, Chairman
- TIM KESSLER, Vice Chairman
- BRIAN DOYLE, Member
- DAN FRIO, Member
- JAMES HOLDERFIELD, Member
- TOM PRETZ, Member
- MICHELLE SPRUTH, Member

ALSO PRESENT:

- RUSSELL COLBY, Planning Division Manager
- ELLEN JOHNSON, Planner

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P R O C E E D I N G S

CHAIRMAN WALLACE: The meeting of the Plan
Commission will come to order.

Tim.

VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: Pretz.

MEMBER PRETZ: Yes.

VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: Doyle.

MEMBER DOYLE: Yes.

VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: Spruth.

MEMBER SPRUTH: Here.

VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: Holderfield.

MEMBER HOLDERFIELD: Here.

VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: Frio.

MEMBER FRIO: Here.

VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: Wallace.

CHAIRMAN WALLACE: Here.

VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: Kessler, here.

CHAIRMAN WALLACE: Presentation -- we don't
have to approve the Planning and Development minutes,
do we?

MR. COLBY: They're also minutes of the Plan
Commission meeting.

CHAIRMAN WALLACE: Presentation of minutes
of the Planning and Development Committee which you

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1 have before you not for -- oh, wait.

2 MEMBER DOYLE: This is the joint.

3 MR. COLBY: So they are technically minutes
4 of the Plan Commission meeting.

5 CHAIRMAN WALLACE: Got it.

6 VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: I move to approve.

7 CHAIRMAN WALLACE: Both of them?

8 VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: Both.

9 MEMBER FRIO: Second.

10 CHAIRMAN WALLACE: All in favor.

11 (Ayes heard.)

12 CHAIRMAN WALLACE: Opposed.

13 (No response.)

14 CHAIRMAN WALLACE: Motion passes

15 unanimously.

16 Item 4 on the agenda, General Amendment
17 (City of St. Charles) as stated on the agenda.

18 Ellen -- I'm sorry -- does she need to be
19 sworn?

20 MS. JOHNSON: Do I need to be sworn?

21 CHAIRMAN WALLACE: Will you tell the truth?

22 MS. JOHNSON: I will.

23 MR. COLBY: I will, also.

24 MS. JOHNSON: So this item is a general

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1 amendment to the zoning ordinance to add design
2 standards and guidelines for single- and two-family
3 dwellings in the RT and CBD-2 districts.

4 The purpose of this amendment is to help
5 ensure that new -- ensure that new development within
6 these areas is compatible with the character of the
7 city's older neighborhoods.

8 This past winter, as most of you remember,
9 the Commission discussed teardown and infill
10 development in the RT districts. Staff provided the
11 document that's attached to your meeting packets at
12 that time, and that provides data on infill development
13 and teardowns in these neighborhoods. It shows a
14 picture of each new home built in these neighborhoods
15 since 2006, along with an analysis of impact of staff
16 design recommendations on the design of the homes just
17 for your reference especially for the new members who
18 didn't see it before.

19 The Commission at that time provided staff
20 with direction that establishing kind of broad design
21 standards and guidelines for new development in these
22 neighborhoods would be appropriate in order to set
23 clear expectations for property owners and also to
24 ensure consistent review by staff. So this past

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1 March the Commission reviewed a draft of the design
2 standards and guidelines, and the Commission's
3 comments have been incorporated into the general
4 amendment.

5 So I'm going to review some of the
6 background information we went over a few months ago
7 for the benefit of the new members and also as a
8 refresher.

9 So this map shows the location of the
10 RT districts. There are four of these districts,
11 RT-1, 2, 3, and 4. The RT-4 district shown in kind of
12 the teal color permits single- and two-family
13 dwellings. The other RT districts only permit
14 single-family dwellings.

15 The purpose of the RT district is stated in
16 the zoning ordinance, and it is to preserve moderate,
17 medium, or higher density residential development in
18 older neighborhoods of the city and to accommodate new
19 residential development with a similar character. So
20 that's the stated purpose of the RT districts.

21 Most of these neighborhoods were constructed
22 prior to the 1950s, so they're the older parts of town.

23 This amendment also applies to the CBD-2,
24 mixed-use business district. This is shown in pink

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1 and this zoning district serves as kind of a
2 transition between the core downtown area and the
3 residential neighborhoods surrounding downtown.
4 Single- and two-family residential uses are allowed in
5 the CBD-2 district along with all other types of
6 residential, including multifamily and townhomes and
7 along with some limited commercial uses, also.

8 So the next few slides, most of you have
9 seen these before, so I'm going to kind go over -- the
10 new zoning ordinance was adopted in 2006, and I'm
11 going to kind of go over what changed from the
12 previous zoning ordinance to this zoning ordinance in
13 terms of regulations for new development in these
14 zoning districts.

15 So before the 2006 ordinance was adopted,
16 the zoning regulations didn't really reflect the
17 existing development pattern found these neighborhoods
18 for a variety of reasons, including floor area ratio
19 was used to limit the size of a home instead of
20 building coverage. Building height was measured
21 differently so it allowed actually taller buildings
22 than we currently allow.

23 So because of these -- kind of these
24 regulations that didn't really fit, some of the

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1 teardown and infill development constructed in the
2 early 2000s really didn't fit with the neighborhood,
3 and, also, there was no design review process in the
4 old zoning ordinance.

5 So the zoning ordinance adopted in 2006
6 established the RT, traditional residential zoning
7 districts and along with that established bulk
8 requirements that more closely match the development
9 pattern of the existing neighborhoods.

10 So provisions were added -- to incentivizing
11 kind of traditional design elements in these
12 neighborhoods. So, for example, attached garages were
13 incentivized by providing a building coverage bonus
14 for providing a detached garage instead of an attached
15 garage or a garage accessed from the alley. Also,
16 garages now have to be set back at least 5 feet from
17 the front of the house if it's attached to the house.
18 Also, garages can't be more than 50 percent of the
19 width of the front of the house, and alley access must
20 be used if it's provided; so a garage has to be on an
21 alley if there is an alley.

22 Also, front porches are encouraged by
23 allowing them to encroach up to 8 feet in the front or
24 rear yard setbacks, and then they don't count towards

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1 building coverage. So you can build a larger house if
2 you provide -- and provide a garage. So it allows you
3 to provide a garage still having a house that meets
4 the setback requirements -- or is built up to the
5 setback requirements.

6 The new zoning ordinance also established an
7 advisory design review process. This is called
8 Residential Architectural Consultation, so RAC for
9 short, and it's been in place since 2006. So the
10 purpose of Residential Architectural Consultation is
11 provided in this slide.

12 Basically, the purpose is to preserve the
13 character of older neighborhoods in St. Charles by
14 providing applicants advice and guidance on the
15 appropriate design and location of residential
16 structures to maximize their compatibility within
17 older neighborhoods and to enhance long-term
18 viability.

19 So this is a staff-level review process.
20 Staff provides comments to permit applicants
21 pertaining to this list that's on the slide. This
22 list is included in the zoning ordinance. So we
23 provide comments based around facade articulation,
24 placement, size and framing of windows and doors,

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1 roof forms, design compatibility of additions, and
2 building materials.

3 However, there are no specific design
4 guidelines or any sort of guidance as to what kind of
5 roof form is appropriate or what kind of facade
6 articulation is appropriate. So it's kind of led to
7 inconsistent review by City staff depending on who is
8 reviewing. Also, permit applicants don't know what to
9 expect. They don't know what kind of things we'll
10 comment on because it's not listed in the zoning
11 ordinance.

12 Also, no comments are binding. It's
13 advisory only, so applicants don't need to change
14 their plans to comply with staff comments; they can
15 just completely disregard them.

16 So another design review process that also
17 already exists in the zoning ordinance is called
18 Design Review. It's another staff-level review
19 process, but it's only currently required for
20 commercial zoning districts and multifamily zoning
21 districts.

22 There are specific standards and guidelines
23 provided in the zoning ordinance that new development
24 in these areas are reviewed against. So standards are

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1 binding. They must be met. So if a proposal doesn't
2 comply with the standard, the design needs to be
3 changed. Guidelines are meant to provide flexibility.
4 So if a guideline isn't being met, the applicant has
5 to show how the intent of the general category is
6 still being met.

7 So are there any questions before I move on?

8 MEMBER DOYLE: Design review, does that only
9 apply to the RT and CBD-1 and CBD-2 districts?

10 MS. JOHNSON: It does not apply to those
11 districts. It applies to the CBD-1 and CBD-2 for
12 commercial dwellings, and it also applies to the
13 commercial zoning district. So along Main Street,
14 Randall Road, that kind of thing.

15 MEMBER DOYLE: So this is just the contrast --
16 the difference between RAC versus design review?

17 MS. JOHNSON: Correct. In fact, the design
18 review includes design standards and guidelines.

19 So for this general amendment, staff is
20 proposing to eliminate the Residential Architectural
21 Consultation review process and instead requires
22 design review for single- and two-family dwellings in
23 the RT and CBD-2 districts. So this would include
24 design review for new construction, additions, and

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1 alterations of the exterior.

2 So along with that staff is proposing design
3 review standards and guidelines that will be used to
4 review proposals. The design guidelines will provide
5 permit applicants which include developers,
6 architects, contractors, and homeowners, with clear
7 information regarding the City's expectations, and it
8 will also allow consistent review by staff.

9 So the proposed standards and guidelines are
10 in the meeting packet. I don't have them up on the
11 slide, but they're similar to what the Commission
12 reviewed before. There are seven general categories,
13 which are site layout and context; garages; massing
14 and proportion; roofs; architectural details; windows,
15 doors, and entrances; and additions and exterior
16 alterations.

17 So under each category there are standards
18 listed -- these standards must be met -- and then
19 guidelines which can provide more flexibility. Most
20 of the items there are guidelines; they are fairly few
21 standards, and some of the standards are just
22 references to existing zoning ordinance requirements
23 that already exist like the requirements for the
24 garages that I mentioned before.

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1 So the idea was to have fairly broad
2 guidelines that wouldn't limit design creativity but
3 would provide some basic requirements to help make
4 sure that new development generally fits with the
5 character of these neighborhoods.

6 VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: Ellen, I'm looking
7 through these and of these seven items there's only
8 three of them -- I think three -- that have standards
9 that have to be met. The rest are just guidelines.
10 Does that sound right?

11 MS. JOHNSON: Yes.

12 VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: Site layout and
13 context, you have a standard; building facade, site
14 grading. Garages you have standards, they have to
15 meet the provisions of accessory buildings and
16 structures. And then, finally, architectural details,
17 360-degree architecture required. But for most
18 intents and purposes these are simply guidelines.

