

City of Concord Planning Board
March 12, 2019 - DRAFT
Minutes

The City of Concord Planning Board and Architectural Design Review Committee held a work session on March 12, 2019, in City Council Chambers, in the Municipal Complex, at 37 Green Street, at 6:00 p.m.

Planning Board members present included Mayor Bouley, Chairman Richard Woodfin, Mayor Jim Bouley, Councilor Byron Champlin, Vice-Chair Carol Foss, Teresa Rosenberger (Ex-Officio for City Manager), Members John Regan, Susanne Smith-Meyer, Matthew Hicks, David Fox, and Erle Pierce.

Architectural Design Review (ADR) members present included Co-Chairs Liz Hengen and Jay Doherty, Members Claude Gentilhomme and Doug Shilo.

Planning Staff present included Heather Shank (City Planner), Sam Durfee (Senior Planner), and Lisa Fellows-Weaver (Administrative Specialist).

Planning Board Chairman Woodfin called the work session to order at 6:00 pm.

Mr. Woodfin welcomed all in attendance and thanked everyone for coming. Members introduced themselves and provided a synopsis of their background.

Ms. Shank stated that the Planning Board has the authority, per state statute, to create a separate Architectural Design Review Committee to provide recommendations on site design and architecture. The Committee members are appointed by the Planning Board and make recommendation to the Board on ADR applications. Mr. Woodfin commented that he would like to make sure that the Planning Board is taking full advantage of the skillset of ADR members and to utilize the Committee as a sounding board.

Members/Alternates

A discussion was held to consider changing the number of members of the Committee from seven to five and/or adding alternate members to aid in attendance and avoid not having quorums. Mr. Woodfin suggested allowing a Board member to be an alternate on the Committee.

Ms. Hengen stated that she feels that the current members on the ADR create synergy and diverse perspectives and she would prefer to not reduce the number of members. The consensus of the Committee was to keep ADR at seven regular members and add alternates. It was requested that staff reach out to the current seven members and ask if any member would be interested in moving to alternate status. It was noted that it would be great to have members with expertise in lighting impacts and also site design.

Signage/Facades

Discussion ensued regarding the expectations for facades and signage in the downtown area. Councilor Champlin referenced the historic facades and asked what the standards of preservation are and noted that the innovated architecture of the City should be preserved. He added that not everything on Main Street should be red brick; however, it is important to preserve the historic facades. He stated that he would also support ADR in not inhibiting new architecture in the City. Ms. Hengen commented that it is important to have vitality and allow for change.

Terminology

Additional discussion was held regarding the clarity in motions and conditions recommended by ADR. PB members requested that recommendations be very clear. Mr. Gentilhomme stated that the goal is to

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encourage development in Concord. He expressed frustration for applicants who may have to return though he acknowledged that there are times when it is necessary.

Ms. Shank stated that one challenge is when the Committee is divided. It's difficult for the Planning Board to decide against an applicant when members of ADR do not agree. Mr. Woodfin noted that most of the time, both the Board and ADR are in agreement with each other, though when ADR is divided the Board may have a tendency to find in favor of the applicant.

A discussion was held regarding creating criteria for design in the City. Ms. Hengen asked if that would just be the building code. Ms. Shank stated that the zoning ordinance is also a primary document for design. With regard to signs and the use of phone numbers and websites, she explained that ADR can only look at aesthetics, for instance with regard to sign clutter, and not content.

Ms. Hengen stated that it is important to build for the time. For instance, she commented that there is a wide variety of materials available today for construction. Some may be more expensive; however, so is preservation. She stated that the City can still build for the time and still allow freedom of design for the applicants. Ms. Hengen suggested a mini master plan specifically for designing on Main Street. Mr. Hicks suggested creating a historic district for the downtown. Ms. Hengen explained that downtown is already on the National Register; however, there is no local designation for it, which is what triggers additional reviews. Ms. Shank stated that the code update could include components for this if that is what the community is interested in doing.

Future Items of Concern

- Protecting small areas and neighborhoods
- Holding a joint Planning Board & Zoning Board of Adjustment meeting
- Aesthetics of the back of buildings facing the highway
- Having ADR members with expertise in lighting impacts
- ADR representative attendance at Planning Board meetings

Mayor Bouley encouraged members to be open with other committees and boards as well as continue to seek input from the public. He thanked the members for holding this meeting to address comments and concerns and thanked each of them for their time as board/committee members. He stated that their efforts are greatly appreciated.

Adjournment

As there was no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting adjourned at 7:34 PM.