Land Use and Zoning Committee Meeting

attendees
Kevin Barbian
Brent Niese
Megan deSola
Matt Olliges
Sara DiLandro
John Slawter
Ron Dill
Kyle Stevie
Dan Gorman
Mark Thurnauer
Patrick Hagerty
Frank Twehues
Patti Hudepohl
Lori Wendling
Michelle Knight
Kris Hopkins

discussion items:

- Materials distributed:
  - Updated Goals for discussion (updates from the discussion are included on pgs 4-6)
  - Preliminary Land Use Display Boards for the Public Forum
  - Over-arching Themes (from 2016) and land use related Goals & Objectives from 2005 Plan for reference
  - Additional Existing Conditions: Ft Thomas Residential Buildings Year Built map and Urban Tree Canopy Cover (Ft Thomas and adjacent communities) (pgs 7-8 at the end of this document)

- Frank Twehues and Kris Hopkins gave an update on the survey. The online survey has been available on the Fort Thomas Community Plan website [https://ftcommunityplan.com/](https://ftcommunityplan.com/) for about a month, and will continue to be open till after the January 24th public forum. Approximately 525 people had taken the Land Use and Zoning survey so far. Interim results through 1/8/18 will be highlighted at the public forum. Committee members who haven’t yet completed the surveys are encouraged to do so.

- Public Forum Update. The public forum/open house (1/24 at 7-9PM at Mess Hall) will include a short (20-30 min) presentation highlighting the “Awareness Phase” work of the 6 committees. After the presentation, attendees will visit the displays located around the room, one display station for each committee, highlighting information such as draft goals, the SWOT analysis, and specific issue areas being discussed by the committee. People will have the chance to comment on the issues and goals for each committee. While the tech advisor and committee chairs will be at each display station, all committee members are encouraged to attend to see what the other committees are working on and to hear what attendees are saying.

  Mark Thurnauer will provide visual images of what redevelopment and new construction in the business districts could look like, so meeting attendees can comment on what they like and don’t like.
• Overarching Theme for Community Plan. Sara DiLandro (Human Nature) technical advisor with the Parks and Recreation committee talked about that committee’s observation that Fort Thomas seems like a “city within a park”. She noted that the Parks & Rec committee has embraced a Vision Statement that reads: To preserve and enhance the quality of the environment so that our community embodies a “city within a park”. The LU&Z committee discussed the importance of mature trees and preservation of open space and the hillsides can provide direction for land use and zoning goals as well.

• Updated Goals Discussion: The rest of the meeting was devoted to finishing up review and edits to the Land Use and Zoning goals – which focus on: Quality of Life, Housing/Residential Development, Business Districts & Economic Well-being, and Environmental Resources. See the updated Goals attached (pgs 4-6).

• Discussion Items of interest:
  > Code enforcement – how much is necessary? Ron Dill provided an update on potential new ordinances being studied by City Council. The general assembly enacted rules that allow greater enforcement at the local level. Changes give more latitude to local governments to take action more quickly and not rely so heavily on the court system, which can be cumbersome and lengthy.
  > Vacant property registration. Ron mentioned that while the City has had good success in dealing with blighted houses and there are not as many vacant houses as before, City Council is looking into a vacant home ordinance that would require a bank, when taking over a property, to register, pay a registration fee and be responsible for ongoing maintenance of the property.
  > Parking in the business districts. The City receives numerous call about parking and it not a surprise that survey respondents are noting that parking is a problem.
  > Sensitive renovations of older homes. Consideration should be given to raising awareness among home owners and contractors on renovation practices and techniques that are sensitive to, enhance and maintain the character of older homes. Preserving and maintain the existing character of older homes is beneficial to the whole neighborhood. Perhaps a volunteer “design” committee similar to the Tree Commission could be created to be a resource for homeowners, with ideas for appropriate and sensitive remodeling projects.
  > Create unique business districts. In order to not have the business districts compete with each other, consider creating a niche for each – such as entertainment/arts versus service oriented. This should be a question for the business district display boards at the open house (1/24/18) to see what people believe are each districts potential.
  > Make sure Fort Thomas remains walkable. Need to make sure the transportation network provides connectivity, and is bike-friendly. Should allowance for low-impact retail be expanded along main streets to allow more houses to be used for small businesses? What is the potential for adding a Red Bike Station at Midway or CBD? The city of Newport received a Transportation Alternatives Grant from OKI Regional Council of Governments Ohio – and now has four stations; Bellevue has two stations.
Impact of low rents. One issue with attracting new businesses to Ft Thomas business districts is the generally low rents that businesses pay and the fact that many businesses in Ft Thomas own their own building. Major renovations to existing buildings and new construction are viable only if the space can be rented at a point that covers the construction cost and then some. The same is true of residential rents. Monmouth Row was provided as an example, where apartments can command higher rents for similar space.