19 MS. JOHNSON: Correct.

20 VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: Okay.

21 MS. JOHNSON: So that's the main part of my
22 presentation. I also wanted to mention the
23 comprehensive plan does provide some guidance on this.
24 It recognizes the importance of preserving the

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1 character of the city's older neighborhoods, and it
2 recommends developing a residential design and pattern
3 book to ensure that new development meets -- is
4 appropriate for the neighborhood.

5 When we discussed this last time, the Plan
6 Commission -- you guys agreed that that would be a
7 little too prescriptive and felt that the design
8 standards and guidelines had to meet the same intent
9 the comp plan for the pattern book. So we feel like
10 we're still going in the direction of the comp plan
11 recommendation.

12 So staff has provided findings of fact that
13 are attached to the application, too.

14 MEMBER HOLDERFIELD: Can you just elaborate
15 a little bit? I'm trying to get my head about this
16 applied -- with the guidelines are meant to be applied
17 with flexibility.

18 So you get a homeowner who wants to do
19 something, and our guidelines, they don't meet it. So
20 what if they choose not to meet the guidelines? Can
21 they go ahead and build, or are you going to stop them?

22 MS. JOHNSON: Well, there's an intent for
23 each of these categories. So if it doesn't meet a
24 guideline, we'll look back at the intent and kind of

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1 try to determine if the proposal still meets the
2 general intent.

3 So, for example, for architectural details,
4 the intent is to promote architectural interest and
5 design that complements the traditional building
6 styles found in older neighborhoods. If that wouldn't
7 be appropriate, if it's more of a modern structure, it
8 wouldn't be appropriate for the style of the house.

9 MEMBER HOLDERFIELD: I can see modern as
10 opposed to craftsman or something like that. I'm just
11 wondering how detailed a scope this might get into
12 when you would have a problem where you can't reach a
13 compromise.

14 MS. JOHNSON: Right, right. Well, most of
15 the -- I think that most of even the guidelines are --
16 they're not very expensive to incorporate. So I think
17 that if we told the applicant, explained our rationale
18 and said that we'd really like to encourage this, I
19 think that most of the time they'd be willing to
20 comply.

21 VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: Jim, if I can.
22 These are guidelines and if they choose to ignore
23 them, they can ignore them. They can't be bound by
24 these guidelines, and I think I remember as a group

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1 the discussion leaned more towards allowing that as
2 opposed to --

3 MEMBER HOLDERFIELD: It did. I agree with
4 you. That's why I just want to go over that once more.

5 MR. COLBY: One point I wanted to add is in
6 the event that there is a disagreement about how a
7 guideline is being applied, if they're clearly not
8 meeting the guideline, and they're not able to show
9 that they're still meeting the intent of that section,
10 we have the ability to require them to -- I should say
11 we can issue them a zoning interpretation, which is a
12 process under the code we would say that what you're
13 proposing does not meet the guidelines, and you
14 haven't demonstrated that you are meeting the intent
15 of the section. So on that basis we could withhold
16 the building permit.

17 There's a process that exists in the
18 ordinance for someone to appeal a staff interpretation.
19 So someone could request to appeal that decision by
20 staff and then could appear before the designated
21 board, which I think for design review, administrative
22 design review decisions, except for the downtown
23 districts, the CBD-1 and CBD-2 districts, those are
24 reviewed by the Historic Preservation Commission, but

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1 then all of the other zoning districts the design
2 review findings would be reviewed by the Plan
3 Commission.

4 MEMBER HOLDERFIELD: So they would come
5 back here?

6 MR. COLBY: Yes. So a process does exist if
7 there was a situation where it was clearly a guideline
8 not being met and they hadn't proven to us that they
9 were meeting the intent of the section.

10 MEMBER PRETZ: My question would be with the
11 RTs and the CBs, percentagewise if you were guessing,
12 how large -- what percentage of the historic district
13 encompasses those?

14 VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: Not as much as you
15 may think.

16 MS. JOHNSON: Do you want me to pull it up?

17 MR. COLBY: Yeah. Could you?

18 The historic district goes on the west side
19 from 5th Street, and the east side is 6th Avenue; the
20 south boundary is Indiana Street and Avenue, and then
21 the north side is more or less where the railroad
22 tracks are, if you can sort of picture that.

23 MEMBER PRETZ: Where I was coming from in
24 asking the question is then outside that area, does it

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1 make sense -- and staff does a lot, but you have a
2 commission in place covering the preservation portion.
3 Does it make sense -- and they for the most part meet
4 every two weeks. Doesn't it make sense that the
5 process would be staff and then if there's an
6 objection or a challenge by the applicant to come
7 before the Plan Commission? Or would you be better
8 served utilizing the other existing commission to do
9 those reviews for -- you know, again, there's some
10 nonbinding and et cetera, et cetera.

11 But you already have -- you have a group in
12 place that can do a review, meets often enough, and
13 then if there was a challenge or something like that
14 still be able to keep it confined there instead of
15 bringing it up -- ultimately bringing it back up to
16 the Plan Commission who is dealing maybe with other
17 things other than a challenge of an architectural
18 issue.

19 MR. COLBY: Yeah. It certainly could be
20 done that way. I think the thought was since the
21 Plan Commission is the group that's really part of
22 setting the requirements, since they're more a
23 function of zoning requirements that the Plan Commission
24 deals with that it would be more appropriate for them

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1 to be the group that does that review. But, certainly,
2 the Historic Preservation Commission has the
3 appropriate background to do the same type of review.

4 VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: But they don't have
5 the same authority.

6 MR. COLBY: Right. The authority is
7 different.

8 VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: They don't have the
9 authority to do it.

10 MEMBER PRETZ: Understand but it may be
11 since it's lower in the chain in the process to take
12 some things off of your plate as staff, put it on that
13 plate, and then let them function and clear out a lot
14 of things before it comes up this way. But it's just
15 a thought.

16 MR. COLBY: I think maybe what you're
17 suggesting is -- probably would entail a different
18 kind of process than just design guidelines. I think
19 based on what we've seen from the examples we have
20 over the past few years, we think having these
21 guidelines will be adequate, but we'll see as time
22 goes on if it is. There's always the option of
23 changing our process so that there's something more
24 rigorous involved in terms of the design review.

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1 MEMBER PRETZ: Makes sense.

2 MS. JOHNSON: This is the downtown area and
3 the historic district outlined in orange. So a good
4 portion of the CBD-2 and 1 are in the historic
5 district.

6 VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: But not much of RT.

7 CHAIRMAN WALLACE: Any other questions?

8 MEMBER PRETZ: I had one more and I'll let
9 you go.

10 We're discussing this and by the time it
11 gets processed what I've noticed, especially in my
12 neighborhood, which I would say would be the railroad
13 tracks north -- so the Pottawattomie area and that --
14 and I see a couple more signs up that will probably
15 mean demolition of homes in the near term here. Those
16 would be already in play, so any of this when it
17 ultimately gets changed would not affect those, I'm
18 guessing.

19 MR. COLBY: No. Once this change is made,
20 it would depend the time which the building permit is
21 filed for the new structure, but if that were to occur
22 after these requirements are in place, they would need
23 to follow the zoning ordinance requirements in effect
24 at the time.

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1 So if there are buildings you think you may
2 demolished soon, they may not be permitted for the new
3 structure until after this is in place.

4 MEMBER PRETZ: Okay.

5 MEMBER DOYLE: I was just reviewing the
6 proposed language, and in general I think that it
7 would be useful for the Commission to just consider
8 standards and whether we're comfortable with those
9 items as well as guidelines and see if there's
10 anything that's currently identified as a guideline
11 that should be a standard or vice versa.

12 VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: Right. Are you
13 looking at the actual language, or are you looking at
14 the --

15 MEMBER DOYLE: That's correct. So from "Add
16 the following."

17 VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: That's what I'm
18 looking at. Okay.

19 MEMBER DOYLE: So to that point I'm just
20 going to highlight a couple of things that jump out
21 at me.

22 In Section C, prior to guidelines there are
23 no standards here. I do wonder in some of the
24 previous sections under standards we have references

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1 to other sections of the code. So one question is, it
2 may be redundant but would it be helpful to have a
3 standard here that references lot coverage under
4 massing and proportion?

5 MR. COLBY: We could have a standard in that
6 section that makes reference to the bulk requirements.

7 VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: You mean to the
8 actual existing?

9 MEMBER DOYLE: Existing bulk requirements
10 for lot coverage that applies to these districts.

11 I know it's redundant in a sense, but it
12 seems that other places these standards that are
13 referenced also reference other parts of the code that
14 I presume are somewhat redundant. Right?

15 MS. JOHNSON: Yes. They're included, also.

16 MEMBER DOYLE: So reiterating that this is
17 what is required.

18 VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: Makes sense to me.

19 MEMBER DOYLE: Then under "Guidelines,"
20 No. 2, "Simple building massing is encouraged," could
21 you elaborate just what that means?

22 MS. JOHNSON: Well, if you look -- the types
23 of homes that exist in the neighborhoods are generally
24 simple, you know, like front gable, fairly simple

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1 massing. When you get into a lot of varying roof
2 lines and many different gables and peaks that you see
3 in kind of the neotraditional development -- you know,
4 the '90s homes kind of, that's kind of what we're
5 getting at there.

6 MEMBER DOYLE: This is a question that
7 maybe, Jim, you could comment on. Is this term
8 "simple building massing," is that a term, a phrase
9 that an architect or even a drafter is going know what
10 that means?

11 MEMBER HOLDERFIELD: I'm not familiar with
12 that term, no, I'm not.

13 MEMBER DOYLE: So when I read this, I just
14 wasn't certain what that refers to. And if someone
15 who is familiar with architectural terminology is not
16 clear on what it means, I think it may require some
17 elaboration.

18 MR. COLBY: I think it could be rephrased to
19 say something like simple building shapes. Because I
20 think what we're trying to get at is, like Ellen was
21 saying, older houses generally have more of a simpler
22 form and not a lot of elaboration and articulation in
23 sort of excessive amounts of detailing and elements
24 that sort of add interest and kind of clutter the look

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1 of a building. It wasn't common in older
2 architecture.

3 VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: I know exactly what
4 you mean when you explain it, but you don't get it
5 from this.

6 CHAIRMAN WALLACE: What if it says
7 traditional building massing is encouraged as opposed
8 to excessive articulation or something along those
9 lines? I don't know.

