

I. Call to Order

Members Present:

- Planning Commission: Mike O'Brien, Chair; Ruby Tetrack; Brian Colombini; John Baker; Trevor Thomas; Matt Gile
- DRB: David Weissberger, Chair; Aaron Guyette; Riley Livermore, Ryan Wade

City Staff Present: Ravi Venkataraman, Director of City Planning

Guests Present: Kate Coffey; Eli Ogilvie; Thomas Renner, Mayor; Al Turkos

Call to Order by: Mike O'Brien

Meeting Start Time: 6:35 pm

Minutes Recorded by: Ravi

II. Changes to the Agenda

None

III. Public Comment

Kate Coffey asked for a third-party review of the permit issued for 12 Franklin Street. David noted that additional review actions can be taken during the appeal period for the permit. Ravi said that new buildings are inspected through the Certificate of Occupancy process, that one of the dwelling units has been granted a certificate of occupancy, and that the other two dwelling units are pending based on the affordability requirements. Ravi said that permits are allowed small shifts based on the understanding that plans can change over time due to unforeseen elements.

Kate asked about the affordability requirements. Ravi explained the basis from the Federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and that the thresholds for the sale amount and income amount are available for the public through HUD and Vermont Housing Finance Agency.

Eli Ogilvie asked the Planning Commission about the blank wall limitations City Council is reviewing and why the commission chose to regulate blank walls by area instead of by floor. Ravi said that the Planning Commission was more concerned about an area of a façade to not have a blank wall, even though the form-based code and most regulations from other municipalities regulate blank walls by floor.

IV. Discussion: Recently reviewed Development Review projects

Ravi said that this agenda item is open-ended and deferred to the Development Review Board with their concerns. Aaron discussed the lack of alignment with the form-based code, its allowance for gas stations, and the disconnect between the intent of the code and the general layout of gas stations. Aaron asked about how the Planning Commission views character of the

area, and said he is concerned about the Development Review Board's lack of ability to regulate density for projects. Mike, Matt, John, and Trevor said that the Planning Commission is working on defining character of the area through better discrete standards with the help of the Building Typologies project. Mike pointed to state statute changes for the increases in density. Kate Coffey suggested talking to the state about the ramifications of these changes. Thomas noted that the statutory changes notwithstanding, Winooski City Council was committed to removing language that had racist connotations, and using racially charged terms as a fallback instead of discretely defining terms and limitations is not what City Council wants. Ravi said that the state had been progressively moving towards removing character of the area as a review criteria for years, and pushing municipalities to set discrete standards instead of relying on a generalized character of the area standard.

Mike highlighted the work on updating the City's municipal plan. Ravi said that the plan has a 30- to 50-year horizon. Trevor said that the character of the city will change over time, and the City will need to update its regulations to match the direction and needs of the City.

David voiced his concerns about the form-based code and the Building Typologies project as an architect, and said that open-ended elements are needed to cultivate creativity and change over time. David said that the Planning Commission should be concerned about overregulating.

Mike suggested a waiver for allowances in the form-based code. John asked about variances. Ravi explained the intent of the form-based code, the background for the application in question, and the allowances for non-conformities in the form-based code. Ravi added that this particular applicant has a lot of room to work with based on the size of the structure, and the ways to meet façade requirements in the form-based code.

V. Discussion: Recent changes to the Unified Land Use and Development Regulations and changes currently under consideration

Ravi gave an overview of the recommended changes to the ULUDR City Council is considering during their next meeting, the status of the Building Typologies project, and items the Planning Commission is currently discussing. Aaron asked about the Public Works Department's role in reviewing zoning permit applications. Ravi said that he's based his process on Eric Vorwald's process, has been adjusting his process and has involved the Public Works Department more in the last 6 months. Ravi added that all departments are involved in the review of projects subject to form-based code, as this is set in the form-based code.

Aaron asked about parking requirements. Ravi cited parking regulations in nearby municipalities, studies of places that have removed parking requirements, and recent Planning Commission conversations about off-street parking requirements. Mike, Thomas and Ravi said that determining parking requirements, and the usage of public streets is a balancing act.

Aaron asked about communicating to the broader public recent bylaw changes, and zoning mechanics. Thomas encouraged the Planning Commission and Development Review Board to communicate the information, considering how limited staff time is.

Brian asked Ravi about how to engage with the Comprehensive Plan development process. Ravi reviewed the upcoming open houses, and the surveys on the City website.

VI. City Updates

A. Updates from the Mayor

Thomas reviewed the approval of the tax rate, the status of the hotel and housing

project in the downtown, and the status of City Council's work on reviewing the roles of the City's boards and committees.

B. Updates from the Inclusion and Belonging Commission

C. Updates from City Staff

Ravi said that City Council will be holding a public hearing on the proposed updates to the Unified Land Use and Development Regulations, and that more information about the Comprehensive Plan open house are forthcoming.

VII. Other Business

Mike suggested that the Planning Commission and Development Review Board meet a couple times per year. The Development Review Board and Planning Commission concurred to meet again in January 2027 and July 2027.

VIII. Adjourn

Motion by: John

Second: Aaron

Meeting End Time: 8:15 pm