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**TOWN OF CHARLOTTE
PLANNING COMMISSION
Special Meeting
JULY 9, 2015**

DRAFT

Minutes are subject to correction by the Charlotte Planning Commission. Changes, if any, will be recorded in the minutes of the next Planning Commission meeting.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Jeff McDonald, Chair; Peter Joslin, Gerald Bouchard, Charles Pughe. **ABSENT:** Marty Illick, Paul Landler & Donna Stearns.

ADMINISTRATION: Jeannine McCrumb, Town Planner/Zoning Administrator.

OTHERS: Michael Russell, Howard Seaver, Karen Frost, Carrie Spear, David Nichols, Robert Mack, Frank Tenney, Jonathan Fisher, Mathew Zucker, Robin Reid, Steven Brooks, Fritz Tegatz, Gary Farnsworth, Martha Perkins, and Dean Bloch.

AGENDA ITEMS:

- **Proposed Town Plan Amendment Discussion; Village Center Designation Recommendation; and Energy Chapter**
- **Proposed Zoning Regulation Amendment Discussion; Conditional Uses; Energy Facility Siting Standards / Site Plan Review**

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. McDonald, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m. Mr. McDonald explained that the meeting would be run as an informal “work session” to review proposed changes to the Town Plan and Land Use Regulations. Mr. McDonald encouraged the audience and Zoning Board of Adjustment to participate in the discussion. As for the time-frame, Mr. McDonald clarified that the Planning Commission would take into consideration the comments provided during this work session, and eventually schedule a formal hearing to present the final proposal. The final Planning Commission proposal will then be passed to the Selectboard for review, and ultimately the proposal will be voted on by Charlotte voters.

Ms. McCrumb explained that the Planning Commission would push forward with two initiatives for a November vote, despite a planned comprehensive Town Plan update. Changes are proposed to the following sections of the Town Plan and Land Use Regulations:

1. Energy Chapter/ Energy Siting Standards
2. Changes to Conditional Uses in the Village Commercial and Commercial/Light Industrial Districts/ Recommendation for Village Center Designation

VILLAGE CENTER DESIGNATION:

48 Ms. McCrumb explained that the Town Plan must contain language recommending
49 Village Designation before an application for Village Designation can be submitted.
50 Village Designation provides property owners in the designated village areas tax credits
51 for improvements to existing buildings.

52
53 Mr. Russell added that Village Designation acts as a prequalification for many planning
54 grants. By having Village Designation, you are in a better position for receiving grant
55 money.

56
57 Mrs. Frost noted that a site visit would be conducted by a State representative who will
58 walk the West Charlotte Village and East Charlotte Village to delineate the boundaries
59 for designation. The site visit will be open to the public and will take place on August 20,
60 2015 at 5:00 p.m. Ms. McCrumb noted that notice will be posted as we get closer to
61 August.

62
63 Mr. Nichols asked if Village Center Designation would change the town's zoning district
64 lines.

65
66 Ms. McCrumb explained that Village Designation is completely independent from the
67 town's zoning districts, which are not currently proposed to change. The Village
68 Designation may have different boundaries than the town's district boundaries.

69
70 **ENERGY STANDARDS:**

71 Ms. McCrumb explained that the current Energy Standards are outdated and do not
72 include renewable energy sources. The updated plan discusses renewable energy goals
73 and an updated inventory and trends section. With the anticipation of new legislation that
74 will allow towns to have a role in siting renewable energy sources, the Town Plan, and
75 updated Land Use Regulations will address the siting of new renewable installations.

76
77 Mr. Tegatz expressed concern that the Energy Standards draft did not provide a cost
78 analysis for how the Town will meet the ambitious net-zero goals. Mr. Tegatz also asked
79 if the total energy consumption (including energy sources other than electricity) could be
80 added to the updated inventory.

81
82 Ms. Spear suggested the language discouraging single-occupant vehicles be removed or
83 reworded to sound less regulatory.

84
85 Mr. Pughe recommended that the Energy Standards include a definition section so that
86 terms such as "locally sourced" and "locally scaled" can be clarified.

87
88 Mr. Tegatz asked if the town currently required energy efficient lighting as part of the
89 regulations. Ms. McCrumb clarified that the regulations require down shielded lighting to
90 prevent glare but do not speak to energy efficient lighting sources.