10 MEMBER SPRUTH: They'd also give you the
11 site plan or a detailed drawing, so then there's an
12 opportunity to --

13 MS. JOHNSON: Mark it up, yes.

14 MEMBER SPRUTH: Yeah.

15 MEMBER DOYLE: You could -- I'm just
16 thinking out loud here, but in intent you could put a
17 second sentence that says, "Herein, massing is defined
18 as X" and just define what you mean by massing under
19 intent. You know, I don't think that all the sections
20 have need of a definitions portion, but in this
21 section since building massing is a guideline, you
22 know, a definition could be helpful.

23 The last comment is under "Additions and
24 Exterior Alterations." So I wonder if it might be

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1 useful to make a reference to the Standard E1 for
2 360-degree architecture, and do we want to stipulate
3 that any addition or exterior alteration is subject to
4 the 360-degree architecture standard?

5 MS. JOHNSON: I think that any exterior
6 alteration would be subject to any of these -- to all
7 of these.

8 MR. COLBY: Because all the different
9 elements that are listed would apply to the addition.

10 MEMBER DOYLE: So, again, I understand. I
11 think it may be useful just to reiterate that, that
12 just as other areas we have some redundancy here, you
13 could simply say that 360-degree architecture is
14 required, see Standard E1 for reference and make it
15 clear that if you're adding an addition, this other
16 portion of the guidelines and standards also applies.

17 VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: It's true when you
18 say that, it looks like that's a separate item and not
19 really referring to anything else. But I understand
20 when you say that even one of these things is --

21 MS. JOHNSON: We could say Category A
22 through F also applies.

23 VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: A through F, yeah.

24 MEMBER DOYLE: Other than that, I don't have

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1 any other comments on the language of the additions.

2 CHAIRMAN WALLACE: Anything else?

3 VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: Nice job on the
4 findings of fact.

5 MEMBER SPRUTH: I just have a question,
6 actually. Going through the examples, when -- I guess
7 some of the pictures are after -- right? -- post
8 teardown. It says teardown.

9 MS. JOHNSON: These are all the new homes
10 that were built in place of the house that was
11 torn down.

12 MEMBER SPRUTH: Okay. And some of the
13 guidelines were taken into account; some of them
14 weren't. I guess my concern was in going through
15 this, of course, if an older -- well, whatever, a
16 '60s house in any of the RT areas, that's where I
17 live, is taken down and built -- I mean, we go through
18 guidelines and characteristics of the surroundings and
19 all that. What assurances are there or I guess
20 standards that somebody can't come over and build a
21 completely -- a house that is, I guess totally
22 uncharacteristic with the area?

23 MR. COLBY: There's really no guarantee that
24 that won't happen. I think what we try and do is

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1 encourage some of the characteristics that would make
2 a new structure fit an older neighborhood better than
3 it could, but we can't necessarily prevent someone
4 from building a house that's -- provided it meets all
5 the zoning requirements, we can't prevent them from
6 building a house that's maybe of a different
7 architectural style.

8 MS. JOHNSON: I'm just thinking of building
9 a great big house next to a smaller house, and then
10 you can't sell the big house, and then it comes into
11 disrepair, and you have a neighborhood that's affected
12 by a great big house that they can't sell.

13 MR. COLBY: I mean, the size -- really at
14 the end of the day the size is regulated by the zoning
15 district requirements for height, setbacks, coverage,
16 and beyond that we can't really control the size of
17 the structure from a design perspective. We can only,
18 you know, encourage certain design elements to make it
19 a better fit.

20 MEMBER SPRUTH: Yeah.

21 MR. COLBY: That's really all we can do.

22 MEMBER SPRUTH: Is there anything we can do?

23 MR. COLBY: I think the problem is that
24 doing anything beyond that is fairly subjective.

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1 Short of changing the zoning district requirements to
2 literally require in a neighborhood where single-story
3 houses are common actually limiting the structures to
4 single-story houses was or something like that --
5 something like that can be done. It's unusual to
6 impose that level of restriction.

7 MEMBER SPRUTH: I'm looking for the odd
8 developer who comes in and has a fantastic idea to
9 build a great big mansion -- I've seen it in
10 neighborhoods like in Hoffman Estates, my old
11 neighborhood, where you have someone that tore down a
12 house, built a great big house, they couldn't sell it,
13 it became in disrepair, and it affects the whole area.
14 I don't like to see the same mistake over again.

15 MEMBER PRETZ: But you do see that happening
16 when you have some of the smaller homes being knocked
17 down and then the replacement fitting into the
18 footprint with all the setbacks and everything, and it
19 just looks odd. There's nothing wrong with the
20 architecture, it may be a little different, but the
21 size of the house and where it's placed under the new
22 rules make it a little bit odd. And that's hard to --
23 it's hard to accept when you see that change take
24 place, but if they fall within the parameters, there

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1 isn't a lot that you can do.

2 MEMBER DOYLE: Well, if a permit is issued
3 under the auspices of this design review and then in
4 the opinion of the inspector a standard has been
5 violated, does the City have any recourse? Can the
6 City say you violated the terms of your permit --

7 MR. COLBY: Yes.

8 MEMBER DOYLE: -- and take enforcement
9 action?

10 MR. COLBY: It would be the same as if
11 something was constructed that didn't follow the plan,
12 that didn't meet any other zoning requirements. So if
13 you enlarge a structure in the way you weren't allowed
14 to provided it's a standard.

15 MEMBER DOYLE: Provided it's a standard.

16 MR. COLBY: Right. It's a standard.

17 MEMBER DOYLE: So the standards are binding?

18 MR. COLBY: Yes.

19 MEMBER DOYLE: I think that that -- so as
20 long as there's a mechanism if somebody receives a
21 permit or is issued a permit, and they just blow off
22 the standards in this guideline or in this document,
23 there's some mechanism for the City to go back and
24 say, "Hey, you didn't do what you said you were going

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1 to do."

2 VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: I think it comes
3 down to what Russ and Ellen have said at this point.
4 Those districts have massing requirements and building
5 height requirements.

6 MEMBER DOYLE: But like 360-degree
7 architecture I presume is not in the zoning ordinance.
8 So that being a standard -- whether or not the City
9 would decide whether it's prudent to do that, the
10 point is that it has the authority to say, "The terms
11 of your permit were that would you follow these
12 standards at a minimum."

13 MEMBER PRETZ: But that falls into the
14 responsibility of the inspector. Because if the
15 inspector doesn't notice it in their process, life is
16 going to continue whether the standards are met.

17 We just recently had a very lengthy
18 discussion in another commission meeting about how we
19 tighten up the review process once somebody is already
20 beginning their construction and the checks and
21 balances that need to be put in place in order to stop
22 it and do a correction.

23 And I think it would probably fall within
24 the same problem here is that even though it says it

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1 in the ordinance, and it may be conveyed somehow some
2 way that a certain standard, once construction takes
3 place and the inspector doesn't catch it or decides
4 not act, but I'm going to assume that doesn't catch it
5 because it's after the fact, it's going to be
6 incorporated --

7 VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: I don't know if
8 you've done any construction in St. Charles, but the
9 inspectors don't miss anything that they're required
10 to. They don't. Trust me.

11 The other thing is I think this discussion
12 is somewhat Draconian. I'm not interested in putting
13 more restrictions on homeowners building into these RT
14 neighborhoods. It's not as if we're building mansions
15 that have wings here and roof lines going that way.
16 Tom makes an incredibly good point when he says when a
17 new structure goes into an old neighborhood,
18 regardless whether it matches the architecture of the
19 neighborhood or not, is an eyesore at first because
20 it's new. Give it 20 years.

21 One of the most beautiful things about the
22 old neighborhoods here in St. Charles and Geneva and
23 even Batavia is if you drive through those old
24 neighborhoods, you'll see many different architectural

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1 styles, many different sized houses in those same
2 neighborhoods. That was even before they had the kind
3 of standards that we have today, but that's what makes
4 them nice old neighborhoods.

5 I think we have to be a little bit careful
6 especially in these old neighborhoods of trying to be
7 so -- I can see it in a larger lot and a bigger area.
8 You know, you bring up the big house that gets built.
9 I see it in Elmhurst. They buy two lots and they tear
10 both houses down, and they build a huge house next to
11 an old 1926 brick bungalow. That's what you're
12 talking about and we don't -- that's not going to
13 happen here.

14 MEMBER DOYLE: Isn't that the point and the
15 difference between a standard and a guideline is that
16 if we're saying that particular provision is a
17 standard versus a guideline and we're also -- what
18 we've heard from Russ is that it is at the discretion
19 of the inspector to determine if the terms of the
20 permit have been honored. The inspector does have
21 authority to say, "No, you did not build according to
22 the terms of your permit." And just as if you build a
23 fence without getting a permit and someone finds out,
24 the inspector can come out and say, "Tear it down.

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1 You didn't have a permit. Tear it down." They can
2 always do that.

3 VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: They can red tag
4 you, and it goes to the proper commission, proper
5 authority.

6 MEMBER DOYLE: Someone can call that
7 Draconian, but the point is the City has that
8 authority. So I think it's important knowing it's at
9 the discretion of the inspector and they're going to
10 use their discretion appropriately. It's up to us to
11 determine if this proposed standard is something that
12 we can look at and say, yes, it is appropriate that
13 that be compulsory in this zoning area because that's
14 what we're saying, it's binding.

15 VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: But we're not saying
16 these are binding. Standards are. Guidelines are not.

17 MEMBER DOYLE: There are standards embedded
18 in this document.

19 VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: I understand. But I
20 guess you weren't hearing what I said. I don't
21 disagree with what we have here. I think doing any
22 more than this would be Draconian, and I don't object
23 to these guidelines.

24 MEMBER PRETZ: But I don't think you were

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1 adding anything.

2 MEMBER DOYLE: I was suggesting a couple of
3 things that I thought were redundant such as building
4 coverage and under "Additions and Alterations" a
5 clarification that 360-degree architecture applies to
6 Section G as --

7 VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: But those are
8 guidelines.

9 MEMBER DOYLE: No, as standards because
10 360-degree architecture is a standard.

11 VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: I understood that
12 and I was okay with that, but how I was hearing this
13 discussion going was we need to have another level of
14 scrutiny.

15 MEMBER SPRUTH: I wasn't saying necessarily
16 that.

17 VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: You were saying what
18 can we put in the here.

19 MEMBER SPRUTH: Oh, not what can we put in
20 here. I'm just trying to get in my mind I guess what
21 are the -- I'm not looking to add more. Like if you
22 have this odd developer -- the majority of people will
23 looking at guidelines, consult, talk, and all that.
24 But you will have an odd developer which can impact

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1 a neighborhood, and what measures are in place to
2 either -- I don't want to say ring that developer in
3 or say, hey, listen -- I guess, yeah, what do we have
4 in place to prevent something like that from happening?

