

Minutes of the Downtown Okauchee Advisory Committee (DOAC)

Wednesday, June 13, 2018

Committee Members Present

All committee members were present.

Contributing Staff Present

Ben Greenberg, Senior Land Use Specialist
Rebekah Leto, Senior Land Use Specialist
Bill Lincoln, Okauchee Fire Department Chief

5/23/18 Minutes

There were no comments or concerns regarding the minutes.

Number of Stories/Height Topic

Ms. Barrows reiterated that the committee felt the quaintness of Okauchee was important and to keep this in mind as height is discussed. She stated that all buildings within the downtown area are three stories or less (with the exception of minor exposures on the Mission Lakes building) and only two buildings exceed 42 ft. in height. Ms. Barrows mentioned that at the last meeting the committee was concerned that a maximum 42 ft. height limit may not accommodate typical multi-story commercial, mixed-use, or multi-family uses. The committee reviewed height schematics (prepared with guidance from Jim Siepmann) and pictures of existing multi-family and mixed-use buildings at a range of different heights located throughout the County. Ms. Barrows showed the committee an example from Mt. Horeb, WI where Duluth Trading Company built a new headquarters that greatly exceeds the overall scale of the rest of the historic downtown. It was noted that there was a map correction to the overall building height on the Mission Lakes property. Mr. Fruth asked the group to think about the shadowing effect that taller buildings may create.

Number of Stories

Staff recommended that the committee consider allowing up to three stories by right, but allow a maximum of four stories in certain areas through a special approval process requiring that minimum performance measures be met. The ordinance already limits structures to three stories as viewed from the lake.

The committee discussed the following:

- Construction costs would likely discourage five or more story buildings.
- The committee felt that structures taller than four stories would have a significant impact on the existing downtown environment.
- Some expressed that existing maximum height limitations on lakefront properties may be too restrictive. Staff and other committee members noted that state law restricts options.
- If a special process is developed to allow taller buildings, the process should not be overly complex.

The committee made the following recommendations regarding *number of stories*:

- Allow up to three stories by right throughout the project area.
- Provide a special process that would allow up to four stories with consideration of specific performance measures and neighborhood context.
- At the previous meeting, the committee discussed requiring a minimum of 1 ½ story buildings throughout the project area. It is not clear whether the committee specifically discussed the areas designated for single-family residential use. Staff will bring this matter back at the next meeting.

Height

At the previous meeting, the committee supported the removal of the 35 ft. height limitation on narrow lots if not designated primarily for single-family residential use. Staff explained that statutes limit height to 35 ft. if the structure is within 75 ft. of a navigable waterbody. The existing 42 ft. maximum height limit for other lots was further discussed. Staff recommended that the committee consider leaving the maximum height at 42 ft. and allow additional height up to 54 ft. through an exception process requiring that minimum performance measures be met. If it is later determined that enough height relief is not being provided, future code amendments can be considered. Staff recommended this approach to prevent incompatible structures, as structures built at the wrong scale would have a long lasting impact on the community.

Mr. Lincoln (Okauchee Fire Chief) stated that their department doesn't have a ladder truck tall enough to service four story or taller buildings. They rely upon either Lake Country or Hartland to service tall buildings. Investment in a ladder truck was estimated at one million dollars. If the need increases with more tall buildings, consideration may need to be given to purchasing a ladder truck.

The committee discussed the following:

- Emphasis was placed upon the importance of architectural design.
- It would be desirable to perpetuate the feeling of a "resort town atmosphere".
- Preference was expressed for slightly increased setbacks or upper level setbacks for four story buildings.
- Preference was expressed for codifying design requirements to leave as much subjective review out of the process. Specific requirements create certainty, or at least clear expectations for the development community.
- Some committee members expressed preference for pitched roofs rather than flat roofs to accommodate nicer architectural features. This may result in additional height.
- A few members urged the creation of an Architectural Review Board (ARB). There was some discussion that an ARB would help encourage developments to look different, but keep an overall resort feel.
- Mr. Fruth commented that Code language could be incorporated at a high level to allow architectural standards to be addressed until an ARB can be established.

The committee made the following recommendations regarding *height*:

- Allow 42 ft. by right within all areas not designated primarily for single-family residential. Additional height up to 54 ft. could be approved through a special process which would consider

performance/design standards such as architectural controls, heightened setbacks and offsets, neighborhood context and shadowing concerns.

