

C2-73-3a      Zoning

Planned Unit Development and Townhouse Provisions;  
Planned Unit Development guidelines.

At the regular meeting of the Zoning Committee on February 6, 1973, a public hearing was held concerning the Planned Unit Development and Townhouse Provisions, and the Planned Unit Development guidelines. Mr. Jack Alexander, Assistant Director of Planning, presented information to the Committee. The Planned Unit Development and Townhouse Ordinances have been in effect approximately two years, and the Planning Commission has requested that the Planning Department staff study past developments to determine the effectiveness of these Ordinances, and the Planned Unit Development guidelines. This study has been completed; several modifications are recommended to the Planned Unit Development guidelines, and it is recommended that the Townhouse Ordinance be deleted from the Zoning Ordinance.

The Planned Unit Development guidelines were originally developed to provide general ground rules for individual projects. Without guidelines the staff of the various City Departments, the Zoning Committee and the Planning Commission would have to spend many extra hours reviewing detailed proposals. It is anticipated that over 95% of all future Planned Unit Developments could be developed within the proposed guidelines; this would provide the additional time necessary to review the detailed recommendations of the small percentage of projects that would require special consideration.

After discussion with the Austin Home Builders' Association and the American Institute of Architects, it is felt that a disagreement exists concerning these guidelines. Representatives of these organizations have indicated that they would prefer limited guideline criteria, with the design of the individual project to be worked out with the City staff and the Planning Commission.

It is the recommendation of the staff that a set of guidelines be adopted by the Planning Commission. The City staff and the Planning Commission have worked with the developers in the past to provide maximum flexibility in design; on several occasions the staff has recommended to the Commission that the guidelines be waived, as the projects showed creativity and met the intent of the guidelines.

Mr. Bill Scudder, representing both the Austin Association of Home Builders' and the Austin Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, presented a letter to the Committee which detailed specific items that members of these organizations feel should be changed or deleted from the guidelines. He stated that the guidelines should be very general to allow more flexibility in design.

Messrs. Chartier Newton, Ken Zimmerman, Jim Perdue and Art Moseley participated in the discussion. They were in agreement that the guidelines should provide greater flexibility for development.

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The Committee reviewed the information and discussion; Mr. Hetherly stated that he felt that a developer would not be able to function without a set of guidelines for development. He noted further that the general public needs to be educated regarding townhouse development, as they feel that they are apartments. Mr. Barrow stated that lifestyles are changing and many persons do not want to maintain a yard; a Planned Unit development offers flexibility in planning and an increase in density. The members noted that compatibility with the surrounding area is a primary consideration on density for a Planned Unit Development. The members concluded that further research and discussion on the guidelines would be desirable. They then voted to postpone this item for thirty days, and requested that all interested parties participate in a work session at that time.

AYE:          Messrs. Hetherly, Barrow and Faulkner.    Mses. Ashworth and Mather