

Betsy Pringle, Chair, welcomed the group at 6:30 p.m. She discussed the proposed changes to the agenda, including moving the review of the existing plan to follow the policy direction presented in Attachment 3 to the memo for the meeting.

I. Houghton Center discussion

Tom Markl recapped his presentation from the earlier meeting with the following comments:

- Currently the Houghton Center is fully developed
- Parking is the key constraint to further development of the site.
- Metropolitan Market has a 20-year lease
- Structured parking will be required if further development is to occur
- Future development would likely include: mixed use, pedestrian-friendly (brought out to sidewalk), housing (upper stories)

The advisory group discussed the options for Houghton Center presented in the memo, which included:

1. Including relatively general language supportive of taller buildings in the area, or
2. Including language supportive of taller buildings when amenities are included in redevelopment such as ped-oriented site design, public gathering spaces, affordable housing, etc.

A vote was taken on the options with the following results:

- Option 1: 7 votes
- Option 2: 2 votes

Comments in discussion on this topic included:

- Favor greater neighborhood commercial, greater livability.
- Supermarkets can be a vital part of community.
- Support for notion of public square, incorporated into the design – design toward a public focus
- Concern about how streets around the commercial area function – need to deal with access points, especially at 106th
- Traffic facilities (tuning in and out), safety for cars and pedestrians need to be dealt with if greater density is to be allowed
- Improve entrances/exits into the site
- Heights over five stories may be too high
- Pedestrian scale is important
- 30' heights with underground parking may be economically feasible
- Development has responsibility to community
- Flexibility for development should be provided since redevelopment may not occur for 15+ years
- Don't want regional draw in retail or big box retail
- Urban design:
 - Commercial corridor should be viewed as a whole
 - Parking should not be in front of buildings
 - Transit issues should be addressed on 68th
 - Support for design guidelines for Houghton Center and surrounding commercial area – address corridor
 - Interest in approach like a Planned Area or overlay to encourage cohesive building and street design

II. Multifamily area west of Houghton Center

Doug Waddell had submitted a letter to the Advisory Group, and said that he would like to make a few additional points and respond to questions from the members. He described his property, west of Houghton Center. His comments included:

- The property is in an area next to shopping, where more density is appropriate
- 4-5 stories in height, with unlimited residential density would be a better designation for his property
- He is not asking for commercial zoning
- If commercial use were to be required on the ground floor, it should acknowledge depth of the property, as retail would not be successful if required to occupy the full depth (a retail depth of 30' may be appropriate)

Discussion followed. Staff noted that the unlimited residential density would be typical in a commercial zone, but that generally retail would be required on the ground floor. Mr. Waddell's request would be a variation on this.

Comments from advisory group members related to this area included:

- Five story apartments would bring more affordable housing to Houghton
- Support for retaining affordable housing options here
- Greater density would provide more diverse housing options
- The area lies between the eastside rail corridor and Houghton Center – good link
- This would be an extension of the commercial area to the west
 - Makes sense to have more density near services and retail
 - May make commercial center more viable

The advisory group voted on options discussed in the meeting, which varied somewhat from those presented in the memo for the meeting. Results of the voting exercise were:

1. Retain the existing provisions (planning and zoning): 2 votes
2. Allow unlimited residential density (multifamily only): 2 votes
3. Designate the area for unlimited density with commercial: 6 votes

The group agreed that this represented support for an expansion of the commercial area to include properties to the west. The southern boundary would align with the southern boundary of Houghton Center.

III. Other multifamily areas in Central Houghton Neighborhood

The advisory group discussed the concept of preserving more affordable housing through allowing redevelopment at existing densities, where properties are currently legally non-conforming as to density (these properties developed prior to 1977, when residential densities were reduced in some areas).

Some advisory group members expressed concerns that this was a piecemeal approach, since the higher densities would be allowed when some properties redeveloped but not others. Staff noted that the rationale for this approach is to maintain the same densities that exist today, but not to "up-zone" the area as a whole, which could result in different impacts, and had not been previously discussed or supported by the group.

The advisory group voted on the options for these areas:

1. Without allowing for additional height, allow redevelopment to occur at existing densities if some percentage of units meet the City's definition of affordable housing: 7 votes
2. No change: 3 votes

Following this discussion, several members noted that they are feeling too rushed in going through issues and in taking votes. These members felt there should be more time for their part of the process.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 9:10 p.m.