

NEW CASTLE PLAN COMMISSION
NOVEMBER 20, 2024 MEETING MINUTES

Members present:

Ed Hill, President
Dave Barker, Vice President
Kenny Melton, Voting Member
Larry Abrams, Voting Member
Don Criswell, Voting Member
Janet Davis, Secretary

Absent:

Rex Peckinpaugh, Voting Member
Joel Harvey, Attorney
Vacant Voting Member Seat

The New Castle Plan Commission met on Wednesday, November 20, 2024, in the City Council Chambers.

President Ed Hill called the meeting to order at 6:00pm, advising the members that they were here to consider the proposed Unified Ordinance Development (UDO), and a Plan Amendment.

The President confirmed this was the Plan Commission's opportunity to initiate the public notice for the proposed UDO. He reminded the members that this is an advisory board. Don Criswell asked for an overview of what the UDO was, and was informed it was an update to the zoning and subdivision ordinances. Building Commissioner Kenny Melton explained that this would include updating some zonings along State Road 3 and the downtown district; updating zoning definitions; new language for development requirements; new residential square footage requirements; new sign standards; and changing subdivision requirements, to name a few.

Dave Barker then asked for an explanation of how the proposed documents were created. He was informed that, over the past year, a steering committee met with the firm hired by council to update ordinance. There was an opportunity to review the proposed updates and make changes as needed. Ed Hill told the members that he found the review process to be very thorough, going through the UDO chapter by chapter. Janet Davis commented that this proposed update deserved this board's attention, and should be thoroughly read. She also informed them that the members of BZA, Plan Commission, City Council, and staff in the building inspector's office would receive training. Ed Hill commented that this document would be easy to access and to read. Janet Davis let them know that the zoning and subdivision ordinances would no longer be available on the American Legal site with all the other city ordinances. The zoning and subdivision ordinances would be available on the city's website. Some additional discussion followed, focusing on some of the more specific changes included in the updated zoning ordinance.

At this point, Kenny Melton commented that the proposed changes will have ramifications, and everyone involved should take the time to read it and understand the consequences of those

changes. Dave Barker agreed that people need to take the time to read and understand the document so that the necessary conversations can occur to be certain this document fit our community.

Ed Hill then confirmed that, should this commission pass the UDO at this meeting, it was only passing to hold the public hearing so that the document can be reviewed. At this point, the members discussed whether they should meet in December or postpone until January. Several members felt December would not be a good time to have a public hearing, as most people will be busy with the holidays.

Don Criswell made a motion to move forward with the UDO and hold public hearing; second was made by Larry Abrams; motion carried unanimously by those voting members attending.

President Hill then asked the board members if they had reviewed the minutes from the August 21, 2024 meeting. Don Criswell made a motion to accept the minutes, second was made by Larry Abrams; the motion passed unanimously by those voting members present.

The discussion then returned to the UDO, and whether to hold the public hearing in December or wait until January. After much discussion, Don Criswell made a motion to hold the public hearing at the January 15, 2025 meeting; second was made by Larry Abrams. The motion passed unanimously by those attending.

The remaining item on the agenda was a request made by the New Castle Redevelopment Commission (RDC), for this Commission to consider a plan amendment at the request of. Corey Murphy, Executive Director of the RDC, referred the Plan Commission members to the folder he had provided to each, as he explained the request. The RDC manages TIFF districts for the city, and they are initiating a master plan amendment. Per statute, the amendment process starts with the RDC, then moves to the Plan Commission, and then to City Council if it is recommended favorably by this Commission. The request would then return to the RDC for public hearing, and then back to City Council for final approval.

The folders that Mr. Murphy provided included a project overview as well as a resolution prepared by independent council. In the overview were two maps representing three parcels, two located at the northeast corner of Washington and North 20th Streets that were currently owned by the City of New Castle, and a third parcel located south of Nixon Drive, north of Spiceland Pike (although the property cannot be accessed from Spiceland Pike), and west of the current Taco Bell on South Memorial Drive, that was currently owned by Myers Realty Investments LLC. The proposal before the Commission was to place these parcels into a residential tax increment finance area for the purpose of using tax increment finance for the construction of two residential neighborhoods on the three parcels. A draft of the proposed development was included with the project overview packet. Mr. Murphy advised the outline may change and the number of homes may change, and also that this Commission would likely review the development as rezoning may be required. At this time, though, the request is solely to decide if creating this TIFF district matched up with the city's comprehensive plan.

Phase One of the Washington Street project included 49 single-family residential homes, while Phase One of the Myers Realty property included 63 homes. Mr. Murphy then directed the Commission's attention to two more documents included in the project overview, that were only for illustrative purposes. The RDC was currently negotiating with Rybuilt Homes, and so two of their plans were included to provide the Commission with an idea of what the homes could look like. Rybuilt is currently building in Mount Vernon, Indiana which allowed the RDC the opportunity to view their development first-hand. The current price point was \$300,000, although the goal is to bring the price down from there as much as possible. Mr. Murphy advised there was state grant money involved, referring to the READI program through Indiana Economic Development Corporation (EDC), where they would likely receive \$3.5 million toward infrastructure. Phase One on each site is approximately a \$39 million dollar project, which includes \$31 million in home construction and \$8 million in public infrastructure. They have acquired the \$3.5 million grant, \$1 million from the Food and Beverage Tax that is administered through the County, hopefully will issue TIF bonds, and also receive contributions from both the City and County RDC's as well, toward the cost of public infrastructure.

Ed Hill asked if the grant was a 50/50 or 80/20, and Mr. Murphy advised it was a dollar for dollar, so for every dollar of READI funds, a matching local dollar must be available. An independent housing study was scheduled to be released after Thanksgiving, showing the demand and the shortage in this area.

President Hill then asked if there were any additional questions, and when there were none, Larry Abrams made a motion to adopt the resolution; second by Kenny Melton. The motion passed unanimously by those members in attendance. Mr. Murphy asked Janet Davis to provide a signed copy of the resolution within the next few days.

With no additional business before the Commission, Dave Barker made a motion to adjourn, second by Kenny Melton. The meeting adjourned at 6:40 pm.

Respectfully submitted by:


Kenny Melton
New Castle Plan Commission