Density

Mr. Fruth reviewed density ranges discussed at the previous meeting and indicated that the number of stories and height recommendations will also help to regulate density.

Staff recommended encouraging a minimum 10 units/acre density as a good standard for a majority of the project area and that consideration should be given for encouraging a greater minimum density of 15 units/acre within sub-area 7 (Wisconsin Ave. West-West End). Mr. Fruth relayed that SEWRPC recommends 14 units/acre for sewered communities in the interest of affordable housing opportunities. The Waukesha County Comprehensive Development Plan also encourages greater densities in urbanized settings.

Ms. Barrows stated that she has been in contact with the Environmental Health Division who does not believe the increase in density causes concern for water supply. Ms. Barrows also noted that the Town requires connection to sewer for developments within Okauchee and the number of requisitions allowed is still to be determined.

The committee discussed that the density at Mission Lakes is approximately 15 to 16 units/acre. Committee members discussed that density is critical for the redevelopment of the concrete plant.

Staff mentioned that the recommendation is not to require minimum 10 to 15 units/acre density, but to set an expectation that higher densities are appropriate. Site considerations may make higher density infeasible for some sites because of the high sewer requisition cost, topography, etc.

The committee made the following recommendations regarding *density*:

- Encourage 10 units/acre in all areas except in the Wisconsin Avenue West - West End, where 15 units/acre is encouraged.

Road Setback

Staff presented a number of possible setback schemes, encouraging development close to the road with maximum setbacks rather than minimum setbacks in the central downtown area. Options included extending the central downtown area scheme throughout the project area, excluding the areas designated primarily for single-family purposes or slightly increasing the setback and potentially removing a maximum setback within the transitional areas.

The committee discussed the following:

- It is important to encourage development close to the road within the central downtown area. However, the group discussed ensuring that room is available for outdoor seating outside of the sidewalk area and that flexibility may need to be provided.
- It is important to increase the setback along the round-a-bout.

- More open space and landscaping should be required in the area leading into the downtown area, such as the properties west of the Lion’s Club.

The committee made the following recommendations regarding *road setback*:

Sub-Area	Min. Road Setback	Max. Road Setback
Central Area (Sub-area 1) *The properties abutting the round-a-bout should meet a 10 ft. road setback.	0 ft.	20 ft.
Wis. Ave. NE, Lake Dr. N, Wis. Ave. – West End (Sub-areas 2, 6 & 7*) *The post office should be moved into sub-area 1 for the purposes of road setback.	10 ft.	20 ft.
Wis. Ave. SE, Wis. Ave. East End, Lake Dr. S. (Sub-areas 3, 4 & 5)	20 ft.	None

- In all commercial and mixed-use areas, a reasonable amount of landscaping is encouraged between the building and the road (setback area), if there is sufficient space.

Parking location

- Parking location preferences were discussed during the road setback discussion. The committee agreed parking should be to the rear and side of the parcels, with an exception process provided for circumstances, such as topography, lot width, and protecting lakeside aesthetics. Performance measures should be established if parking is allowed on the roadside of buildings, such as landscaping, vegetative screening, and separation from sidewalks and outdoor seating.

Offset

Staff provided a brief overview of existing offset provisions for the Okauchee area and typical offset provisions from surrounding communities. Staff provided options for the committee to consider including a zero offset in the central business area and potentially extending a zero offset beyond the central business area. Staff also recommended that the existing 14 ft. offset for properties zoned residential or for properties used for business and residential purposes match the 10 ft. offset for properties zoned business within the project area in order to provide consistency.

The committee offered some initial thoughts:

- Concern was raised regarding the urban look that zero lot line development can create.
- When narrow side lots are left between buildings, they are often poorly maintained and can become blighted.

- Fire Chief Lincoln stated that maintaining an offset is not a concern with the Fire Department because of building code standards. The bigger issue is making sure that access is available to each building.

The committee will reconvene this discussion at the next meeting.

Next meeting topics:

Ms. Barrows expressed that the group will continue a discussion on offset, parking, signage, outdoor seating, building footprint, and expediting the permit process. Staff will also discuss next steps in the process and potential future efforts to encourage a vibrant growing downtown. The next meeting will be on **June 27, 2018, at 9:00 a.m., at the Town Hall.**

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