

**MINUTES
CITY OF HEDWIG VILLAGE
PLANNING AND ZONING SUB COMMITTEE MEETING
THURSDAY, JANUARY 22, 2009
6:00 P.M. – 955 PINEY POINT ROAD**

#1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Speck called the meeting to order at 7:07 P.M.

Present: Bob Wiener, Chairman
 Larry Opalka
 Barabra Abrams
 Richard Plessela
 Rand Stevens
Absent: Mark Tidwell

#2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Sub Committee Meeting – January 6, 2009

Tabled until next month's meeting on February 3, 2009.

#3. DISCUSSION OF BUILDING HEIGHTS IN BUSINESS DISTRICTS B1 AND B3

Sub-Committee Chairman Wiener invited the residents and visitors present at the meeting to speak on the topic.

Bob Collier stated he did not believe there was any reason to change the allowable building heights. He stated City of Houston already had tall buildings. He stated it was not worth the burden to the City streets.

Chairman Wiener asked Mr. Collier if he could be in favor of any change, possibly 1 or 2 stories.

Mr. Collier stated he was not in favor of any changes.

Suzie Opalka stated she spoke with a resident on Magdalene who was upset concerning the taller buildings currently being built on the I-10 frontage road at Bunker Hill. The resident stated the buildings are taller than what the area residents were initially told the building would be.

Sub-Committee Chairman Wiener stated any new buildings to be built in the City would be on the frontage road.

Mrs. Opalka stated the resident stated Hedwig Village has a small town feel and the Police Department and the Fire Department were very active.

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Member Larry Opalka asked Mrs. Opalka for her opinion.

Mrs. Opalka agreed.

Mr. Phil Taggart asked if the sub-committee had consulted with a City Planner. He asked if the possible increased revenue would pay for any additional Police Department or Fire Department manpower or equipment.

Mr. Larry Scarky stated he approved of the sub-committee's efforts. He asked about the Fire Department's stand on the taller buildings issue.

Sub-Committee Chairman Wiener stated Fire Chief Calunga has stated the Fire Department would be comfortable with any building up to 10 stories without an increase in manpower or equipment.

Sub-Committee Member Rand Stevens asked Mr. Scarky his opinion on improving the area along the I-10 frontage road.

Mr. Scarky stated he approved of the improvements of the area along the frontage road from Campbell Road heading east along the frontage road. He stated his concern was parking.

Sub-Committee Chairman Wiener read a letter from Sam Searcy, a resident and current president of the Chestwood III Homeowner Association. The letter expressed the opinion of the 26 homeowners of Chestwood III subdivision concerning their opposition to taller buildings.

Sub-Committee Chairman Wiener summarized the visitor comments by stated there appeared to be little interest in allowing taller buildings. He also stated the visitor comments showed there was a need to review the possible revenue increase from taller buildings.

Sub-Committee Chairman Wiener stated the current buildings along the I-10 frontage road may not be attractive to future tenants or developers.

Sub-Committee Chairman Wiener asked the sub-committee members to comment on the issue.

Sub-Committee Member Rand Stevens stated he represents the owners of the property on I-10 at Old Voss Road. He stated the owners would like to redevelop the property. He stated the old office buildings were demolished due to safety concerns. He stated the other buildings still on the property are very old and may be a fire hazard. He provided a

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list of areas that would need to be addressed and discussed. The list included discussion items such as neighborhood traffic, drainage, fire and life safety, open space and public parks, retail/property tax income for the City. The complete list was provided to all members and visitors.

Sub-Committee Chairman Wiener stated these areas would need to be discussed, possibly with an Urban Planner.

Mr. Phil Taggart asked if the redevelopment of the I-10 corridor would be controlled by Hedwig Village.

Sub-Committee Chairman Wiener stated Hedwig Village was a zoned City and any redevelopment would be controlled by the City.

Mr. Scarky asked about the proposed 10 story office building.

Sub-Committee Member Dr. Richard Plessela stated when he purchased the property, his architect designed a building that would compliment the City. He stated that building cost are rising and taller building recoup their cost more quickly.

Mr. Taggart asked about possible conflict of interest for the developers on the committee.

Sub-Committee Member Opalka stated the developers on the committee had previously stated their objectives for being on the committee. He also stated his concern was increased traffic within the City.

Sub-Committee Chairman Wiener stated that the committee consisted of 4 members of the Planning and Zoning Commission, 3 members which are present on this meeting.

Mr. Taggart stated the sub-committee made a good start but more information was needed before any decisions could be made. He also stated a plan needed to be decided on before any changes in building heights were made.

Sub-Committee Chairman Wiener stated the sub-committee was not ready to make any decisions.

Mr. Taggart stated the City would be at a disadvantage due to the redevelopment along other areas of the I-10 corridor. He also asked if the committee had established a timeline or benchmark.

Sub-Committee Chairman Wiener stated the only timeline the committee has would be to have a recommendation to forward to the Planning & Zoning Commission by mid year.

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Mr. Collier stated residential property values might decrease and residents may not be interested in the commercial property values increasing.

Sub-Committee Member Stevens stated he agreed with Mr. Taggart concerning the need for a timeline. He asked about the topic for the next meeting on February 3, 2009. He stated his architect may be able to attend.

Sub-Committee Chairman Wiener stated the list of discussion items provided by Sub-Committee Member Stevens was a good outline for discussion topics for the committee meetings.

Sub-Committee Member Opalka stated he believes that, after several meetings of the sub-committee, the developers would have an idea of citizens views and opinions and would develop property accordingly.

Sub-Committee Chairman Wiener stated one goal of the sub-committee was to stimulate discussion among the community for a consensus on possible change to building heights.

Sub-Committee Member Stevens asked if buffering the sound and light from the freeway would be important to the residents.

Mr. Taggart stated buffering would be nice, but not a high priority.

Sub-Committee Stevens reviewed his list again for the benefit for the committee and visitors. He stated that, based on the discussion from this meeting, access and traffic were important issues.

Sub-Committee Member Opalka stated one area to discuss would be a cost benefit analysis for the City.

Sub-Committee Member Stevens stated other areas for discussion would be fire and life safety and sight line issues.

Mr. Taggart stated some buildings in Hedwig Village are not attractive.

Sub-Committee Member Stevens suggested having an architect re-design a building based on areas of concerns discussed at this meeting.

Sub-Committee Member Plessela suggested providing a PowerPoint presentation showing a possible development from various angles to understand better what a project would look like such as height, materials used, and green areas.

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Mr. Collier suggested building a sound barrier wall instead of taller buildings to mute the sounds from the freeway.

Sub-Committee Chairman Wiener stated the TxDOT drawings for the frontage road included landscaping.

Sub-Committee Member Plessela asked about the timeline for the landscaping.

Sub-Committee Chairman Wiener stated the landscaping may be an ongoing project.

Sub-Committee Chairman Wiener asked for any additional comments from members and visitors.

Sub-Committee Member Plessela asked when the next meeting for the sub-committee would be.

Sub-Committee Chairman Wiener stated the next meeting would be on February 3, 2009 at approximately 8:00 P.M. after the regular scheduled Planning and Zoning Meeting.

#4. ADJOURNMENT

Sub-Committee Member Plessela moved, Sub-Committee Member Stevens seconded, to adjourn the meeting at 8:20 P.M.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY



Lisa Modisette
Planning and Zoning Secretary