



CDC/PC Joint Work Session Meeting Notes

March 5th, 2018

Introduction by Corey Liles

- Purpose of the project is to understand common principles, promote walkable and green character.
- Provide guidance for applicants
- Will discuss new authority chart

Consultants:

- Shape development based on objectives
- Offer flexibility in interpretation
- Design review document is not a plan, not a policy
 - But can inform policy
- Building on the code, but also informing the code
 - Give and take
- Members will have 2 weeks to provide comments after tonight
- Document Hierarchy
 - Vision for the District
 - Guiding Principles
 - Intent statements
 - Design guidelines
- Vision for the District
 - Build on the active, green, and creative traditions found in Chapel Hill
 - Promote Development of a walkable community with opportunities for all
- Revisions were based on comments received last time around
 - Being more specific with language
 - Understanding whether or not the guideline have teeth
 - Explaining how to apply four-sided design
 - Green character and enhancement of Booker Creek
 - Expand range of discussion about sustainability techniques
- Authority table
 - Indicates the applicable stage of review
 - Code compliance and COA review elements inform how to meet requirements
 - Design alternatives represents a range of options for applicants
- Recommendations for code changes (Corey)
 - Frontage types
 - New frontage type for Booker Creek
 - New Frontage Types for district streets, alleys, and non-vehicular thoroughfares
 - Varied Building massing
 - Max upper story floor plate (70% at 4th floor and above)
 - Meet existing step back or meet a max module length (6' offsets for every 40' of façade)
 - 20' setback needed to exempt building from module length/stepback

- Design alternative for other effective approaches to varied massing
- Building pass-through dimensions
 - Larger dimension for 4+ story buildings and pass-through longer than 50'
 - 2 story minimum heights
 - Greater width subject to CDC review
- New design alternatives
 - Phased redevelopment
 - Outdoor amenity space: sizing and location
 - Additional primary materials
 - Street tree sizing and space constraints
- Added or expanded design topics
 - Drive-thrus
 - Service drives
 - Building entrances
 - Transitions at the district edge
- Detail on staff and CDC review
 - COA Review elements
 - Design alternatives for innovative approaches
 - Locating new streets and assigning street types
 - Shared street improvements
 - TIA and Urban Design Assessment
- Name change, correction, clarifications

Questions and Comments

- Question: The current code says "open amenity space", not "green space". Why do guidelines focus on "green"?
 - Guidelines are meant to help guide how that open amenity space is developed. Focus on green can help more amenity spaces be green.
- Question: Is this the draft that is going forward in April?
 - There will be some time for minor revisions and comments, but mostly the same as this draft
- Comment: If we're changing the code, we need to include no service entrances on Type A Frontages. The CDC has asked for this multiple times. Please include it in these revisions.
- Question: The 6' and 40'... could you explain that more?
 - Idea is to bring a vertical articulation element every 40'. Bump-outs, columns, other modules... measured horizontally.
- Question: You have some references to proportionality in pass-throughs... could we do the same thing here?
 - Yes, trying to divide building into modules.
- Question: Is there some sort of prescription to this?
 - Yes, missing a figure in the presentation, but there is a minimum dimension number.

- Comment: These are some of the largest buildings in town... we want to insert the word "meaningful", as in "meaningful effect".
- Comment: Since these are guidelines, it's the principle that's important.
 - Example language: If it's a 2-story pass through, it must be for the full pass-through.
- Comment: Saying "proportional" is directional for the applicant.
- Question: Are you taking away measurements, and just saying proportional?
 - No, both will be there.
- Comment: Consultant has inferred that the pass-through was created as a substitute for what should have been a street. As such, street requirements should apply to pass-throughs.
 - When it started, it was supposed to be mid-block. But, scale increased.
- Comment (Corey): Nothing being proposed will replace the existing code; it is just an additive to the code.
- Question: If a building cannot meet requirements for whatever reasons, but is part of a phased development, can stipulations be placed that future development finishes out what was approved?
 - Time limits can be placed, but has to be rational. Stipulations can be placed in general, but reasonability must be considered.
- Comment: If proposing rooftop public space, there must be obvious access. And it must be ADA compliant.
- Comment: Amenity space is supposed to open up the area, but putting it on the roof does the opposite.
 - Consultant: what about keeping it to the first or second floor, overlooking public plazas?
 - Flexibility is important, so we don't want to centralize everything and lose the relief of intermittent spaces
- Comment: Large spaces shouldn't be a problem. Open space is already only 6% (2600 sf per acre). That's barely anything. Don't allow people to do less.
- Question: Ralph said some time ago that CDC could use the draft guidelines in assessment of projects. Have applicants been asking for the draft?
 - We've been telling applicants about the draft.
- Question: Can you explain changes to "street tree sizing and spacing with constraints"?
 - Would still have to be approved.
 - Design alternative example: If roots are impacting utilities, then place in boxes.
- Comment: Drive-thrus are at their worst when they conflict with pedestrians. Wording should specify that pedestrian routes are not interrupted.

- Comment: Drive-thrus should not be allowed "by right". Blue Hill is the only place in Chapel Hill where you can have a drive-thru by right, even though it is designed specifically to be more pedestrian friendly. A certain irony in that.
- Comment: It is a problem that zoning always ends at one side of the street. Public realm encompasses both sides of the street.
- Comment: Visual continuity is important. Building a nice new building next to something small and/or older is not good.