5 Because I've seen it happen in neighborhoods,
6 and they've only been one lot, and they built this
7 huge house and it doesn't sell. I was just saying,
8 what do we have in place to prevent that? I'm all for
9 varying architecture, and I love going around seeing
10 different houses; you don't want to see the same house
11 twice, but there are instances where you have a
12 developer who goes a little bit crazy.

13 VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: But you talk about
14 the inspectors calling out, "Well, you didn't follow
15 the" -- I don't know -- I've never heard of that
16 before. An inspector is going to look at the
17 blueprints; he's going to look at the ordinance; he's
18 going to go by the details of those two things, and
19 that's what he's going to inspect. He's not going to
20 inspect and say, "I don't think you did this exactly
21 quite the way you should have." That doesn't happen.

22 MEMBER HOLDERFIELD: Tim, what I'm thinking
23 of here is the building permit would not be issued
24 unless those standards are met. If you're waiting on

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1 the building inspector to do it, that's way too late.

2 VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: And it's not going
3 to happen. That's not what they do. They read the
4 plans, and they read the ordinance, and that's how
5 they do it.

6 MEMBER DOYLE: So the regular permit process
7 is the recourse.

8 VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: That's it. Once
9 you've issued the permit, you've approved the plans.

10 MEMBER HOLDERFIELD: These standards.

11 VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: But the plans have
12 to meet --

13 MEMBER HOLDERFIELD: These standards. Not
14 the guidelines but the standards.

15 MR. COLBY: Just to clarify something on
16 process, if someone is building a new residential
17 house, for example, they have to have complete
18 architectural plans and elevations and they're
19 reviewed. And most of the zoning standards are
20 reviewed by the plan staff. Ellen or myself would be
21 reviewing the architectural plans for these guidelines
22 because we're more familiar with the guidelines and
23 what's expected. So we wouldn't sign off on issuing
24 the permit until we were sure they had provided all

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1 the standards or the guidelines.

2 I think what Tom was saying was that you
3 could have a situation where the actual building isn't
4 exactly constructed per plans, and maybe something has
5 changed in the field, and that's an issue that does
6 get addressed when inspections are taking place where
7 something isn't built exactly to the plans. Those
8 situations do occur, but in those situations still
9 they would be required to bring the building into
10 conformance with the standards if there is a standard
11 that was violated.

12 VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: If you don't build
13 according to your plans, you're going to get
14 red-tagged, period.

15 MEMBER DOYLE: I think that's what -- in
16 terms of what Laura is asking --

17 MEMBER SPRUTH: Michelle.

18 MEMBER DOYLE: I'm sorry. I blew it. In
19 terms of what Michelle is saying, there is a mechanism
20 that is going to ensure that there is some recourse if
21 that happens, and that's the standard permitting
22 process --

23 VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: And inspection.

24 MEMBER DOYLE: -- and inspection. So long

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1 as we are comfortable with those things identified as
2 standards in this document saying yes, that's
3 something we think should be red-tagged if it's not
4 built that way, then on both sides we're in agreement
5 that this is the appropriate standard and guideline
6 document.

7 VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: And I agree, yeah.

8 CHAIRMAN WALLACE: Anything further?

9 (No response.)

10 CHAIRMAN WALLACE: All right. Is there a
11 motion to close the public hearing?

12 VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: So moved.

13 CHAIRMAN WALLACE: Is there a second?

14 MEMBER SPRUTH: Second.

15 CHAIRMAN WALLACE: All right. Any
16 discussion on the motion?

17 Tim --

18 MEMBER DOYLE: I do have a question. So we
19 talked about a couple of possible amendments to the
20 language as proposed. Are those amendments that we
21 want to attach to the motion, or is it something that
22 we just ask staff to consider to edit according to the
23 staff discussion before it is presented to the --

24 MR. COLBY: I would include that with your

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1 motion when we get to this item on the meeting
2 portion.

3 MEMBER DOYLE: Got it. Okay.

4 MR. COLBY: You can make reference to the
5 items that were discussed and we'll pull those.

6 VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: Keep those until
7 the end.

8 MEMBER DOYLE: Got it.

9 CHAIRMAN WALLACE: All right. Anything
10 else?

11 (No response.)

12 CHAIRMAN WALLACE: Motion to close the
13 public hearing.

14 Tim.

15 VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: Spruth.

16 MEMBER SPRUTH: Yes.

17 VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: Doyle.

18 MEMBER DOYLE: Yes.

19 VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: Pretz.

20 MEMBER PRETZ: Yes.

21 VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: Holderfield.

22 MEMBER HOLDERFIELD: Yes.

23 VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: Frio.

24 MEMBER FRIO: Yes.

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1 VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: Wallace.

2 CHAIRMAN WALLACE: Yes.

3 VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: Kessler, yes.

4 CHAIRMAN WALLACE: Let's move on to Item
5 No. 6 before we address Item 5 on the agenda. This is
6 general amendment City of St. Charles, Chapter 17.04
7 and Chapter 17.06 as stated on the agenda.

8 Is there a motion?

9 VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: I would make a
10 motion to recommend approval of the general amendment
11 with the addition of the three suggested add-ins that
12 Brian will add at this time.

13 MEMBER DOYLE: Edit A being to add a
14 reference as a standard under Section C for lot
15 coverage; two, add some sort of elaboration or
16 definition to define "simple building massing" under
17 Section C2; and three, add a reference under Section G
18 as a standard to clarify that Standard E1 for
19 360-degree architecture applies to additions and
20 exterior alterations.

21 CHAIRMAN WALLACE: All right. Is there a
22 second to that motion?

23 MEMBER HOLDERFIELD: I will second it.

24 CHAIRMAN WALLACE: All right. The motion

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1 has been made and seconded. Any discussion on the
2 motion?

3 (No response.)

4 CHAIRMAN WALLACE: All right.

5 VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: Spruth.

6 MEMBER SPRUTH: Yes.

7 VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: Doyle.

8 MEMBER DOYLE: Yes.

9 VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: Pretz.

10 MEMBER PRETZ: Yes.

11 VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: Holderfield.

12 MEMBER HOLDERFIELD: Yes.

13 VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: Frio.

14 MEMBER FRIO: Yes.

15 VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: Wallace.

16 CHAIRMAN WALLACE: Yes.

17 VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: Kessler, yes.

18 CHAIRMAN WALLACE: That concludes Item 6 on
19 the agenda.

20 (Off the record at 7:48 p.m.)

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BEFORE THE PLAN COMMISSION

OF THE CITY OF ST. CHARLES, ILLINOIS

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IN RE THE MATTER OF: :
General Amendment (City of St. Charles) :
Chapter 17.12 "Residential Districts," :
Sections 17.12.030 and 17.14 and :
17.14.030. :

-----x

Public Hearing
St. Charles, Illinois
Tuesday, September 8, 2015
7:48 p.m.

Job No.: 91301B
Pages: 1 - 47
Reported By: Paula Quetsch, CSR

Public Hearing - Residential
Conducted on September 8, 2015

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Public hearing held at the location of:

CITY OF ST. CHARLES COUNCIL CHAMBERS
2 East Main Street
St. Charles, Illinois
(630) 377-4400

Before Paula Quetsch, CSR and Notary Public in
and for the State of Illinois.

Public Hearing - Residential
Conducted on September 8, 2015

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PRESENT:

- TODD WALLACE, Chairman
- TIM KESSLER, Vice Chairman
- BRIAN DOYLE, Member
- DAN FRIO, Member
- JAMES HOLDERFIELD, Member
- TOM PRETZ, Member
- MICHELLE SPRUTH, Member

ALSO PRESENT:

- RUSSELL COLBY, Planning Division Manager
- ELLEN JOHNSON, Planner

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P R O C E E D I N G S

CHAIRMAN WALLACE: Moving back to Item 5, General Amendment, City of St. Charles, Chapters 17.12 and 14 as stated on the agenda.

MS. JOHNSON: So this is another general amendment. Staff is proposing to reduce the lot area requirements for residential uses in the CBD-1, CBD-2, and RT-4 zoning districts. The purpose of this amendment is to promote reinvestment and redevelopment in and around the downtown and also to promote a greater diversity of housing types in these areas and the city as a whole.

So this map shows the location of the CBD-1, 2, and RT-4 Districts. The RT-4 district, as you all know, is adjacent to downtown, and it is the only traditional residential district that allows both single- and two-family homes.

The CBD-2 mixed-use business district is the transitional district between the core and the residential neighborhoods. It permits all types of residential uses. It's the only zoning district in the city that permits all types, including single-family homes, two-family, townhomes, multifamily, and upper-level dwellings.

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1 The central business district permits
2 two types of residential, multifamily, and upper-level
3 dwelling. So an upper-level dwelling is, you know, an
4 upper floor dwelling unit above a nonresidential use.

5 So this table shows the existing lot area
6 requirements in these zoning districts, and I guess
7 first I'll define each type of residential use.

8 Single-family is obvious. Two-family, two
9 units in a dwelling. They can either be attached
10 horizontally, so one up and one down, or vertically,
11 so side by side like a duplex. A townhouse is at
12 least three residential units attached side by side.
13 Upper-level dwelling I mentioned before. Multifamily
14 is three or more units in a structure not constructed
15 like a townhome. So it's like an apartment building
16 or say a converted home that has three units; that
17 would be considered multifamily.

18 So for the RT-4 district, the two residential
19 uses that are allowed, single-family requires 5,000
20 square feet -- a 5,000-square-foot lot. So in order
21 to have a single-family home, you need a 5,000-square-
22 foot lot. For a two-family home you need a 7500-
23 square-foot lot, which is 3750 square feet per unit.
24 So, basically, a two-family home cannot be constructed

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1 or converted on a standard size 5,000-square-foot lot.

2 So for the CBD-2 district the lot size
3 requirements for the single- and two-family is the
4 same as the RT-4. For townhomes you need 3,000 square
5 foot per unit, so that's 9,000 square feet for a
6 standard three-unit townhome. So for an upper level
7 and multifamily you need 2200 square feet per unit. A
8 nonresidential use, so a commercial or an office use
9 would require 5,000 square feet, same as single-family.
10 For CBD-1, the upper-level and multifamily you need
11 1,000 square feet per unit. So that's just kind of
12 background information. I don't expect you to
13 remember all of that.

