

**Johnson Planning Commission**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**July 27, 2015**

Committee members in attendance: David Bergh, Paul Warden, Phil Wilson, Cindy Hennard, Brian Boyden, David Grozinsky, Ben Waterman.

Other attendees: Walter Pomroy, Scott Meyer, Mark Nielsen, Jollie Parker, Charles Flaum (all Form Based Code Committee), Lea Kilvadyova

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In the absence of both the chair and the vice-chair, David Bergh called the meeting to order at 7:20.

*Review of Form Based Code*

First, Form Based Code Committee members talked about the geographic focus of the proposed code. They provided reasons for why some areas of the town are not included in the code. The reasons described by Walter included a limited amount of available time, a huge amount of effort required to draft the code, and the community's desire to focus on addressing the downtown area. Charles Flaum said that the code largely focuses on regulating the form and not the use of the buildings. Walter added that one exception is the Village Neighborhood district which has two disallowed uses (adult book stores and industrial operation with large number of truck traffic). Scott Meyer said that after a public meeting at which the draft code was presented, it became really clear that some residents living in uphill areas of the Village, Gould Hill in particular, wanted nothing to do with the implementation of the code in their area. There were also issues with Clay Hill vis-a-vis its topography. Scott said that some form based code standards, such as setbacks, would be hard to follow because of existing streams and ledges. Public opposition and the topographic limitations contributed to the Committee's decision to limit the geographic reach of the code. Lea added that to her, an important feature of form based code is that it cares about how buildings affect public streetscape and an impression they make on people passing by. Aesthetic impact is always considered.

Next, per Lea's suggestion, Committee members in detail reviewed standards proposed for the Village Storefront District. The following summary captures key points pertaining to the Village Storefront District:

- Ben Waterman asked for clarification of the floor-to-floor height. Is it finished first floor to the finished second floor measurement? David Bergh noted that we should mark this as an area in need of an additional explanation.
- While discussing the glazing requirement, David Grozinsky asked whether people remembered how much glazing the former Beards' Hardware used to have. The amount of glazing was sizably reduced when the ownership changed and the building was refurbished to a pizzeria. The loss of the glass in the store front has a significant visual impact.
- Ben remarked that the document does appear to regulate uses. In multiple places it talks about residential uses, commercial uses, etc. Also, in the Village Storefront district residential use on the ground floor is disallowed.
- David Grozinsky noted that a bullet point defining parking standards says that there is no parking required for ground floor uses of less than 5,000 feet. The 5,000 feet number should be double checked. Charles thought it is a typo and the number should be 500 feet.
- Ben noted that the document is 42 pages long and some standards in the document are completely superfluous. He said that the document could be simplified and the standards significantly chopped

down. As an example, he mentioned glazing. As a green builder, he thought that it was very restrictive to require 80% glazing on buildings the front of which face north.

- Ben also discussed that he did not agree with the standard that requires 75% of the lot frontage to be built out. He said that this is restricting developers from developing their properties as a green space. Cindy said that this requirement exists because we want to maximize commercial development in the downtown. Ben contradicted by saying a vegetable farm in the downtown district would be a commercial use however the 75% lot frontage buildout standard would not allow it.

Other discussion points were:

- Scott Meyer said that he was hoping that the Planning Commission would revisit the minimum number of parking spaces required for a residential unit in the Neighborhood District. He thought that the “minimum of 1” was not enough.
- On page 27, a suggestion was made to strike out “and to bring about their eventual elimination in order to preserve the integrity of the regulations established in this Code”.
- On Page 1, a request was made to fill in the blanks in the section titled “When do I need a permit?”
- Ben asked what the Planning Commission timeline and the purpose are in terms of revising this document. Is the public expecting to vote on this in March? Lea said that the expectation is for the Planning Commission to review the document and make edits, if needed. Then warn a hearing to allow for public comment. Once the public comment period is finished, the Planning Commission will decide whether to approve the code or not. After the Planning Commission approves the code, it shall pass it to the legislative body for their review and action. Lea said that David Butler was hoping that once the public comment period is done, there would be an educational period the goal of which would be provide opportunities to learn how the code works.

David Bergh remarked that it is appropriate for the Planning Commission to play devil’s advocate and tweak the document but at the same time, it is important to recognize there is a high bar in that we have a citizen group that has been working on drafting the code for a year and at the end of their process came to a conclusion that these are the standards they would like to recommend. David Bergh thanked the Committee for their remarkable work. He said that he did not want to obligate the Committee to come to further meetings but their presence would be very useful for answering questions and making clarifications.

**David Grozinsky moved and Phil Wilson seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:55 P.M. All voted in favor.**

----- Notes taken by: Lea Kilvadyova