URBAN COUNTY COUNCIL

PLANNING COMMITTEE SUMMARY

March 18, 2008

CM Gorton chaired the meeting, calling it to order at 1:00 pm. All committee members were present. CM DeCamp was present also.

I. Infill Redevelopment Committee Recommendations

Chris King, Division of Planning Director, gave the committee some background information regarding infill/redevelopment. (PowerPoint presentation). He stated the key element that goes along with all this is the cornerstone of the community planning program that being the urban services/rural service area boundaries. He stated the urban service area is 30% of the county and the rural service area is 70% of the county.

Steve Kay provided the committee an overview on what the process has been.

Stan Harvey, Principal with Urban Collage, went over the Executive Summary and recommendations of the Infill & Redevelopment Steering Committee. (PowerPoint presentation).

Vice Mayor Gray acknowledge those who worked on this project. He stated it was interesting to see how much this project related to the touchstone to the six pillars that Mr. Harvey mentioned especially the pillar regarding the commitment to the innovative and imaginative urban planning. He stated this has a direct correlation and direct impact on our commitment to sustaining the rural landscape and the brand it represents to Lexington. He stated in his view the biggest opportunity is expanding the way of thinking about infill and redevelopment. Vice Mayor Gray stated this project expands our thinking, our vision and expands the strategy and the imperatives associated with doing stuff related to it. He stated there is also a lot of dissent and disparaging about studies. He stated in the absence of studies we usually end up not doing anything. He stated that level of calcification usually moves us nowhere. He stated this project does examine some of the past. He stated this project examines the extent to which we need to do more to stimulate our urban core. He stated a very important piece in this report that will be helpful to council is the implementation checklist which includes over 100 recommendations. He stated this document collected a lot of good thinking throughout the community.

CM Gorton thanked Vice Mayor, Dr. Stevens, CM DeCamp, CM Blues and CM James as they all served on the steering committee.

Dr. Stevens stated the steering committee is not done yet. He stated he is a big believer in planning. He stated nothing in the report is set in stone today it will have to be worked out as they go along.

CM Stinnett stated this is a great start to try to do something about a problem that a lot of people have talked about for a long time. He stated this gives them a good blueprint and thanked everyone for working on it. He asked how much was it talked about to change the comprehensive plan process to shorten it and to review it to possibly every three or four years.

Mr. King stated to his knowledge they did not talk about it. He stated CM Stinnett hit on the big thing, between the communitywide updates they have a window of opportunity to do these very intense kinds of programs such as small area studies.

CM Stinnett stated to do the small area studies it costs money. He asked how much money we are going to spend rather than update our comprehensive plan sooner and how much the small area plans cost.

Mr. King stated depending on the size of the area it has been running $100K to $200K for consultant studies. He stated we do have in house resources which will be used for two of the studies.

CM Stinnett asked how many positions need to be created to fulfill the infill and redevelopment implementation.

Mr. King stated he does not think of it in those terms. He stated once they sort out the tasks and look at where they are and look at the impact of the management partner changes and other things then they will try to calibrate their staff resources to doable projects.

CM Stinnett asked is there a price tag on the report.

Mr. King stated no.

CM Stinnett asked how the infill and redevelopment chart came about because some areas in his district were left out and not identified as a town center.

Mr. King stated it was just showing a concept. He stated they will be able to test these concepts in some areas soon.

Mr. Harvey stated on the implementation checklist they will have a lot more clarity on the first five years. He also stated the Quality of Place Task Force talked a lot about the growth framework and the map is suppose to be a representation of that. He stated it is a better way to understand where they are directing growth.

CM Stinnett asked about the problem statement stating the incentives and the primary focus should be downtown. He stated this is problematic for his district.

Mr. King stated one of the key recommendations is to take a proactive more intensification that they had been focusing on traditionally in and near the downtown area for infill and redevelopment and expand that to all the urban service area and all land resources we have. He stated even as they do that they know the playing field is still not level between the areas in and near downtown and the costs involved, land cost and the fact that it is developed land versus green field development so in terms of the idea of incentives the consensus of the group was they are still going to have to pay special attention on and near the downtown area particularly in the area of incentives to help level the playing field.

CM Stinnett stated there is a big difference in land cost. He stated the Bryan Station Corridor has been there since the 1960's and their land cost and redoing things in that area is approaching the cost of the downtown area and could use some incentives. He stated the corner of New Circle Rd and Winchester Rd is an area that could use a major change. He stated he does not want to exclude any of these areas.

