

MINUTES
MANHATTAN URBAN AREA PLANNING BOARD
City Commission Room, City Hall
1101 Poyntz Avenue
December 16, 2013
7:00 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Linda Morse, Chairperson; Phil Anderson, Vice-Chairperson; Gary Stith; John Ball; Jerry Reynard; Ron Hageman; and, Mike Kratochvil.

MEMBERS ABSENT:

STAFF PRESENT: Eric Cattell, Assistant Director for Planning; Lance Evans, Senior Planner; Steve Zilkie, Senior Planner; Chad Bungler, Planner II; Kevin Credit, Planner; and Bob Isaac, Riley County Planner.

OPEN PUBLIC COMMENTS

No one spoke.

CONSENT AGENDA

APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE DECEMBER 2, 2013, MANHATTAN URBAN AREA PLANNING BOARD MEETING.

SET ASIDE THE PREVIOUSLY APPROVED FINAL PLAT OF NORTHLAKE ADDITION, UNIT 2, AND APPROVE THE REVISED FINAL PLAT OF NORTHLAKE ADDITION, UNIT 2, GENERALLY LOCATED 500-FEET EAST OF THE INTERSECTION OF DONNAS WAY AND NORTHFIELD ROAD. (APPLICANT/OWNER: MANKAN, LLC - BRANDT RUDZINSKI, MANAGER)

Stith moved that the Board approve the Consent Agenda. Reynard seconded the motion. On a vote, the Minutes were approved (5-0-2) with Ball and Anderson abstaining because they were not at the meeting, and the plat was approved (7-0).

GENERAL AGENDA

AT THE REQUEST OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF RILEY COUNTY, CONTINUE THE PUBLIC HEARING TO RECONSIDER THE REQUEST TO REZONE AN UNPLATTED TRACT, FROM "AG" (AGRICULTURAL DISTRICT) TO "D-1" (INDUSTRIAL PARK), LOCATED APPROXIMATELY 2000 FEET EAST OF SCENIC DRIVE, ON THE SOUTH SIDE OF K-18 HIGHWAY. (THOMAS)

Isaac indicated that the applicant requested the item be tabled to the January 6, 2014 meeting, due to a family illness.

Stith moved to table the item to the January 6, 2014 meeting date. Ball seconded the motion, which passed on a vote of 6-0-1 with Kratochvil abstaining, due a conflict of interest.

WORK SESSION AGENDA

OVERVIEW - REVISION OF SIGNAGE PROVISIONS IN THE MANHATTAN ZONING REGULATIONS.

Zilkie and Bunger presented an overview on the updates to the sign regulations.

Stith said that he understands the concept of content neutral but you do control content when you make the distinction between off-premise signs and on-premise signs. Zilkie explained the process and intent that the staff is taking to make clear and understandable sign regulations.

Anderson asked if the updates are an attempt to make sure we have clear and understandable regulations. Zilkie agreed. Anderson then asked if the county regulations are coordinated with the updates to the City regulations. Zilkie said that there has been coordination with the County in regards to billboard regulations.

Kratochvil asked how signs are regulated on state highways compared to regulations within City limits. Cattell said that if the sign is located within the city limits then the city sign regulations take precedence. If the sign is located in the County then it must meet all applicable regulations.

Ball said that the State's interest is in the right-of-way that goes through the city. Cattell agreed and said that in rural areas it does involve private property as well due to the federal beatification act.

Kratochvil asked if the school district has been asking for digital signs. Bunger said that there have been some inquiries from the PTOs.

Bunger asked the Board for its thoughts on if digital signs should be allowed within Manhattan. Ball said that they should be allowed within the city but with limitations. Cattell said that there are a number of issues that come with digital signs. Ball said that overall he feels that digital signs should be allowed but there needs to be restrictions.

Anderson said that the issue is if digital signs can be regulated. Cattell said that digital signs can be regulated but there are details that need to be addressed.