upcoming meetings:

Wednesday, January 24, 7-9pm, Public Forum/Open House at Mess Hall

Monday, February 12, 7-9pm, next Land Use & Zoning Committee meeting. Centennial Room, 2nd floor City Building.
Updated DRAFT Goals
(with some notes on objectives, revised/additional text noted with *)

Overall Vision: Fort Thomas continues to be a “city in a park” setting*, an attractive and desirable place where people choose to live, work and play, and where businesses choose to do business and invest in our community.

Quality of Life

1. Continue to be a great community to raise a family, with good schools, safe neighborhoods and an environment that promotes walking, interaction among neighbors and a sense of belonging; a place where people want to live.*

2. Maintain and enhance the City’s built environment in a way that retains the City’s history and distinct character, fosters quality design and strengthens citizens’ attachment to place.

3. Maintain and improve (where needed) visually pleasing, well-maintained, and inhabited neighborhoods and districts.

4. Embrace and enhance the natural physical beauty of Fort Thomas, especially at our gateways and along our entry corridors.

Housing/Residential Development

5. Promote continued improvement to the housing stock, such as housing renovations, remodeling and other improvements that help retain its viability and desirability.
   - Encourage sensitive renovations to older homes as a way of retaining the original character of Fort Thomas neighborhoods. Provide resources and education to raise awareness, consider creation of a volunteer committee.*
   - Update the residential district zoning regulations to better suit the existing development patterns for the various neighborhoods, e.g. lot size, front setback from the street, and width/depth of side and rear yards, and reduce the administrative burden of reviewing variances.*
   - Develop more flexible regulations and provide guidance to address site-specific issues for unique parcels.*

6. Ensure that neighborhoods and the housing stock are well maintained.
7. Encourage a variety of housing types and residential development to accommodate different/changing needs and preferences of the population.
   - Promote infill housing, including in/adjacent to business districts, as a sustainable form of development that enhances a walkable environment, uses existing infrastructure, and reduces the need to develop the remaining and often challenging open spaces in the city.*

8. Ensure new housing is compatible with the surrounding area and overall character of the city.

**Business Districts and Economic Well-being**

9. Create and maintain vibrant mixed-use districts that are central gathering places for their surrounding neighborhoods, building on each one’s assets and unique character.
   - Promote infill development in the business districts, as a sustainable form of development that enhances a walkable environment and uses existing infrastructure.*
   - Consider creating themed business districts each with its own character and purpose.*

10. Ensure commercial/nonresidential properties in Fort Thomas are maximized to their fullest potential, as well as resilient and adaptable to change.

11. Promote a healthy economy with a stable and diversified employment base.
    - Foster low-impact, home based businesses.*
    - Encourage businesses that meet the essential day-to-day needs of residents.*

12. Ensure nonresidential infill development is appropriate for its location and compatible with the surrounding neighborhood.
    - Pay particular attention to the edges of the business districts to adequately buffer the adjacent single-family neighborhood*

13. Ensure that nonresidential development and redevelopment promotes and enhances the “city in a park” environment.*
    - Consider requiring a minimum amount of tree planting and maximum impervious surface*
Environmental Resources

   - Encourage infill development and develop flexible regulations that reduce demand for development on hillsides and helps preserve green space.*

15. Ensure new development and redevelopment is designed to incorporate the area’s physical resources in an efficient and sustainable manner.

16. Ensure that planning adequately considers methods of reducing energy consumption and adequate protection is afforded all energy resources.

17. Promote sustainable development practices that are beneficial for both the property owner and the community as a whole.*
   - Promote the benefit of trees such as reducing the heat island effect, providing improved infiltration of storm water runoff, and increasing property values, etc.*
   - Rely primarily on education, awareness and perhaps incentives to encourage the use of landscaping and tree planting balanced by reasonable regulations.*
Additional Maps Distributed
Urban Tree Canopy Study (2014)

Tree Canopy Cover

- Campbell Co: 57%
- Ft Thomas: 57%

Source: http://www.nkyurbanforestry.org/urban-tree-canopy-assessment.html