



**REGULAR PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
MARCH 5, 2018**

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chairperson Lynn Motley, Vice-Chairperson Joshua Spare, Commissioners, Cheryl Smith, Janie Adhikari, Eduardo Carranza, Shawn Connor, Clayton Fisher, Max Coleman.

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: John Lopez, Eduardo Carranza

CITY STAFF PRESENT: Steve Norwood, Director of Development Services, David Jones, Chief City Planner, Charles Lee, Senior Planner, Savannah Ware, Senior Planner, Colby Collins, Planner, Ted Helm, Planner, Daon Stephens, Transportation Planner, Mark Dempsey, Deputy City Attorney, Chris Hartmann, Executive Assistant.

Chairperson Motley called the meeting to order in the Council Chambers in the City Hall Building at 6:35 p.m.

PUBLIC HEARING AGENDA Item #8– TA180201 – Text Amendment – Amendment to the Unified Development Code. Chief City Planner David Jones presented the case report and gave a Power Point presentation to update residential development standards pertaining to single-family and multi-family residential development within the City of Grand Prairie, to establish a new Article unifying and consolidating residential development standards, and to make miscellaneous amendments to existing Articles to amend regulations pertaining to residential development standards within the Unified Development Code.

Mr. Jones stated the City of Grand Prairie last overhauled its residential standards in the early 2000s. As residential development in Grand Prairie has evolved, it has become apparent that the City's current residential development regulations are misaligned with development trends and preferences in our market. Most residential developments approved within the last several years, including almost all multi-family apartment projects, have sought one or more variances from the Unified Development Code. These variances often include exceptions to requirements for unit composition, garages, material standards, roof pitch, yard setbacks, and screening. In most cases, the requested variances are granted as requested or granted with modifications, allowing the project to be built. A clear trend has emerged with the city's most recent single-family and multi-family residential developments, which has resulted in residential developments which look and in some cases function differently than what is required by current standards. These developments are also highly amenitized and reflect a more urban design with the use of flat roofs, non-traditional materials, and shorter setbacks from the street. This amendment is an effort to update requirements for residential development and to make them more flexible and context-sensitive, while maintaining or exceeding the high degree of quality and design which the current

standards were intended to provide. A second goal of this amendment is to consolidate all residential development regulations, which currently are spread among several different Articles within the Unified Development Code. This change is designed to allow for better communication between the City and prospective developers and builders and to make the code easier to search and reference. This consolidation is not intended to replace any Article or section within the UDC, but it is designed to place the most relevant and often referenced requirements in a single location. This Article will fully replace Resolution 3924, which was adopted in July, 2003.

Mr. Jones noted Resolution 3924 has functioned as a set of guidelines without legislative authority, although applicants who wish to deviate from the Resolution have customarily requested variances as part of the zoning or platting process. On November 20th of last year, staff met with the City Council Development Committee to discuss ideas about improving Resolution 3924. In that meeting the CCDC directed staff to develop regulations eliminating or significantly limiting front-entry garages, increasing the requirement for lots that are 65 feet and over and strengthening standards for fence maintenance and appearance. At the December 4, 2017 CCDC meeting, staff presented ideas for modifications to residential standards to the City Council Development Committee, where it was suggested that the standards found in Resolution 3924 be updated and codified in the UDC and also coordinated with updates to multi-family standards. A full draft of the combined regulations, called Appendix W, was presented to the CCDC on January 22nd. The attached exhibit shows the proposed changes from Resolution 3924 with either a strikethrough where current guidelines are being eliminated, or an underline where regulations are being added or amended. The regulations would apply to any new residential subdivision with five or more single-family lots and would be in addition to any base zoning requirements. Some of the most significant changes include the following:

- An increase in the percentage of lots required to be 9,000 square feet or greater from 20% to 30%;
- Elimination of front-facing garages except under certain criteria;
- Stricter standards on "cookie cutter" building plans;
- Requirement for 10 foot HOA buffer lots where residential side or rear yards abut a street;
- Requirement for HOA to maintain side yard fences in cases where a fence is visible from the street.

Mr. Jones also stated that in the year since regulations on single-family and two-family carports were last updated, the City has continued to see a large number of applications for carports which are required to go to the Zoning Board of Adjustment. Between October 2016 and October 2017, 34 carport applications required a variance. In many cases the proposed carports require variances for one of two reasons: They technically exceed the 400 square foot limitation but still meet dimensional restrictions by not exceeding 25 feet in length or 25 feet in width, or there is no existing permitted carport within 300 feet. The revisions proposed are designed to minimize technicalities and allow homeowners more flexibility in constructing carports which meet the intent of the current ordinance and also conform to the design of the house or lot on which the carport is proposed. If the square footage limitation is increased to 500 square feet and the existing carport restriction is increased from 300 feet to 800 feet, staff believes instances of carport variances can be reduced by as much as 75 percent. Dimensional controls would remain

in place or be enhanced so that a carport could not be wider than 30% of the frontage of a house in order to maintain proportionality, and also must be constructed of materials similar to the house, including the roofing material. The revised standards are included in the proposed new residential Article, to provide ease of reference.

Mr. Jones stated the Multi-Family regulations are currently found in Articles 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 10, and 11 of the Unified Development Code. This makes it difficult to communicate the location of relevant standards to prospective developers and builders. The proposed amendment would in many cases retain the regulations found in those sections for topical reference purposes, making needed modifications to match the proposed consolidated article. At the December 4, 2017 City Council Development Committee meeting, staff presented suggestions for improving multi-family standards by requiring a suite of amenities, updated building designs, shorter setbacks more integrated with the street, and stronger provisions for mixed use development. At the January 22nd CCDC meeting, staff presented a draft of the updated standards, along with proposed single-family standards to replace Resolution 3924, and was given direction to proceed with an amendment that integrated the revised single-family and multi-family standards, known as Appendix W. Significant changes to multi-family and single-family attached and townhouse uses include the following:

- Updated architectural standards designed to respond to current building designs, which often include flat roofs, longer buildings, alternative or non-traditional materials, and non-primary colors;
- Updated security regulations, including requirements for managed entry points, increased lighting, and more effective sightlines;
- Amenity requirements utilizing a tiered point system similar to LEED certification, wherein a developer would be required to select tiers of features from multiple categories, including environmentally-friendly building materials, site features, or construction techniques, use of luxury features, or use of technology. The features are not limiting, so a developer who proposes an alternative feature or technique which is not on the list could potentially receive credit if it meets the intent of the standard;
- Incentives for mixed use development and structured parking.

Mr. Jones stated this item was heard and recommended for approval by the CCDC at its January 22, 2018 meeting.

Chairperson Motley stated this is a big step to making a change to our development standards that would result in a better and higher quality development to benefit the city, and thanked staff for their time and effort working on this case, very well done.

Commissioner Spare stated we have a love for our city, and wanted to make sure the changes considered everyone.

There being no discussion on the case Commissioner Spare moved to close the public hearing and approve case TA180201 as presented by staff. The action and vote being recorded as follows:

Motion: Spare

Second: Coleman

Ayes: Adhikari, Coleman, Connor, Fisher, Motley, Smith, Spare

Nays: None

Approved: 7-0

Motion: **carried.**