Morse expressed her concerns about the distractions that come along with digital signs and that she would like to stay away from using conditional use permits.

Bunger asked if digital signs are appropriate in residential districts, such as with institutional uses.

Hageman said that digital signs are fine but there should not be any motion. He said it's no different than texting while driving.

Kratochvil said he thinks that schools and churches should be exempt.

Morse expressed her concerns with digital signs in residential neighborhoods. Kratochvil said that the digital signs could be regulated to turn off at certain times.

Morse said that there could be some areas that are more conducive for digital signs than others. Bunger said that may be a reason for using the conditional use approach.

Kratochvil discussed the use of digital signs in commercial districts and said that he is more accepting to allow them within residential districts for schools and churches.

Morse said that there is certainly more discussion needed moving forward.

Bunger discussed the feedback received from the focus group meetings conducted in the spring with various business and neighborhood groups and the sign contractors.

Reynard discussed allowing digital signs in the Aggieville District if it was ever turned into a completely pedestrian area so it would not affect traffic safety.

Zilkie discussed some of the mechanisms for regulating digital signs that will need to be addressed throughout the process.

Morse asked how the updates will transition into the county's regulations. Bunger said that will be discussed with the county as the process moves forward. Cattell said that urban areas have different objectives than rural areas in terms of zoning regulations which must be taken into consideration.

Bunger asked about sidewalk signs. Stith said that sidewalk signs generally work in a predominately pedestrian environment and that they need to be regulated to make sure they don't block the sidewalk.

Bunger asked about sidewalk signs in a C-2 district or a PUD, where sidewalks might be private. Stith said that those districts are sometimes less pedestrian oriented but the number of sidewalk signs needs to be regulated. Cattell said that in the Aggieville and Downtown districts the sidewalks are within the public right-of-way which will need to be addressed to allow sidewalk signs.

Hageman said that if the sidewalk is large enough for a sidewalk sign he didn't see anything wrong with allowing them. Ball said that the city should be able to write reasonable regulations to allow sidewalk signs that are appropriate.

Kratochvil asked about the Aggieville District requesting sidewalk signs a few years ago and said that the association needs to be included in these discussions. Cattell discussed the past requests from the Downtown and Aggieville Districts about sidewalk dining.

Bunger discussed banner signs and asked for feedback from the Board.

Kratochvil expressed concern with how some of the main roads look with all the clutter from temporary signs.

Reynard expressed his concern about the overuse of banner signs. Kratochvil expressed his thoughts on banner signs and raised the question on how to regulate them in certain areas. Ball said it comes down to setting reasonable regulations regarding number, size and placement for business owners.

Anderson asked about signs being carried by people. Bunger said that generally the city doesn't regulate them unless they become a nuisance.

Hageman asked about ways to enforce the regulations in regards to unsightliness. Bunger said that generally the city stays away from regulating the appearance of signs because it can be subjective, but there are regulations addressing maintenance.

Bunger discussed sign regulations in residential districts.

Anderson indicated his neighborhood had concerns about certain large wall signs for rentals that were out of place in lower density areas.

Morse expressed a need to protect residential areas from flashing signs and other inappropriate types.

Bunger thanked the Board for its input and indicated there would be future discussion with public once the draft was completed.

DISCUSS THE MANHATTAN URBAN AREA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE.

Evans indicated that because the City was about to start the update of the Manhattan Urban Area Comprehensive Plan, that process would take the place of this year's annual review of the Comprehensive Plan. He explained the study area boundary and the overall process timeline for the Comprehensive Plan update, and he and Cattell explained the committee structure for the project.

Evans then asked the Board to identify any broad issues that should be considered with the update to the Plan.

Ball identified the need to look at areas that could potentially be rezoned for high density student oriented housing around the University and refine the redevelopment areas to minimize the need to drive and to reduce traffic impacts and enhance internal growth. Ball suggested looking at the entire perimeter around K-State to identify which areas would be more conducive to transition to higher density.