14 So, basically, staff has observed the
15 following related to lot sizes in these areas. A
16 variety of residential uses are permitted in these
17 zoning districts, but the lot sizes that exist vary
18 greatly. Many of them are under the minimum
19 requirements, meaning that they are nonconforming. So
20 these lot sizes really limit what can be done with
21 these properties, and I'll show data on nonconforming
22 in a little bit.

23 But nonconformities are a problem because if
24 a nonconforming building is destroyed, it cannot be

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1 reconstructed. So because of that a property owner is
2 unlikely to make a significant investment to redevelop
3 a property or to improve a property because if it's
4 destroyed, they can't build it back. So property
5 owners who want to sell a nonconforming property often
6 have trouble doing so because a potential buyer has
7 trouble getting a mortgage or insurance because of the
8 fact it can't be rebuilt if destroyed. Also, because
9 of this buyers are often cash buyers who are looking
10 to buy the property as an income property as a rental
11 unit and don't plan on making significant improvements.

12 The Homes for a Changing Region study, which
13 you may remember was adopted by the City Council as a
14 policy guide last November recommends -- provides a
15 recommendation directly related to this. It
16 recommends reducing the lot size requirements in the
17 downtown zoning districts in order to promote new
18 residential development downtown.

19 The study notes that reducing per-unit lot
20 size requirements would allow for increased
21 residential density downtown, new opportunities for
22 residential units to open up, and it would also
23 encourage adaptive reuse of the existing buildings
24 downtown.

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1 The comp plan also in several sections calls
2 for promoting diverse housing options in the city and
3 also calls for analyzing downtown zoning regulations
4 to eliminate unnecessary barriers to downtown
5 investment, and this is one of those barriers that
6 we're seeing.

7 So based on these observations we're
8 proposing these amendments related to the lot area
9 requirements.

10 So first we'll look at the RT-4 district.
11 This is the zoning bulk requirement table that's in
12 the zoning ordinance. So RT-4 is highlighted.

13 So staff is proposing to reduce the lot size
14 requirement for two-family dwellings to 5,000 square
15 feet. So there would just be one minimum lot area in
16 the RT-4 district, and that would be 5,000 square feet.
17 So you could have a single-family or a two-family on a
18 standard-sized lot.

19 So this table shows data -- it's kind of
20 confusing but, basically, we went through and counted
21 the number of single-family and two-family parcels in
22 the RT-4 district, and then we pulled lot size data
23 and counted the number of conforming lots and
24 nonconforming lots.

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1 So this first section here shows that
2 89 percent of single-family residential lots meet the
3 5,000-square-foot requirement. For two-family only
4 half, so 50 percent of the two-family meets the
5 requirements for a total of 77 percent conforming lots.

6 So if the two-family lot area were changed
7 to 5,000 square feet, we'd go up to 89 percent
8 conforming for both the two-family and for the total,
9 also.

10 VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: So it's written kind
11 of funny. So it's going from -- the proposed is 5,000
12 compared to 7500?

13 MS. JOHNSON: Yes.

14 VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: Not compared to 3750?

15 MS. JOHNSON: Yes.

16 CHAIRMAN WALLACE: How far would you have to
17 go to bring them all into compliance?

18 MS. JOHNSON: There's some outliers, like a
19 3,000 square foot lot, a couple of those. So we would
20 have to go down pretty far in order to bring 100 percent
21 into compliance.

22 MEMBER PRETZ: Does it make sense to put
23 such a change to make everything, you know, as close
24 to being conforming? Especially in the two-family,

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1 bringing that down from 7500 to 5,000, that's a pretty
2 drastic drop in order to accommodate that.

3 And I understand the economics of if somebody is
4 investing in the house, and they're renting it out and
5 have two portions. But is it really -- I know it's
6 a concern of the City to make sure that development
7 continues, but is it really the responsibility of the
8 City to accommodate that?

9 MS. JOHNSON: It is a policy question. We
10 kind of see it as the fact that this zoning district
11 allows both two-family and single-family, and it's the
12 only RT district that allows that. From our
13 perspective it makes sense to permit a two-family on a
14 standard-sized lot.

15 MEMBER PRETZ: Because what goes along with
16 that is what you're saying is currently there's 36,
17 and so that percentage will go up, that conform. But
18 if you're bringing it down to 5,000, and you have
19 130 parcels that are single-family, what you're doing
20 is I think you're opening the door for 130 parcels --
21 not all of them but there's got to be a certain
22 percentage of those that are capable of moving into a
23 two-unit and now you're increasing -- to satisfy one,
24 I think you're sacrificing the other one.

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1 MEMBER DOYLE: Well, I do think it's a
2 policy question, and I think that we should discuss
3 the pros and cons of that.

4 VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: Why wouldn't you --
5 and I was going to say the same thing coming at it
6 from a different angle. Why aren't we bringing the
7 single-family into 100 percent compliance? In CBD-2
8 we're proposing 2,000 square foot per unit for a
9 single-family. In the zoning district right next to
10 it we're going to propose 2,000. That would be a fear
11 of mine but so would -- if we're doing 2,000 in the
12 zoning district right next to it, why don't we bring
13 them all into compliance and solve that problem at the
14 same time and reduce that to, I don't know, 2500?

15 MR. COLBY: I think the issue we're trying
16 to address is, like Ellen mentioned, there are some
17 outliers that are really low lot areas that we
18 wouldn't necessarily want to replicate if someone were
19 to resubdivide property in that zoning district. So
20 we could take the square footage down, but the
21 5,000 square feet is sort of a pretty standard lot
22 size for those older neighborhoods. So that seems
23 like a good place to stop it at if we want to continue
24 to maintain that development pattern in terms of lot

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1 sizes and not replicate those really smaller outliers.

2 MEMBER DOYLE: What is that? Is that a

3 50 --

4 MS. JOHNSON: 50 by 100.

5 MR. COLBY: It's 50-by-100 lot, which is the

6 typical downtown lot on the east side of downtown

7 where the lots are smaller than the west side.

8 MEMBER PRETZ: And I think you have to take

9 into consideration, too, that -- having experience

10 with one of those 5,000-square-foot lots, it is an

11 older neighborhood. So if -- and, again, I guess it

12 gets back to the single-family portion. If you're

13 going to open it up to multi, and those neighborhoods

14 don't necessarily have the driveways, the street

15 parking, I think there's other issues that go along

16 with -- potential issues that go along with going down

17 this route.

18 VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: The only RT-4 is

19 right next to this? Is this the one that -- the RT-4

20 that we're referring to here, the district, it's right

21 next to the CBD-2?

22 MS. JOHNSON: Uh-huh.

23 VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: I guess if we have

24 55 units in CBD-2 at 5,000 feet and 45 -- 18 percent

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1 of them aren't in compliance, and we're proposing
2 dropping it to 2,000 square feet so that we bring
3 54 of them into compliance and one not, and the
4 alternate to the bring it down to 1500, I don't see
5 any reason why we wouldn't consider lowering the
6 single-family in the RT-4 district to eliminate the
7 issue of -- and I realize that there are outliers.
8 I'm not saying bring them all into compliance.

9 CHAIRMAN WALLACE: What's the difference in
10 the setback requirements in the two districts?

11 VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: Do we have that?

12 MR. COLBY: They are significantly different
13 because the RT-4 district is really more more similar
14 to a single-family zoning district, as with the CBD-2
15 is meant to be sort of mixed-use downtown -- not the
16 core of downtown but shorter setbacks.

17 VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: I'm not suggesting
18 that we go down to 2,000, but I'm suggesting we could
19 go down lower than 5,000 to accommodate more of them
20 and to eliminate the possibility of turning -- because
21 could you easily turn that single-family into a
22 multifamily lot right there. They're both 5,000 feet.
23 They're both at the same minimum lot size or minimum
24 lot area.

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1 MEMBER DOYLE: Okay. Right now are we
2 asking questions about the RT-4 proposals?

3 VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: Yes.

4 MEMBER DOYLE: Okay. So in the city of
5 Chicago a 40-foot lot -- width lot is still a fairly
6 common lot size, isn't it?

7 MR. COLBY: 25 feet I think is the standard.

8 MEMBER DOYLE: 25 feet is as far down as
9 it goes?

10 MR. COLBY: With a Chicago lot, yes.

11 VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: We have a lot in
12 Geneva that is 40-foot -- we have actually two lots.
13 One of them is 40-foot, one of them is 35-foot.

14 MEMBER DOYLE: Just in terms of -- I do
15 think that it makes sense from just a policy
16 standpoint that CBD-1 and 2 be more intensive urban
17 uses than the RT-4. So I would suggest that we not
18 contemplate bringing RT-4 all the way down to the lot
19 size that we're looking at for CBD-2.

20 VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: And I agree with
21 you. I agree with that.

22 MEMBER DOYLE: Now, whether there's a
23 logical breaking point under 5,000 square feet that
24 still falls within the confines of what is -- for this

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1 region what is regarded as a typical traditional
2 single-family lot -- I mean, that's why I asked the
3 question. If you look at throughout the region, is a
4 50-foot lot considered in terms of a traditional lot
5 size a generous lot size? If you just tried to do an
6 average of what's the average range for traditional
7 single-family lot sizes in the region, what's the
8 range going to look like?

9 CHAIRMAN WALLACE: It's a small lot but it's
10 typical for RT-4. I mean, 66 by 100 would probably be
11 typical in RT-3, wouldn't it?

12 MR. COLBY: Yeah.

13 CHAIRMAN WALLACE: And from there you go up
14 to -- you get some more depth.

15 MEMBER DOYLE: To Tim's point, right now if
16 we're saying -- Ellen, could you go back to the
17 proposal for RT-4? Right now we've got the same lot
18 size for single-family as well as two-family. So if
19 you've got a building that is -- the single-family is
20 still 89 percent in conformance. Could we bump that
21 up a little bit to say a 40-foot lot?

22 VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: I don't think
23 40-foot lots in the tri-cities are uncommon.

24 MEMBER DOYLE: Are uncommon?

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1 VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: They're not
2 uncommon.

3 MEMBER DOYLE: All right. Again, from a
4 policy standpoint I think it might make sense to have
5 single-family have slightly smaller lot size available
6 that's only for single-family and maintain 5,000 square
7 feet for a two-family lot.

8 VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: And that would
9 eliminate the possibility of taking one of these
10 single-family lots and turning them into two-family.

11 MEMBER DOYLE: Right now if you've got
12 anything less than 5,000 square feet, you're out of
13 luck; you tear it down and you can't build anything.