91
92
93

94

95 ENERGY SITING:

96 Ms. McCrumb explained that Energy Siting Standards need to be added to the Land Use
97 Regulations, as the regulations do not currently speak to renewables.

98

99 Mr. Tegatz suggests adding language that addresses “shadow easements”. Mr. Tegatz
100 explained that this type of easement may be necessary for properties that neighbor solar
101 installations.

102

103 Ms. McCrumb explained that currently, solar panels are being treated as accessory
104 structures, and thus, will be subject to current accessory structure setbacks. Ms.
105 McCrumb posed the question as to whether solar panels should be continued to be
106 considered an accessory structure or whether they should have their own classification.

107

108 Ms. McCrumb read the State mandated setbacks. The State requires a 40ft setback from
109 the travel way, and a 25ft setback from property lines, for installations 15k-150k in size.
110 The State requires a 100ft setback from the travel way, and a 40ft setback from property
111 lines, for installations greater the 150k.

112

113 Mr. Pughe noted that there is no State setback for installations less than 15k. Mr. Pughe
114 explained that single-panel solar trackers, typical of residential use, are less than 15k.

115

116 **CHANGES TO CONDITIONAL USES IN THE VILLAGE COMMERCIAL AND**
117 **COMMERCIAL/LIGHT INDUSTRIAL DISTRICTS:**

118

119 Mr. Seaver explained that the Community Development Group is seeking to limit the
120 need for Conditional Use Review in the Village Commercial and Commercial/ Light
121 Industrial Districts. While commercial development would still require Site Plan Review,
122 Mr. Seaver explained that his group believed that eliminating the need to gain approval
123 from both the Planning Commission, and the Zoning Board, would make it easier to start
124 a business in the Districts where businesses are encouraged.

125

126 Changes to the Village Commercial District include changing the following from
127 conditional uses to permitted uses: Adaptive Reuse, Financial Institution (max: 2,500 sq.
128 ft.), Grocery Store (max: 3,500 sq. ft.), Health Care Facility, Inn (max: 5,000 sq. ft.),
129 Parking Facility, Retail store (max: 3,500 sq. ft.), Restaurant (max: 75 seats), snack bar,
130 and Veterinary clinic (max: 3,500 sq. ft.). Mr. Russell added that he would like to see
131 “crafts, production” added as a new permitted use.

132

133 Changes to the Commercial/ Light Industrial District include changing all conditional
134 uses to permitted uses, eliminating residential use, and other changes to the dimensional
135 standards.

136

137 Mr. Tenney recommended eliminating the division in the regulations between the East
138 and West Village in Table 2.3

139

140 Mr. Fisher suggested requiring conditional use review for residential uses in the Village
141 Commercial District.

142

143 Mr. Tegtaz expressed concern that by discontinuing conditional use, the town will lose
144 the ability to regulate development in the Village Commercial and Commercial/ Light
145 Industrial Districts.

146

147 Ms. McCrumb explained that even as a permitted use, the development would require
148 Site Plan Review, and still have to meet local and statewide regulations. Ms. McCrumb
149 suggested that the Performance Standards be incorporated into Site Plan Review.

150

151 Mr. Tenney asked if setback distances would be reviewed in the Commercial/ Light
152 Industrial District. It is suggested that setbacks within the Commercial/Light Industrial
153 District be reduced, but perhaps a larger setback would be needed where two different
154 Zoning Districts abut.

155

156 Mr. Fransworth asked if it was possible that retail space be increased from 3,500 sq. ft. to
157 5,000 sq. ft. in the Village Commercial District. He is particularly concerned with the old
158 Citgo lot on the east-side Route 7.

159

160 Mr. Russell explained that the Community Development Group used the existing square
161 footage numbers to calculate the numbers for the proposal.

162

163 Mr. Russell briefly explained the proposed changes to the contractor's yard section of the
164 regulations. This change includes allowing the storage of fuel for equipment, so long as it
165 meets the State Above-Ground Fuel Storage Regulations.

166

167 Mr. Russell stated that the Community Development Group would incorporate comments
168 and produce a revision for review by the Planning Commission.

169

170 **ADJOURNMENT**

171 The meeting was adjourned at 10:05 p.m.

172

173 Minutes respectfully submitted, Britney Tenney, Planning and Zoning Assistant.

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