

AGENDA # 7

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

PRESENTED: June 20, 2012

TITLE: Creating Subchapter 28E, Downtown and Urban Districts of Chapter 28 of the Madison General Ordinances to Update the City's Ordinances Pertaining to Zoning and Planning. (26657)

REFERRED:

REREFERRED:

REPORTED BACK:

AUTHOR: Alan J. Martin, Secretary

ADOPTED:

POF:

DATED: June 20, 2012

ID NUMBER:

Members present were: Todd Barnett, Acting Chair; Richard Slayton, Dawn O'Kroley, Melissa Huggins, Marsha Rummel, John Harrington and Tom DeChant.

SUMMARY:

At its meeting of June 20, 2012, the Urban Design Commission **RECOMMENDED ADOPTION** of Subchapter 28E. Appearing on behalf of the project were Matt Tucker, Zoning Administrator; Bill Fruhling, Principal Planner; Rick Roll, Planner III and Project Manager of the Zoning Code Rewrite, and Peter Ostlind. The Downtown and Urban Districts will likely change by the time they get to the Common Council. As the Downtown Plan has gone through 14 boards and commissions, the plan will change from the draft introduced seven months ago and those changes will need to be reflected in the Zoning Code. The downtown in the context of the Zoning Code and the Downtown Plan is bounded by the lakes on the north and south sides, Blair Street on the east side and Park Street on the west side. These areas are the special control areas, which include historic districts and urban design districts and a number of PUDs. Some of the differences with the new Zoning Code will include a new design review process, residential bulk standards which are more reflective of the built environment, and height parameters that are separate from the zoning districts. The new Urban Mixed-Use District tends to be on the edges of the downtown core and is intended to be high density residential and office. Campus Institutional is a new zoning district created for the University Campus with some of the University's property zoned Planned Unit Development. In talking to the University throughout this process there may be some changes to the Campus Institutional District. The character of a street and maximum building height were taken into consideration in dealing with stepbacks. Where building heights could be exceeded may need to be revisited for possible areas that may require stepbacks.

The Downtown Districts include two residential districts, a new Mixed-Use District, the Downtown Core District, Urban Office Residential and Campus Institutional. There will be additional guidelines for the commissions and boards to use but they will not be requirements.

Peter Ostlind spoke to the Commission and questioned several points in the document. He wondered about parking garages with doors facing the Square, the use of split face concrete block, using plan material as a screen (it should be year-round plants), and the equipment screens. He distributed a photo of a building with an equipment screen that was incorporated into the building design and pointed out that this standard could be

counter-effective. The through block development and 60-foot setback between the buildings concerns him; if you take the front and rear setbacks you end up with thin buildings that end up pretty flat. He suggested some other variable. The actual measurement of height and what constitutes a story was discussed.

Comments and questions from the Commission were as follows:

- 4b – aren't we just advisory and anyone could appeal our decision?
 - There is no functional change from the current procedure and process.
- The blocks on State Street should wrap the corners with the 30-foot setback. The way it's drawn, it's a conflict. The light on the pedestrian mall is very important.
- Be careful with the narrow streets and the setbacks – with snow and ice, etc.
- There should be minimum and maximum building heights to give a visual wall to a grand vista like the Capitol. I'm concerned to go from 4 to 12 and back again; is there a minimum building height along these great vistas that will create some sort of standard?
 - The Secretary stated that there is on East Washington Avenue.
 - Some of the Downtown Districts also have minimum heights. In the Downtown Core you have to have at least two stories.
- Door and window openings – 50% is kind of low. Trader Joe's is a good example, which is kind of harsh. I suggest bumping that number up. And 15% might be a little shy on the residential components.
- On façade articulation, we've talked before about being prescriptive. The Urban Design Commission is going to have the opportunity to basically ignore that, if the architect has come up with a solution that works.
 - The UDC could waive it through the Planned Development process, but for things that won't come before the Commission, some of those smaller things, they really need to do this unless they go through a Planned Development process.

I don't think you need to do that. I'm more nervous about doing that by prescription and ending up with something that's not so good.

- These are the standards, any of which could be waived through the Planned Development process.

40-feet is pretty small, that's less than the width of a 2-car garage. You get somebody who wants to do something formulaic...if I put a bunch of arcades and awnings and meet the code, we'll end up with something that's less than cutesy.

Having a requirement in here for some kind of façade articulation is a good thing. Maybe there's a way to expand on that in the guidelines. Those things that are a bit more suggestive, those types of things are what you're going to see in the guidelines.

The folks that really are top notch, they can come up with a design that does none of those things. It's the folks that just want to get through quickly and aren't meeting the intent.

- Spot on with the split face block – it has no place in this area.
- Design standards should deal with these fabricated walls that are cropping up everywhere; I'd rather see poured concrete.
- I agree that the building (Page 12) should be split. Is there a minimum split? Something that doesn't make you feel claustrophobic. A minimum of 12-feet where you could have a nice pathway with landscaping on either side.

ACTION:

On a motion by Huggins, seconded by DeChant, the Urban Design Commission **RECOMMENDED ADOPTION**. The motion was passed on a vote of (6-0). The motion provided that the above comments be forwarded to the Plan Commission for their review and consideration.

After the Commission acts on an application, individual Commissioners rate the overall design on a scale of 1 to 10, including any changes required by the Commission. The ratings are for information only. They are not used to decide whether the project should be approved. The scale is 1 = complete failure; 2 = critically bad; 3 = very poor; 4 = poor; 5 = fair; 6 = good; 7 = very good; 8 = excellent; 9 = superior; and 10 = outstanding. The overall ratings for this project are 6-0.

URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION PROJECT RATING FOR:

	Site Plan	Architecture	Landscape Plan	Site Amenities, Lighting, Etc.	Signs	Circulation (Pedestrian, Vehicular)	Urban Context	Overall Rating
Member Ratings								

General Comments:

- Lots of value added with Urban Design Commission input – thanks.