14 CHAIRMAN WALLACE: I guess the question is,
15 what is the objective? Is it to bring as much into
16 compliance as we possibly can or to prevent the change
17 in the character of the neighborhood from single-family
18 to two-family?

19 VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: Both.

20 MEMBER DOYLE: I don't -- okay. I would say
21 an objective would be to have a logical cascade of --

22 CHAIRMAN WALLACE: What if it's 5,000 for
23 single-family and then 6,000 for two-family? I mean,
24 I guess I would just need to know what --

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1 MS. JOHNSON: It's a policy question. Do
2 you want to allow a two-family on any lot that a
3 single-family is allowed or be more restrictive for a
4 two-family?

5 MEMBER PRETZ: See, you have to keep in
6 mind -- I personally reside on a 5,000-square-foot
7 lot, single-family. Once this occurs, then I have the
8 ability to create a two-family house.

9 MEMBER DOYLE: Do you reside in RT-4?

10 MEMBER PRETZ: I don't know.

11 MR. COLBY: I think you do.

12 MEMBER PRETZ: I believe I do. So that's
13 the potential that exists, which like I mentioned
14 earlier, there are other issues beyond that which then
15 become a logistics issue within a neighborhood because
16 all the lots are small with or without garages.

17 MEMBER DOYLE: As a development philosophy,
18 if we think of these concentric circles from CBD-1 all
19 the way out to our estate lots west of Randall Road
20 where we have -- some of us have argued and I have
21 argued that when you're out there in the brown fields
22 and the green fields, we don't want intensive
23 development unless it's along a commerce corridor.

24 So I just think in terms of a policy

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1 framework what we should be espousing is in-town
2 development, smart development which means you say yes
3 to intensive uses in the middle of town, and you say
4 no to intensive uses outside of town. You have to
5 have both pieces for it to hold together and make
6 sense.

7 So RT-4 is the most intensive use in the
8 RT set of zones. So if we're saying RT-4 is
9 appropriate for single-family and two-family uses and
10 you need to go to the CBD-1 or 2 districts to get into
11 multifamily -- you can also have some townhouse uses.

12 VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: You can have
13 single-family and multifamily in CBD-2.

14 MEMBER DOYLE: I'm talking about RT-4
15 right now.

16 MS. JOHNSON: Just single and two.

17 MEMBER DOYLE: So no townhomes. To get to
18 those more intensive uses you have to go to the
19 central business districts.

20 So it makes sense from a policy standpoint
21 to distinguish that RT-4 is the most intensive land
22 use in RT1 through 4, and we are encouraging to move
23 the two-family land uses and the move to townhomes and
24 multifamily in town because affordable housing is --

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1 we have a crisis in this country for affordable
2 housing -- not maybe in this district, but in the
3 region we do. We don't have enough transit-oriented
4 development, and to get transit-oriented development
5 you have to have intensive uses where transit makes
6 sense. In the study that Ellen cited earlier, I think
7 there are a lot of arguments to be made that more
8 intensive land uses in town particularly in the center
9 of town make sense. They contribute to walkability;
10 they contribute to affordable housing; they contribute
11 to transit-oriented development.

12 So in terms of the direction of this, I
13 think it -- and then in terms of the economics, as
14 well, I think it all makes sense. It all adds up and
15 it makes sense to do this provided that we protect
16 those open spaces outside of town and say, once you're
17 past here, this is not where we do that kind of use;
18 that's for in town. Otherwise, what we have is we
19 have medium-sized development as far as the eye can
20 see; none of it is transit-oriented, none of it is
21 particularly affordable and it's just sprawl.

22 So it's a decision. Then the question just
23 because how do we calibrate it in terms of how intense
24 and how much density we want and where.

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1 VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: Do you have any idea
2 how many more houses would come into compliance if you
3 reduce the minimum lot area to 4,000?

4 MS. JOHNSON: I'll have to look if I have
5 that here or not.

6 MEMBER PRETZ: 5,000 square feet for the
7 two-family brings it down to just four out of
8 compliance, and maybe 5,000 is not -- maybe 5,000 is
9 too low. Maybe that No. 4 and 11 percent in
10 nonconforming maybe should be at 10 and whatever
11 percentage -- I'm just making that up.

12 CHAIRMAN WALLACE: I was going to go the
13 other direction and say, what if you made it 6,000 for
14 two-family.

15 MS. JOHNSON: I have that data. If you go
16 to 6,000 for a two-family, we'll have 58 percent
17 compliance. So we'll go from 50 to 58.

18 CHAIRMAN WALLACE: So it really doesn't do a
19 lot.

20 VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: And besides that,
21 if you think of the size of that lot and the size of
22 two units on that size, that's pretty common in an old
23 neighborhood. That's not uncommon. I mean, those are
24 a couple of one-bedroom, studio units, and that's all

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1 they're going to be anyway.

2 But you don't have that info on --

3 MS. JOHNSON: No. We have the data. I just
4 haven't added it up right now.

5 MEMBER DOYLE: I think -- at first glance I
6 think that these numbers are fine. I would be also
7 comfortable with considering taking single-family
8 square footage down to 4,000 and see what that does.
9 But since we're already at 89 percent compliance, the
10 rationale for bringing it down further doesn't seem as
11 strong. It seems like, you know, we're at almost
12 90 percent compliance in both categories, and so
13 there's a logic to it.

14 VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: I find that a little
15 significant. That's 10 properties that aren't in
16 compliance that fall under the same things they're
17 describing. There are 10 properties that are going to
18 have cash buyers that really have no value. You can't
19 really do anything on them.

20 MEMBER DOYLE: 14 and 4.

21 MS. JOHNSON: They continue to be used.
22 They just can't be --

23 MEMBER FRIO: Can you grandfather the use
24 after fire? I have a mortgage company. So I have a

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1 lot of people that run into this. You find out you
2 can't rebuild that as a two-unit, I ain't buying it.

3 CHAIRMAN WALLACE: You'd basically be
4 permitting a nonconforming use.

5 MEMBER FRIO: You're replacing --

6 VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: But you'd be
7 permitting a nonconforming use on new.

8 MEMBER FRIO: I'm just saying you're just
9 replacing what was there.

10 VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: But you're
11 permitting a conforming use on new.

12 MEMBER FRIO: Correct. But I'm just saying,
13 it's not like you're doing something out of the
14 ordinary. It's already there.

15 VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: I'm not a big fan of
16 grandfathering for the simple reason if you tear your
17 driveway out and they change the ordinance, you can
18 leave it the way it is, but if the ordinance was
19 changed 10 years ago, when you go to put it back in,
20 you're not grandfathered in; you've got fix it the way
21 it's supposed to be.

22 I think the whole point of making ordinances
23 and setting standards is at some point everything
24 comes into compliance.

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1 MEMBER PRETZ: What potential impact could
2 it be -- so if you have 130 single-families -- and I'm
3 a potential developer. I'm going to buy 15 of those
4 and come into the City and doing the demolition to do
5 a rebuild to two-family to fit on there, is it part of
6 the policy of the City to potentially encourage that
7 avenue?

8 VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: To make them
9 two-family?

10 MEMBER PRETZ: Well, I mean, if I'm coming
11 in to purchase some homes, and I pick up several of
12 the 5,000-square-foot single-family homes knowing that
13 I can put a two-family house on there, two-family
14 structure, financially it could be very beneficial.
15 But what impact does that have to the existing
16 neighborhoods if the City is now encouraging the
17 demolition to occur?

18 Because it could happen. I mean, if it is
19 financially viable, you're going to have people that
20 will begin taking a look at it and do a demolition of
21 homes, and that changes the character of the
22 neighborhood.

23 I'm not saying that current demolitions and
24 that are not healthy for a neighborhood because you do

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1 have to have some changes that do occur. It is
2 healthy for a neighborhood, but how much could happen --
3 go ahead.

4 MEMBER HOLDERFIELD: I just want to go along
5 with where you're going. When we say two-family, are
6 we talking about a duplex that's on one foundation, or
7 are we talking about two-foundation footprints?

8 VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: I don't think at
9 5,000 square foot -- you're going to get a two-flat.

10 MEMBER HOLDERFIELD: So you're talking about
11 a two-flat?

12 VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: A two-flat.

13 MEMBER HOLDERFIELD: So any house there
14 could be converted -- if it's a two-story could be
15 converted into a two-family unit.

16 MEMBER PRETZ: That's what I had said.

17 VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: That's what he's
18 saying if we leave them the same.

19 MEMBER PRETZ: Right. But if you have a
20 single-family house that can't do that, now you're
21 encouraging -- potentially encouraging developers to
22 come in to knock down the one-story houses and build
23 two-story houses. If you get too many demolitions
24 within a geographic area, it really changes the look

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1 and the feel of your neighborhood.

2 MEMBER HOLDERFIELD: Well, we can keep going
3 round and round. We could go back to what we just
4 talked about in the past measure that we passed, and
5 if you've got all one-story houses and start building
6 two stories, would that be permissible?

7 VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: Well, it will be.

8 MEMBER DOYLE: Todd, I think that it might
9 be helpful for us to look at the proposals for the
10 other districts since we're going to talk about this
11 at some length.

12 MR. COLBY: I was going to suggest -- I
13 mean, we can provide some additional data based on
14 this discussion because the one aspect we didn't look
15 at this information was how many lots that already
16 exist could be converted to a two-family based on
17 their existing area. So there's a certain percentage
18 maybe that are already at risk of being converted and
19 that opportunity exists now.

20 So we have to probably look at that spread
21 and see if there's a more logical break. Like Ellen
22 said, we don't think there is, but we can at least
23 give you more data to help you understand this a
24 little bit further.

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1 MEMBER DOYLE: Well, and I think the other
2 thing we probably need to know is, to me the main
3 impact, to Tom's point, is parking. So what are the
4 parking requirements for a one-family unit? What are
5 the parking requirements for a two-family lot, and can
6 the street system accommodate?

7 I mean, if we're going to a more urban
8 character, that means you may not be able to park in
9 front of your house, maybe you have park down the
10 street or on the next block and walk to your house
11 because you don't have on-site parking; you're using
12 street parking. Where that really is going to impact
13 the downtown area is during festivals. Right now you
14 can get within, you know, half mile or mile walking
15 distance for the main festivals, and now you're not
16 going to be able to do that.

17 Again, think about this. All of that is
18 oriented around automobiles. What we're saying is we
19 can't do this if we still have a development pattern
20 where people are free and privileged to drive their
21 cars right down to where they want to go and shop and
22 go to festivals and entertainment.

