

CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
Austin, Texas

Special Committee to Study Fee Schedule
January 24, 1973

The meeting of the Committee was called to order by the Chairman at 3:00 p.m. in the Planning Department conference room on the third floor of the Municipal Building.

Present

Buford Stewart, Chairman
Sonia Ashworth
C. W. Hetherly
Jean Mather

Also Present

Richard Lillie, Director of Planning
Joe Liro, Director of Research and Budget
Andrea Winchester, Clerk IV

Mr. Stewart stated that the committee has been charged with the responsibility of reviewing Planning Department fees so that a recommendation can be made to the Planning Commission as to what to do about the fees. He thought it had been agreed upon that the fees are all too small and are in need of adjustment. What is needed at this time is to review the staff proposals and either concur or submit the Committee's own recommendation to the Planning Commission for their judgement and decision to be forwarded to the City Council for subsequent change in the ordinance. He stated that the problem is that the fees haven't been looked at in a long time, consequently the Committee is faced with a proposition that seems to be out of balance.

Ms. Ashworth concurred stating that this would represent a major change in policy, that the person who is asking for a change of zoning is being asked to bear more of the cost. She did not feel that the person requesting the change should be asked to bear the entire cost. She felt it was entirely fair to ask the taxpayer to share in the cost as they were being notified of zoning changes and the processing of zoning applications is the charge of the Planning Commission.

Ms. Mather stated that in her opinion the people requesting the change were asking to change the plan for the city and they were certainly going to get more than \$150 out of the property once it is commercially zoned. She felt \$150 might keep some of the developers and realtors from submitting zoning changes on one lot at a time.

Ms. Ashworth pointed out that when zoning on a piece of property is changed the taxes are increased. Mr. Liro stated that a commercial piece of property requires more police protection than does a single-family residence as well as more firemen, more building inspectors, etc. There is an additional burden on the City.

Mr. Hetherly pointed out that there is also added income for the city, not only from taxes but from the utilities that the city sells.

Ms. Mather stated that often zoning is granted and a business gets started only to fail and leave a scar in the neighborhood because the building has been modified for a store and is no longer useful as a home. She did not feel that the \$150 was too much to ask for a zoning change request.

Committee members discussed the pros and cons of the change in fees being gradual and agreed that it should not be gradual, as it had gone unchanged for too long a time.

The fees proposed by the staff would recover 100% of the processing of a zoning case. Mr. Lillie pointed out that over 2/3 of all zoning cases are under one acre. Twenty per cent is between 1-5 acres, 5% is 5-10 acres and 8% is over ten acres.

Mr. Hetherly suggested the following change to the staff proposal: zoning applications be changed to \$50 up to one acre. He suggested that under the PUD application charge that the \$150 base fee be changed to \$100 and change the \$5 per acre to \$10; and under the subdivision fees lower the subdivision short form change from \$75 to \$50.

Mr. Stewart expressed concern over the duplication of changes on the PUD application, one charge in the zoning section and one charge in the subdivision section. Mr. Lillie stated that in the present procedure the PUD application appears before both the Zoning Committee and the Subdivision Committee. One of the charges could be eliminated, as in the near future the procedure is going to be changed so the the application goes only before one of the committees. Members of the Committee decided to eliminate the charge for the PUD application in the subdivision category other than the final fee which is a recording fee, etc.

Ms. Ashworth expressed concern over the fee for the special permit remaining at \$150 due to the number of day care centers that would be affected. Mr. Hetherly felt it should stay at \$150 as far as the special permits for apartments were concerned as the planning for a special permit involves certain commitments and \$150 would not hurt the owner. The Committee discussed the possibility of setting a base fee at \$50 and adding \$1.00 for every apartment unit. The Committee agreed on this approach thereby allowing for day care centers. This fee would possibly result in more income than the flat \$150 fee. Committee members discussed the possibility of changing the \$50 fee for "one acre" to "one or two lots up to one acre". Ms. Mather stated that she could not agree with \$50 for one acre. She could agree with one lot or possibly two but not one acre. Mr. Stewart suggested making the fee \$50 for one lot or 1/2 acre and \$100 for two lots up to one acre. It was the intent of the committee that when an application is made the higher of the fees would be charged, i.e. if the applicant has one lot but it is an acre the applicant would pay \$100 for the acre, if the applicant has four lots on one acre \$200 would be paid for the four lots. The committee set a maximum of \$200 on the \$50 and \$100 fee for lots and acreage. Ms Mather stated that she felt what the committee has worked out is pretty good but she had rather leave the fee at \$150.

Mr. Lillie went over the committee's recommendations that \$50 be charged for each lot up to a \$200 maximum or up to 1/2 acre of unsubdivided land and \$100 for two lots with a maximum of \$200 or 1/2 to one acre of unsubdivided land on zoning applications, leaving the rest of the categories on the zoning application fees as they were proposed by the staff. The committee agreed on this and agreed on the \$50 fee plus \$1.00 per unit on the special permit fees. Agreeing on suggestions made earlier concerning the PUD application fees.

The committee agreed on the reduction of the short form subdivision fee from \$75 to \$50.

The meeting was adjourned.