

CENTERVILLE PLANNING COMMISSION

Workshop Session - Nov. 11, 1975

7:30 p.m.

Those Present: Messrs Tate, McCrabb, McSherry, Hickey & Mrs. Lake. Also Present: G. Reynolds, City Planner.

The City Planner provided the following information:

1. Copies of the proposed planning budget for 1976 which totals approx. \$9000.
2. Proposals on preparation of the proposed zoning ordinance from a local firm (Woolpert Co.) and (Samborn, Stekette, Otis & Evans) an out of town firm. The local company estimated approximately \$7000 with an additional \$5000 work to be done by the City Planner. The out of town firm estimated approximately \$8500-\$12,000, with their company doing the work complete.

There followed a discussion of the pros and cons regarding a local firm versus an outside firm. Mr. McSherry and Mr. Hickey are opposed to the Woolpert Company only from the standpoint that they represent approx. 80% of the developers in this area. Mr. Tate said that any firm contracted for this job would only do what PC told them to do and would not dictate the policy. Mr. Tate is opposed to outside firms doing this type work. Mrs. Lake is not opposed to the Woolpert Co. and feels they would be fair in their dealings, but she realizes that there may be others who would be opposed for the reason stated by Mr. McSherry and Mr. Hickey. Mr. Hickey posed the question of conflict later in dealing with this local firm if they would be writing the ordinance with information given, using their language - they could conceivably later tell us our interpretation is inaccurate, since they would have written it. Mr. Reynolds feels that at that time the firm could be told that they had been directed as to what to write and the 'interpretation' is as PC so directed them. He could see a problem, perhaps, if this were a master plan or land development, in having this local firm, but on the ordinance he could see no problem. It was felt that in some circumstances (i.e. writing a curb cut ordinance) that this firm could have a built in bias which might sway them in the direction of their (potential) clients as opposed to the question of what is better for the City. Mr. McSherry would like to have someone close to the community but who does not deal with the City every day, such as this company. Mr. McCrabb feels that this is the best engineering firm in the area and favors taking this route. Mr. McSherry would like to see other estimates and will provide Mr. Reynolds with some names. Mr. Hickey questioned having an engineering company and it was explained that this firm has an excellent planning department, also, and this would be the department that would do this work. The question was raised as to whether a planner is really needed if the firm hired is only doing what PC directs them to do. There was some discussion regarding whether or not PC and the City Planner should handle this. Mr. Tate feels there should be a degree of professionalism. Mr. McCrabb does not see a conflict of interest and does not favor paying someone from the outside who is not here to live with the results. Mrs. Lake feels PC could write this with assistance from another planner. Mr. Tate said that this is what we are trying to do - get someone to write this so that it doesn't conflict with other areas - getting someone to 'pull this together'. Mr. Reynolds reminded the commission members of the numerous meetings,

etc., required by the sub-committee that worked on the Group Housing ordinance. To finalize what goes into an ordinance takes a lot of discussion and points have to come out that may not have been brought up previously. Mr. Hickey said he is not directly opposed to the Woolpert Co., but would prefer getting more than these two estimates. Mr. Reynolds explained that these estimates were obtained for budget purposes only and that others will be solicited. There is some feeling that this could be done by PC and the present City Planner. Mr. Reynolds showed a copy of a zoning ordinance from a town in Michigan that was written in lay language and said this is what we should strive for. He also said there are many conflicts and contradictions in our present ordinance that must be resolved. (Some of these contradictions were discussed briefly.) The fact that our zoning ordinance is always changing and creating these contradictions was discussed. There is a definite feeling that we change too often for sometimes questionable reasons. Centerville lacks a good stand on planning, one member feels, while another member feels that planning had nothing to do with (certain) things such as residential is planned and then is changed. Mr. McSherry feels the comments made at this work session help to point out the fact that the PC members go in different directions and we need someone who is not that close to Centerville.

3. A tabulation is being made of the sign ordinance for better reference.
4. A proposal is to have a zoning map and specifications of the zoning ordinance in the newspaper - this is an item on the budget being proposed. Mr. Reynolds asked that the members consider this and its support when it is presented later.
5. Planning staff is checking sources (i.e. Federal Regulations) regarding sign, right-of-way, etc. as may be questioned when I-675 is a reality. State regulations are also being reviewed. The possible future sign problems may be regarding height, lighting, size, etc.

Review of the proposed A.P. District Zoning ordinance:

Mr. Tate summarized the points of discussion - what does the City hope to gain by having a Board of Architectural Review? How appropriate is it for the Planning Commission to be or not to be involved in that district? Mr. Hickey asked why the board had been created. Mr. Tate explained that Council asked for this board because they wanted an architectural review board to preserve the center city and the historical houses. The board was to consist, originally, of a member of the Historical Society, architectural specialists, etc. The only function originally of the BAR was to review architecture - to review the aesthetics of the structure. Mr. Hickey asked what changed that, and why. Mr. Tate explained that the ordinance was presented to Council and while it was in Council the South Main Street business application came up and this was held up for two years. It was resolved by taking this (district) away from the PC and giving it to the BAR, thus preventing a law suit. It was stated that this seems like a waste of time (to review this) because Council overturned PC's unanimous decision regarding South Main Street business. It is felt that when Council placed the members on PC that they should consider our decisions and 50% of them are being overturned. There is strong feeling that a work session with PC and Council is a necessity.

It was generally agreed by the members present that the whole philosophy of the proposed ordinance should be changed - that the BAR should remain strictly an Architectural Review Board. The City Planner said that this ordinance has been worked on for two years and that this would give the BAR the power of a Planning Commission, this is what was requested - a binding legal document. It was stated that anything done (planned) for this area - the center of town - has a direct impact on the rest of the area. It is felt that there is a lot of responsibility for the BAR with regard to architecture - that the physical planning should be done by the PC.

It is felt that this planning should be a section of the City Zoning Ordinance except that which has to do with architecture. Two planning boards should not be in effect for the City of Centerville. The proposed ordinance has been viewed as an addition to the Centerville Ordinance and everything that did not pertain to the architectural preservation has been recommended for removal from this document. It is felt that the site plan should come to the PC - especially any site plan that adjoins a residential zone. Also, it is felt that the sign ordinance of the City should be a guideline and that the signs in the AP District could be more restrictive but not less restrictive - there should be one ordinance for the signs. Curb cuts in the AP district should come to the PC and there should not be a separate ordinance for parking. PC should review the traffic patterns, etc., then the plan can go to the BAR for architectural review. There was a question raised about a portion of this proposal whereby selling of a portion of a record plot and lot splitting might be sanctioned.

It is felt that the original plan should go first to the PC and then to the BAR for their architectural review, as this is their area of expertise. AP should be mentioned in the City Zoning Ordinance that applies in that district - i.e. parking, curbs, etc. There should be one zoning ordinance and one body for planning.

The revised draft, in accordance with comments received at this work session, will be given to the PC members for their review prior to the next regular meeting. A work session to discuss this revised draft is scheduled immediately following the next meeting - November 25, 1975. A proposed cover letter will also be prepared to accompany the final draft to Council. This revised draft will be given to the BAR members prior to forwarding to Council. It is felt that PC members should be in attendance at the Council meeting when this recommended version is on the Council agenda.

Meeting adjourned at 10:00 p.m.

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