23 VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: It's the world we
24 live in.

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1 (Multiple speakers.)

2 THE COURT REPORTER: Whoops. I can only do
3 one at a time.

4 CHAIRMAN WALLACE: One at a time.

5 MS. JOHNSON: We have that data from the
6 American Community survey; it's an estimate from 2013
7 I think and I can provide that. The vacancy rate is
8 really low here in St. Charles.

9 VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: And could you
10 specifically get the data on how many would be in
11 compliance if we reduce it to 4,000 and to 3,000?

12 MS. JOHNSON: Uh-huh.

13 CHAIRMAN WALLACE: Well, and I think we're
14 hitting on a lot of policy issues. Because, you know,
15 one of the things that -- I mean, a lot of the actions
16 that our City Council has taken is to try to increase
17 commercial development in the heart of St. Charles,
18 and a lot of that has to do with bringing more
19 residents --

20 VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: Increasing the
21 residents.

22 CHAIRMAN WALLACE: Increasing residency.

23 MEMBER FRIO: If we bring the single-family
24 down to 4 or 3 -- maybe I'm just not following the

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1 trend. But the typical lot is at 5,000.

2 VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: No, that's not
3 necessarily true.

4 MEMBER FRIO: Let's say in his situation I
5 think the concern is you don't want the neighbors
6 selling out and creating two units on both sides of
7 you. So let's say the normal lot is say 5 around the
8 area you're concerned with. If you take the two-unit
9 down to 5 but take the single-family down to 3, does
10 that solving anything?

11 VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: Well, yes. Because
12 if you take the two-family -- say not 3 say 4. If you
13 reduce the single-family by anything less than what
14 the two-family is, then the two-family can't build on
15 that lot.

16 MEMBER FRIO: But the lot's already there.

17 VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: You can't build on a
18 single-family -- you have to have a 5,000-square-foot
19 minimum lot requirement.

20 MEMBER FRIO: But the lot is already there.

21 VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: Like 116 of them are
22 already there.

23 MEMBER FRIO: At 5,000.

24 CHAIRMAN WALLACE: Well, I think Ellen knows

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1 kind of the simple statistical analysis or analyses
2 that we want to see based on the data that you have.

3 MS. JOHNSON: Yes.

4 CHAIRMAN WALLACE: So I would say let's move
5 on and discuss -- whatever we do we're going to
6 continue this particular hearing, obviously, but I'd
7 like to just discuss the CBD-1 and 2 proposals.

8 MS. JOHNSON: Okay. So we'll do CBD-2.

9 So staff is proposing to remove the lot area
10 requirement altogether for CBD-2 for existing lots and
11 then standardize the minimum lot size requirement per
12 unit to 2,000 square foot per unit, and then newly
13 created lots would be differentiated -- any newly
14 created lot must be at least 5,000 square feet.

15 So currently this middle area -- this
16 existing middle area is proposed and then bottom area
17 is the alternate proposal. So currently 65 percent of
18 residential lots are in compliance with the lot area
19 requirement which are all different depending on the
20 type of residential use.

21 If we move to our proposal of 2,000 square
22 foot per unit, we get to 87 percent compliance. And
23 then we're also -- as an alternative proposal you
24 might want to consider 1500 square feet per unit, so

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1 allowing even higher density, and then we'd get to
2 96 percent in compliance.

3 So right now the CBD-2 maximum density is
4 19 units per acre. If we went to 2,000 square feet,
5 we'd go up to 21 units per acre. If we went to
6 1500 square feet, we would go to 29 units per acre.
7 So it is more of a policy question.

8 MEMBER PRETZ: What was the first number?

9 MS. JOHNSON: 19.

10 MEMBER PRETZ: 19, 21, 29?

11 MS. JOHNSON: Correct. So that's a policy
12 question of how dense you want to allow development
13 and, also, the 5,000 square feet for new residential
14 uses -- or for newly created lots if that's
15 appropriate.

16 VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: What was the study
17 that you were referring to?

18 MS. JOHNSON: The Homes for a Changing
19 Region.

20 VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: Is that from some of
21 their data that you come up with a proposed of 2,000?

22 MS. JOHNSON: It doesn't recommend a specific
23 proposal. It just says consider reducing the lot area
24 requirements.

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1 VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: What's your reason
2 for going to 2,000?

3 MS. JOHNSON: We felt like it was a good
4 middle-of-the-road number. I mean, a two-family home
5 will need at least a 4,000-square-foot lot. So it's
6 similar to the RT-4; RT-4 needs 5,000. So it still
7 acts as a transition but allows higher density when
8 you get into the multifamily. It's not a very drastic
9 change, and it will bring a lot of lots into
10 conformance.

11 CHAIRMAN WALLACE: Why wouldn't we keep
12 single-family at -- or make it 4,000 square feet per
13 unit, and then two-family at 2,000, and then townhome/
14 multifamily at 1500? Would something -- would a
15 tiered approach like that make sense to you?

16 MS. JOHNSON: We could, yes.

17 CHAIRMAN WALLACE: Well, what do you think
18 about it?

19 MS. JOHNSON: This is kind of simpler. I
20 mean, the idea is CBD-2 district allows all of these
21 as permitted uses, so why treat them differently in
22 terms of lot size.

23 VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: And it's a different
24 kind of development, too. Nobody is going to build a

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1 bungalow.

2 CHAIRMAN WALLACE: I might.

3 VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: See, he's the weird
4 guy you're talking about.

5 MR. COLBY: I will add that part of the
6 reason that we were going the more standard method was
7 that having the tiered approach has caused some
8 confusion. Because it's a mixed-use district and
9 someone looks at these numbers and says, "Oh, I can
10 have 2200 square feet per unit. Right?" We say,
11 "Well, no. If it's a two-unit, it's 3750. So you add
12 that up together and you get 7500." They say, "Well,
13 at that amount then I could have three units as a
14 multifamily at 2200."

15 If you start going back and forth on the
16 numbers, it doesn't exactly make sense. Because at
17 the end of the day, if it's a mixed-use development,
18 you don't necessarily care what the unit looks like if
19 it's a building with two units in it or there's one
20 where they're side by side and it's a townhome.

21 The way this was set up, it's kind of more
22 of a suburban development mindset where it's like
23 there's different types of buildings, but in reality
24 in the downtown setting you just have a building that

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1 has a variety of uses in it.

2 So we wanted to get away from that to the
3 extent it didn't make sense, but I think there could
4 be sort of a middle-of-the-road where we're not
5 overlapping those square footages.

6 CHAIRMAN WALLACE: I just want you to draw a
7 line between single-family and all multi -- everything
8 else. Because if we were to set single-family at
9 5,000, we have 82 percent that's conforming. If it's
10 at 4,000, can you tell me right now how many would be
11 conforming, or is that something you'd need to look
12 into it?

13 MS. JOHNSON: I'd have to add that up.

14 CHAIRMAN WALLACE: I guess that's more of
15 what I'm getting at, as opposed to doing each one,
16 drawing a line between single-family and all
17 multifamily uses.

18 I appreciate the simplicity of the approach.
19 I think that that's good but I don't know. Russ, what
20 do you think of that?

21 MR. COLBY: I think something like that
22 could work. I think the net effect might not greatly
23 change the percentages, and that might be a little
24 easier to understand.

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1 One thing we wanted to try to do, in the
2 CBD-2 district we have a lot of undersized lots that
3 exist that we wouldn't want to necessarily replicate
4 again, but we don't really see any possibility for the
5 development pattern to be significantly changed
6 without leveling half a block or a whole block and
7 redeveloping it. And sort of letting the building
8 stock exist up until there's the demand for that to
9 happen we don't think has been very productive over
10 the past few years, so we want to try to avoid that
11 scenario.

12 So I think we can try to find a square
13 footage that works sort of the way you're talking. I
14 think that's something we can look into.

15 MS. JOHNSON: Along with this, related to
16 this is lot width. So in the CBD-2 district right now
17 townhomes, multifamily, and mixed-use development
18 require 100 foot of lot width. So that really limits
19 the lots that these uses can go on. Especially
20 multifamily. I mean, if you want to have a three-unit,
21 you need a 100-foot-wide lot. I mean, it's a pretty
22 large lot in the district, especially in the CBD-2
23 district where most of the lots are fairly small.

24 So we're proposing no minimum lot width

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1 requirement, which is consistent with the CBD-1
2 district and then requiring 50 feet for any newly
3 created lots. So that goes long with the 5,000. So,
4 basically, a newly created lot would have to be
5 50 by 100.

6 MEMBER PRETZ: So would that be encouraging
7 sort of front-to-back-type construction or will the
8 setbacks --

9 MS. JOHNSON: They would still have to meet
10 setbacks, yes. I mean, it would just allow these lots
11 to be used without limitation. I mean, right now if
12 you want to build -- redevelop a lot that's 40 feet
13 wide, you basically can't. You can't change the use
14 on it because it doesn't meet the lot width, and so
15 many of these lots do not meet the 50-foot lot width.

16 MEMBER PRETZ: But if it's 40 feet wide and
17 an extra 50 feet long or deep, then they could build
18 because they wouldn't need the width requirement?

19 MS. JOHNSON: As proposed.

20 MEMBER PRETZ: They can change the --

21 MS. JOHNSON: Yes. Just without the lot
22 width, just so they have the lot area.

23 So that goes along with the CBD-2 and that's
24 it for that. Do you want to move on to CBD-1 or talk

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1 about this a little bit more?

2 CHAIRMAN WALLACE: Let's go to CBD-1.

3 MS. JOHNSON: So we're proposing to reduce --
4 basically, split the square foot requirement in half,
5 so go from 1,000 square foot per unit, per dwelling
6 unit, and this is only for upper-level and
7 multifamily. So from 1,000 to 500 square feet.

8 So this would -- let me see the data. Right
9 now the permitted density at 1,000 square feet is
10 43 units an acre. That would go to 87 units an acre.
11 And I have some data on the existing multifamily
12 buildings in the CBD-1 district kind of just to show
13 what that density looks like.

14 So, basically, all of -- only two of
15 these -- well, Carroll Tower, that's the large
16 structure behind the Hotel Baker, that is at 125 units
17 per acre. So that's well beyond what's proposed even
18 87 per acre.

19 These First Street buildings, only 7A is
20 actually constructed now; it's the building by
21 Blue Goose. So that's at 73 units per acre. So based
22 on the proposal, that would meet the proposed
23 requirements. The First Street Buildings 1 and 2 and
24 3 haven't been constructed yet, but they're both

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1 approved to be higher than that density -- or the one
2 is 82, so it's slightly lower, just to give you an
3 idea what that kind of density looks like.

