

Joint FBC Committee Meeting Notes

June 18, 2015

Committee Members: A. Montroll, E. Lee, C. Mason, M. Tracy and J. Shannon
Staff: D. White (Planning), and K. Sturtevant (City Attorney's Office)

Topic: Sec. 14.7 Administration and Procedures – see pages 109-115

C Mason/M. Tracy moved and seconded acceptance of the agenda. Unanimous

E. Lee noted that there were no meeting notes on the agenda or in the packet. Staff will provide for next meeting.

Staff gave an overview of the agenda topics.

Public Forum:

E. Morrow appreciated the hard work of the Committee and provided information regarding glazing requirements under various building energy codes. He feels that glazing requirements should not be part of the FBC because it will inhibit the ability to create highly energy efficient buildings.

I. Avilix asked about how neighbors receive notice about and an opportunity to talk about smaller projects.

B. McGrew asked about the DRB notification process.

Project Review (see p 111)

Staff gave an overview of the Committee's work at the last meeting.

J. Shannon asked to re-visit a previous discussion about areas within FD6 where the tallest buildings could go, and proposed that 105' was not appropriate everywhere in that district. Perhaps it would be best to have a single, lower max height across the board instead of an as-of-right height (65') and a discretionary height (105'). She agreed that there should be no more bonuses, but the regulations should clearly spell-out exactly what is required. In the case of the mall site, she would be willing to support taller buildings provided the street grid is restored. That would be an acceptable tradeoff.

A. Montroll finds that while it is very difficult to define the conditions that would and would not make an 105' building acceptable or not on a site-specific basis, he felt that there are places where it could work and wouldn't want to exclude the opportunity.

Staff noted that there are two approaches here: one to allow for additional height based on site-specific criteria and standards and the other is to simply require a higher set of standards such as for “green buildings.”

E. Lee finds the Discretionary Height standards proposed by staff have no teeth and wouldn't serve to prevent anything.

The Committee discussed these points of view at length and ultimately agreed to maintaining the two-tiered as-of-right height (65') and a discretionary height (105') as originally proposed. They asked staff to provide other examples of how additional height might be regulated.

The Committee then discussed and agreed upon a modification to the area between Cherry and College where additional height (beyond 105') might be allowed. This area will be confined to north of Bank St extended to Battery.

Public Forum #2:

B. McGrew said that exceptions to the height limit also make building taller and impact people like her who live in a tall building. Design matters. Decisions need to be driven by what's good for the city as a whole rather than one developer.

I. Avilix is concerned about the visual impact of taller buildings and views other have. Also wants to be sure there are opportunities to create small greenspaces (like on Main south of St. Paul), there is a public process to review taller buildings and high green standards for new buildings.

E. Morrow feels that it is not height that the community is/will be most concerned about it is the public process or lack thereof. Quality of design is important in every project, and the City needs to have the appropriate design expertise on the staff and review bodies at all stages of the process.