



PLANNING DEPARTMENT

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**WESTLAKE PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES OF THE WORK SESSION MEETING
MARCH 13, 2023**

Present: Chairman Brad Lamb, Matt Jones, Duane Van Dyke, Lauren Falcone, Bonnie Smith
Also Present: Planning Director Jim Bedell

The work session meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chairman Lamb.

BUSINESS

Ord. 2023-6 code amendments Chapter 1211 “Residential Districts” as to Multi-family townhouse, cluster, two-family dwelling and apartment developments, ref. 2/2/23

Mr. Lamb stated the purpose of this moratorium has been to take time out to study the residential code, Chapter 1211 and see what is working for multi-family uses and what needs to be addressed. This code is over 50 years old and was created at a time when Westlake was still largely rural. Although it was changed through the years to address new housing trends, such as cluster homes, the type of development we have today looks much different from what occurred in the past, with most being on smaller infill parcels next to long-established residential subdivisions. These new developments have the potential to affect their neighbors, so development should continue to be compatible with its surroundings, within a framework that encourages appropriate development. The result of this effort will be to recommend to Council changes to improve the code and future development.

Mr. Bedell discussed the background of the moratorium beginning with Resolution 2022-37: passed on 4/7/22 and Resolution 2022-90: passed on 10/6/22. It is currently in effect until 4/30/2023. This process to review the code has included an emphasis on “the public good” recognizing Westlake’s mixture of zones, balanced housing and quality of life that has been beneficial for attracting families, aging in place, economic development, low impact on surrounding neighborhoods, and preserving community character. This effort could ultimately recommend many changes or few changes. The focus of this first work session is on “Big Picture” items related to cluster, townhomes, and multi-unit buildings, such as density and zoning requirements, setbacks and buffer of multi-family next to existing residential and like developments, building heights, and distance between buildings to prevent overcrowding.

Mr. Bedell and members of the subcommittee discussed the following recommendations from the City’s Consultant and the subcommittee: potential development under the current zoning; minimum development area required for clusters reduced from four to one acre and for townhomes increased from one to two acres; maximum density for clusters increased from 2.904 units per acre to 3 units per acre; number of attached townhomes reduced from six to four; how to address split-zoned properties; improved separation of uses in residential zones by not allowing every R-1F-80 main and conditional use in every other zone; need a separate zone for multi-family clusters; current setbacks and distance between cluster units are acceptable, it should be less than 30’ from private streets and a 7.5’ wide setback from fee simple title lot lines is needed for outdoor uses; current setbacks and distance between buildings for other multi-family uses are currently by formula according to the height and width of the building which results in greater setbacks for larger buildings and agreed to better than a fixed number so not recommended to change; a recent sampling of average building heights for residential homes is two stories or 33.4’ and for townhomes is two stories and 32’, so a similar height for clusters and other multifamily dwellings should be applied; buffer requirements should not be onerous and remain 30’ for clusters but should increase to 50’ for other multi-family dwellings, which is the current minimum building setback when multi-family abuts one-family residential; new regulations are suggested for “mini” or small-scale planned unit development are recommended for multi-family developments less than 25 acres; and review of case studies relative to this effort.

The following members of the audience addressed the commission: Mr. Walid Dardir is a Westlake resident and developer. He introduced his builder, Tony DiBenedetto. Mr. Dardir purchased property one month prior to the moratorium going into effect for the purpose of a townhome development. They wanted the Planning Commission to be aware of the challenges associated with developing smaller split-zoned properties.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 8:56 p.m.

Chairman Brad Lamb

James Bedell
Director of Planning and Economic Development

Approved: _____