4 Also, even though that's the maximum density
5 permitted, there's still the building height
6 regulations and then the maximum floor area that limit
7 the building sizes.

8 MEMBER DOYLE: Now, Ellen, however, those
9 are -- those densities are underneath -- are governed
10 by PUD; correct?

11 MS. JOHNSON: Correct, yes. That's how they
12 were permitted.

13 MEMBER DOYLE: So you're talking about
14 changing the underlying zoning.

15 MS. JOHNSON: Correct.

16 MEMBER DOYLE: I think that's a significant
17 point because when it's a PUD, the City has more
18 leverage to add conditions and stipulations to that
19 increased density, and if it's by right, then the
20 City's ability to leverage that -- now, that doesn't
21 mean that those densities are wrong, but I think that
22 the climate at these public hearings is always when
23 you're talking about these kind of densities, there's
24 enormous amount of pushback from the community, and if

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1 there's not the mechanism of sort of negotiating under
2 a PUD, it makes it harder to say to the community,
3 "Well, we have a mechanism to put stipulations on this
4 and make certain that the value back to the community
5 is sort of built into the development agreement."

6 MS. JOHNSON: It would be easier to get this
7 type of development approved because if it meets the
8 underlying zoning, it wouldn't need to go through any
9 sort of hearing process.

10 MEMBER DOYLE: Right. To that end I think
11 that -- and this is -- pardon me if this is tangential
12 or seems a little bit outside of the normal sort of
13 scope, but since we're talking about increased densities
14 and we're talking about the policy implications of
15 that and I've brought up transportation, I think that
16 these questions have to be considered in the context
17 of, what is the City doing about walkability; what is
18 the City doing about bikeability; what is the
19 framework to get bike lanes installed?

20 If we're going to have this much density in
21 the downtown, I'm inclined to say this is a good
22 thing, but those kinds of densities -- to piggyback on
23 what I said before about automobile traffic and
24 automobile parking, you know, cities that are

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1 encouraging that kind of development are also making
2 public investments in bike lanes, in protected bike
3 lanes and ensuring that their cities are walkable, and
4 we talk about walkability in our comprehensive plan.
5 We don't have any citywide program where there's
6 investments to see that those things happen other than
7 reacting to some goodwill developer coming along and
8 saying, "I'd like to build an apartment complex, and
9 along the way I'm going to install a protected bike
10 lane." Great, that's wonderful.

11 So I think that this is a great start, and I
12 think it would be that much stronger case if we said,
13 "And with this we think that these things would make
14 for a really solid downtown development strategy."
15 We're talking about recreational uses on the river.
16 You know, we have all -- we have this disconnected
17 sidewalk network that we know is there. What's the
18 plan to get it connected and ensure that families can
19 get from one side of the street to another without
20 having to figure out what their route is to walk to
21 the downtown?

22 So I don't know if there's a way to put that
23 in there. I think that it probably would require a
24 conversation with economic development is my guess,

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1 but I just want to put a plug in for that because I
2 think that would ultimately be a part of this being a
3 successful strategy.

4 CHAIRMAN WALLACE: All right.

5 VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: I have one more
6 question. I think you already answered it, but I
7 don't remember the answer.

8 Going back to RT-4, if you were to increase
9 the minimum lot area for the two-family from 5,000 to
10 6,000, how many would we have in compliance then?

11 MS. JOHNSON: 58 percent would comply, I
12 believe.

13 VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: All right.

14 MS. JOHNSON: A few more would comply than
15 currently.

16 CHAIRMAN WALLACE: All right. Anymore
17 comments? I think that I would say a motion to
18 continue the public hearing would be in order.

19 VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: So moved.

20 MS. JOHNSON: Do you need anymore
21 information on the CBD-1 and 2 -- the CBD-2 you had
22 mentioned looking at other options for the
23 single-family, but for the CBD-1 do you want to see
24 any other --

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1 CHAIRMAN WALLACE: Is there -- do you have
2 any data of upper-living dwelling uses in CBD-1?

3 MS. JOHNSON: We don't know a good way to do
4 that because --

5 CHAIRMAN WALLACE: It's too difficult.

6 MS. JOHNSON: -- we just don't really have
7 that data. How do we differentiate between an upper-
8 level office and a -- we just don't know what they're
9 used for.

10 CHAIRMAN WALLACE: Can't you go into every
11 single building and knock on doors?

12 MS. JOHNSON: You guys can help.

13 VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: Field trip.

14 MR. COLBY: You'd think that information
15 would be useful. There's some ways we could try to
16 find it, but we still can't necessarily answer it
17 based on where it's at in the building. We can only
18 guess based on what we see.

19 CHAIRMAN WALLACE: Just get out the
20 binoculars and look in every window.

21 So are we good on information needed?

22 VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: Do you have a list
23 of information?

24 MS. JOHNSON: Uh-huh.

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1 MR. COLBY: Yes. And the motion to continue
2 needs to include the specific date and place.

3 VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: So to move it to --

4 CHAIRMAN WALLACE: September 22nd.

5 VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: September 22nd at
6 7:00 p.m. in the City Council chambers.

7 MEMBER SPRUTH: Would you also be able to
8 include objections, or I guess for those examples that
9 you gave in the CBD-1, for those type of -- the ones
10 that wouldn't be in compliance?

11 MS. JOHNSON: I have that for CBD-2 if you
12 want to look at it.

13 MEMBER SPRUTH: Yeah. I would ask for both
14 of them, but I was just thinking of CBD-1 for like
15 the -- for the ones that have already been permitted,
16 the number of objections or --

17 VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: You know, Michelle --
18 you know what might be helpful? You say there's
19 130 lots. Can you just -- you must have the lot areas
20 of those. That's how you determined how many.

21 MS. JOHNSON: Uh-huh.

22 VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: Can you just list
23 them?

24 MS. JOHNSON: Sure.

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1 VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: I mean, can you just
2 give us that? And we can do a quick calculation.

3 MS. JOHNSON: Sure.

4 VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: Then we have it
5 right in front of us.

6 MS. JOHNSON: I have spreadsheets.

7 VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: Perfect.

8 MS. JOHNSON: Right now?

9 VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: No, no, at the next
10 meeting.

11 I take it that answers the question that
12 Michelle is asking because we see the ones that are
13 not in compliance on that. Would be good to see.

14 CHAIRMAN WALLACE: All right. There is a
15 motion to close the public hearing -- to continue the
16 public hearing to September 22nd, 7:00 p.m. in council
17 chambers. Is there a second?

18 MEMBER HOLDERFIELD: So moved.

19 CHAIRMAN WALLACE: It's been moved and
20 seconded. Discussion on the motion.

21 (No response.)

22 CHAIRMAN WALLACE: Tim.

23 VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: Spruth.

24 MEMBER SPRUTH: Yes.

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1 VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: Doyle.

2 MEMBER DOYLE: Yes.

3 VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: Pretz.

4 MEMBER PRETZ: Yes.

5 VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: Holderfield.

6 MEMBER HOLDERFIELD: Yes.

7 VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: Frio.

8 MEMBER FRIO: Yes.

9 VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: Wallace.

10 CHAIRMAN WALLACE: Yes.

11 VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: Kessler, yes.

12 CHAIRMAN WALLACE: That concludes Item 5 on
13 the agenda.

14 Item 7 will also be included in the
15 September 22nd. We don't need a motion on that
16 because it's an action item.

17 MR. COLBY: Correct.

18 CHAIRMAN WALLACE: Item 8 is weekly
19 development report.

20 MR. COLBY: One of the things that was
21 discussed at the joint meeting with the planning and
22 development committee was that the Plan Commission
23 wanted a chance to go over the weekly development
24 report and I guess ask any questions and take a look

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1 at things that are coming soon. So I handed out a
2 copy of it, but we were thinking we would include it
3 in the packet going forward.

4 VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: That's a great idea.
5 I'd say ever since we have had this discussion about
6 it I actually study it and see what's coming up.
7 Because I think many of us looked at it like, you
8 know, it was just a report that came every week and
9 you can see what was going on but never looked at it
10 like a timetable of what we're doing. So it's very
11 helpful.

12 MEMBER PRETZ: It is nice to see what we
13 have at our next meeting so far.

14 CHAIRMAN WALLACE: All right. Meeting
15 announcements, you see them all in your agenda. Is
16 there any additional business from Plan Commission
17 members?

18 MS. JOHNSON: I have something.

19 CHAIRMAN WALLACE: You are not a Plan
20 Commission member. This is not your turn.

21 All right. Staff.

22 MS. JOHNSON: I have an invitation for you
23 all, if you want to take one and pass it. This is an
24 event happening on October 7th. It's on employer-

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1 assisted housing. It is being put on by CMAP in
2 St. Charles, and it's part of the Homes for a Changing
3 Region implementation. So it was a recommendation to
4 encourage employer-assisted housing in the city, and
5 the event is really aimed at educating large employers
6 on employer-assisted housing; EAH it's called. There
7 are programs offered by employers to assist employees
8 financially to find housing near where they work. So
9 there's tax credits offered by the State, and this is
10 really an informational session for the employers, but
11 you're all welcome to attend if you're interested.

12 CHAIRMAN WALLACE: All right. Is there a
13 motion to adjourn?

14 VICE CHAIRMAN KESSLER: So moved.

15 MEMBER DOYLE: Second.

16 CHAIRMAN WALLACE: Moved and seconded. All
17 in favor.

18 (Ayes heard.)

19 CHAIRMAN WALLACE: Opposed.

20 (No response.)

21 CHAIRMAN WALLACE: Motion passed unanimously.

22 This meeting of the St. Charles Plan Commission is
23 adjourned at 8:43 p.m.

24 (Off the record at 8:43 p.m.)

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CERTIFICATE OF SHORTHAND REPORTER

I, Paula M. Quetsch, Certified Shorthand Reporter No. 084-003733, CSR, RPR, and a Notary Public in and for the County of Kane, State of Illinois, the officer before whom the foregoing proceedings were taken, do certify that the foregoing transcript is a true and correct record of the proceedings, that said proceedings were taken by me stenographically and thereafter reduced to typewriting under my supervision, and that I am neither counsel for, related to, nor employed by any of the parties to this case and have no interest, financial or otherwise, in its outcome.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed my notarial seal this 14th day of September, 2015.

My commission expires: October 16, 2017



Notary Public in and for the
State of Illinois