Stith expressed a need to look for opportunities for mixed use development outside of the downtown and Aggieville areas such as in suburban areas and underutilized shopping centers. He also said implementation of the Comprehensive Plan was critical and that the document needs to identify how to encourage and facilitate implementation.

Morse said there needs to be discussion about boundaries within the city and where hard lines of no expansion might be. She said she never thought Aggieville would expand north of Bluemont and that higher density student apartment complexes wouldn't go east of Juliette Avenue. She agreed that the high density housing issue needs to be discussed so that both homeowners and the development community are alerted about where it might go in the future. She said identifying transition areas and redevelopment areas is also important.

Anderson said he thinks the recent trend towards denser, taller, mixed-use buildings in the downtown core, with retail on the first floor and other commercial or residential uses on upper floors is a positive for the area.

Morse said there is a need to better understand Kansas State University's intentions and master plan for the future.

Kratochvil said the Board has asked the University to come forward to the Board on development issues. An example was the large power substation in the north campus area that was under construction before going through the county's review. He said there is a lot of KSU property north of Kimball Avenue that might be developed by the university.

Cattell reminded the Board that representatives from K-State were scheduled to present the K-State Campus Master Plan to the Board in February. He said the KSU has representatives on the Technical Advisory Committee and the Project Advisory Committee for the Comprehensive Plan update.

Stith said one of the most difficult and important issues facing the city, is housing affordability. It's a function of supply and demand and there is a short supply combined with very low vacancy rates. The study needs to focus on how to generate more affordable housing opportunities in the Manhattan area. He said it makes it difficult for local companies to attract and hire employees when they can't afford to buy a home in the area.

Reynard asked if that was a regional or local issue.

Stith said it is both a regional and a local issue and that some of it can be solved regionally, but that the Manhattan area needs to provide more affordable housing in the closer proximity to the university and other areas. He said it could involve expansion of the city as well as infill and redevelopment.

Cattell identified the eastern boundary of the study area in Pottawatomie County is Lake Elbow Road which is also the MPO (Metropolitan Planning Organization) boundary. Stith indicated the need to plan for parks, schools and other needs.

Ball said the competition between various transient groups, such as Fort Riley and students, and the more permanent population for housing is driving up the cost of rental housing. He said they need to take the economic pressure off with more one bedroom units and other types of rental housing, so that families can afford to rent close in as well. He said this hopefully would also address the increasing problem of degrading rental properties that impact the whole neighborhood over time.

Morse identified the need for the Planning Board to be kept informed throughout the process, so the Board has a better sense of the issues being addressed. She also asked about updates on the NBAF project and the bioscience report.

Kratochvil said he was encouraged to see that the eastern study area boundary goes to Lake Elbow Road and that Pottawatomie County is participating because there needs to be a better sense of direction for future growth in Pottawatomie County. Development is currently piecemeal and they need amenities. He said the affordable housing issue is also affected by the lack of affordable land costs in the area. He said expansion of housing development to the east is the most logical direction.

Morse indicated that the MATS (Manhattan Transportation Strategy) update is also an important component of the Comprehensive Plan update and that public transportation is an important feature of that. She said general aviation is also an important component, as well as ring roads around the community.

Stith mentioned that the MPO is also currently developing the Transportation Demand Model and just put out the RFP for the Long Range Transportation Plan, and that Junction City is updating its Comprehensive Plan, so there are a lot of planning initiatives in the area that can inform each other.

Evans indicated there would be updates provided to the Board throughout the project by staff as well as the Planning Board's committee representatives.

REPORTS AND COMMENTS BY BOARD MEMBERS

Cattell reminded the Board about the kickoff meetings for the Comprehensive Plan update.

Cattell recognized Steve Zilkie for his 29 years of service to the community and the Planning Board.

Respectfully submitted,

Chase Johnson, Planning Intern;
Eric Cattell, Assistant Director for Planning