CM James stated she was very interested in this process initially focusing on the first district but became very sensitive to the entire urban service area and how developmentally Lexington should be thought of as a whole. She asked how council members can implement the specific considerations or concerns from citizens now that the recommendations have been made public.

Mr. Kay stated the process for the infill and redevelopment steering committee and task force has had a beginning and end date which has been extended. He stated the steering committee has one more meeting when that is completed a part of the agenda should be now what. He stated the steering committee can deal with CM James' question and bring their answer back to council. He stated there are a variety of things that could be set up.

CM James asked Mr. Kay to clarify the significance of the appendixes. She asked how concerned citizens should be about the language in the appendixes whereas it was not included in the recommendations coming forward from the infill and redevelopment steering committee.

Mr. Kay stated if something was raised as a suggestion and was in the drafting process at some point but one or more people at the task force level objected those things were held and included in the appendixes that was going to the steering committee. The same way at the steering committee level at a steering committee meeting if there was one or more elements that one or more persons said this is not appropriate at this level was then also held for the appendixes. He stated the intention was to make sure that as the report goes forward council had the full set of considerations that happened in those meetings. Mr. Kay stated just as the steering committee took the information from the task force and its responsibility was to integrate those reports and make decisions as to what was in and what was out. He stated some things that the task force recommended got moved into the appendixes.

CM Gorton stated one would presume that once the steering committee has finalized its work any changes in ordinance or those sorts of things that require council approval would come back to council.

Mr. Kay stated his understanding was that this entire structure was set up to inform council. He stated it was not to mandate council to do anything.

CM McChord stated the core of this goes back to economic development. He stated this gives an interesting road map to that end. CM McChord stated he would like to see incentive packages for other areas that do not touch downtown as well. He stated he does not have any problems with adding extra incentives to the downtown area. He stated we have a huge opportunity with a lot of the hold strip malls and places like that. He stated the Southland Dr. Corridor area could be the next Chevy Chase as there is huge viability in that area. CM McChord asked to be given a list of priorities from the list of action steps.

Mr. King stated general prioritizations are an absolute inherent part of the implementation chart process. He stated the steering committee is the ones doing that with input from others.

CM Gorton gave the chair to CM Blues.

CM Gorton spoke regarding the transportation portion of the report and Lexington being unique because we have the hub and spoke system with no interstate going through the downtown area plus we have the tight urban service boundary. She asked did they look at what other cities do and are there any other cities like this with the hub and spoke.

Mr. Harvey stated inherently it is relatively unique condition. He stated the key to all of these is an increased focus on transit, pedestrian and bicycle use. He stated there is opportunity to be strategic about where we invest our money.

CM Gorton spoke about the problem statement mentioning incentives being in and near downtown. She stated one of the concerns she has heard from citizens is about this. It is about density in the neighborhood and the sensitivity to how that will be implemented. She stated she was happy to hear this being addressed by Mr. Harvey and Mr. Kay.

Mr. Harvey stated they have heard those concerns throughout this process. He stated one part of that is being more practical about neighborhood conservation. In the areas adjacent to those neighborhoods that are the growth framework circle is making sure there is sub area plans and policies that address what the transitions are.

CM Gorton asked if someone from parks is on the steering committee. She stated on page 8 of the Executive Summary where it is dealing with parks and open space standards it states "LFUCG should update and implement quantifiable standards". She stated the Parks Division is getting ready to update its master plan so it seems these things should be coordinated now. CM Gorton asked who will work with coordinating Parks.

Mr. King stated as they do the implementation chart and hit each of those they decide on what the lead agency is. He stated they have already sent out to all commissioners and directors a copy of the work in progress. Mr. King stated he has already met with some people.

CM Gorton asked if the rental licensing fee will be discussed in the housing task force.

Dr. Stevens stated they will have to determine where the rental licensing fee will be after they receive this report.

CM Crosbie asked Mr. King to send the committee a memo letting them know which departments participated in the task force.

Mr. King stated they can go back to the documentation and get that information.

Several citizens spoke: Craig Hardin, Dawn Foree, Bill Lear, Dick Murphy, Win Meeker and Joe Howard.

CM Gorton asked about the recommendation of permitting process under H-1 overlay to provide staff support to the courthouse overlay board through historic preservation. She asked if we have a Design Review Officer and why we need to add more staff.

Mr. King stated he was not present at the task force that day.

CM Gorton asked if someone can email her the reasoning around the recommendation. She stated the next step is the Planning Committee will see things coming forward from this report.

2. Items Referred to Committee

   No motions came out of this issue.

Planning Committee meeting adjourned at 2:58 P.M.