Section 23 – Meeting notes: #5

The livable city – May 30, 2007

Members Present: Rich Kramer (Chair), Gladys Morton, Kevin Flynn, Tim Griffin, Monte Hilleman, Ed Johnson, Jeff Ochs, Chuck Repke, David Stokes and Dede Wolfson.

Members Absent: Bob Cudahy, Gloria Bogen, Lori Fritts, Keith Jans, Lorrie Louder, Eric Mitchell, Dick Nowlin.

Staff: Penny Simison, Larry Soderholm, Lucy Thompson and Matt Smith.

1. **Welcome** by Rich Kramer

2. **The meeting focused** concepts of the livable city. und housing and housing in the Central Corridor.

3. **Parking**
   - Medical office requires more parking than other types of office space, because people stay in the building longer.
   - There is an issue of proportionality – i.e., there is a certain point where a building becomes larger, but the numbers of people inside do not increase, so less parking is needed.
   - What is the rationale to change parking standards? To change human behavior? To encourage transit? For better design? For efficient use of land?
   - There was a discussion on "grandfathering in" existing parking. This included a discussion on state law regarding nonconforming rights and the City's rule of 5.
   - How is on-street parking counted? What is the capacity of the street for parking spaces?
   - Parking is a sustainability issue. Untreated water on surface parking goes to the river and affects the watershed. Ground level temperatures and the aquifer are also impacted.
   - Should there be provisions in the land use plan to reduce required parking if certain sustainability criteria are met? On sites of less than one acre? (Watershed rules apply if the site is one acre or larger.)

4. **Sustainability**
   - This issue is about energy efficiency, involving not only buildings, but also neighborhoods and regions. How do neighborhoods behave, with regard to energy efficiency?
   - Sustainability is not only about the environment and the economy, but also about social equity and livability.
   - Discussion of the Green Communities checklist and the LEED-ND criteria.
   - What has to be done to retrofit existing neighborhoods? Some ways of doing that: provide a mix of uses so that jobs and services are closer to neighborhoods; retrofit existing buildings to use less energy; control light spillage.
   - Sustainability methods that are more specific to land use: provide as much density as possible; maintain open space; acknowledge that density and open space requires a balancing act. A slight increase in density allows greater use of open space. If open space is increased, the architecture of buildings is affected. Salt-and-pepper zoning – more of it in single family neighborhoods. On the issues of density – some people see a difference between condo living and PHA housing.
   - How will the market view sustainability??? See LEED implemented in owner-occupied buildings but not in buildings developed on spec and occupied by tenants. Should it work like a zoning overlay??

5. Design

- Much of the infill housing is ugly. One single-family house is not subject to site plan review. Should there be infill design guidelines. They would affect lot splits (see big impact in low income neighborhoods) and teardowns (the vacant buildings and foreclosed houses).
- Design of multi-family buildings depends on developers bring in good teams.
- Should we have pattern books for Saint Paul, to guide design of new housing? Pattern books would identify the vernacular styles, establish a palette of styles and provides a menu of options for parts of the house, such as garage location. On this, the City is responsible for developing a public purpose for creating pattern books. Pattern books should be readily available to small developers of infill lots.
- Provide for land assembly in areas where teardowns of vacant buildings are occurring.
- Should single family be included in site plan review???
- Include 8-10 items in the zoning code that the plan checker can use to accept/reject plans for SF on infill lots.
- An urban building should function like an urban building. Where is the front of the building? The rear? What is its relationship to the parking lot (if there is one)?
- Basic design ideas should be in the code and used as an education piece. Site plan review is not the time to shape the design of a building or a site, because plans can't be changed readily once the project is in the site plan review process. Code provisions should be more specific than guidelines. They should be contemporary building standards. How is this issue addressed when you have affluent neighborhoods and less affluent neighborhoods? The City doesn't have the tools to deal with these situations.
- Do we have a series of urban zones in the city? In the Land Use Plan? What do they "look like?"
- The city could have a priority wish list of design ideas, to simplify the process for developers.
- Should TN standards be extended into other districts, such as B2 and B3? There could be an interaction between elements of the code and, possibly, tradeoffs, so that retain some flexibility in working with a developer and putting a project together.
- The City cannot zone to a market that doesn't exist; that is economically feasible.

Meeting ended at 7:00 pm.