



**CITY OF OKEECHOBEE, FLORIDA
PLANNING BOARD WORKSHOP MEETING
APRIL 15, 2021
SUMMARY OF BOARD DISCUSSION**

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Hoover called the workshop meeting of the Planning Board for the City of Okeechobee to order on Thursday, April 15, 2021, at 6:18 P.M. in the City Council Chambers, located at 55 Southeast Third Avenue, Room 200, Okeechobee, Florida.

II. ATTENDANCE

Roll was taken by Board Secretary Patty Burnette. Chairperson Dawn Hoover, Vice Chairperson Doug McCoy, Board Members Karyne Brass, Rick Chartier, Felix Granados, and Mac Jonassaint were present as well as Alternate Board Members Joe Papasso and Jim Shaw. Board Member Phil Baughman was absent with consent.

III. ITEMS OF DISCUSSION

- A.** Mr. Ben Smith of LaRue Planning and Management Services was present as the City's Planning Consultant and briefly explained his Staff Report regarding a potential Commercial Corridor Overlay (CCO). In May of 2013, this Board recommended to the City Council adoption of an amendment to the City's Comprehensive Plan to create a CCO with restriction on rezoning that may be approved within that overlay. The proposed amendment was never adopted. The originally proposed amendment designated the boundaries of a Commercial Corridor as well as the boundaries of a Transitional Commercial Overlay (TCO) Future Land Use (FLU) Subcategory. It appears the language did not include any new regulation and was mainly intended for planning purposes as a guide for development land redevelopment along the City's major corridors. However, the language proposed in the TCO portion of the amendment would have limited rezonings in the designated areas to Residential Multiple Family (RMF), Light Commercial (CLT), Commercial Professional Office (CPO), Central Business District (CBD) and Public Use (PUB). Presumably, these zoning districts were selected to provide transitional buffers between the more intensive commercial uses located adjacent to the corridor roadways and the residential neighborhoods, lighter commercial areas, and public use areas. Either this Board can recommend again to the City Council approval as originally proposed or consider some additional options.

First, the possibility of allowing rezoning to Heavy Commercial (CHV) and Planned Unit Development-Mixed Use (PUD-M) within the TCO. Compatibility with adjacent uses is already a required consideration for all rezoning requests and Future Land Use Map (FLUM) amendment requests. Amending the City's Comprehensive Plan to limit rezonings within an overlay area to only certain zoning districts creates a more rigid level of protection for those residential areas, lighter commercial areas, and public use areas. It will also reduce the City's ability to accommodate projects which may be compatible with those areas but would only be allowable in other zoning districts. Specifically, there may be locations within the TCO which could be deemed appropriate for the CHV and PUD-M Zoning Districts. Hotels are one example of a use that would be effectively prohibited in the TCO, as hotels are only permitted in the CHV and PUD-M districts. It is also possible that operators of existing CHV uses along the corridors may seek to expand their operations into the TCO areas.

Second, another required consideration is consistency with the goals, objectives, and policies of the Comprehensive Plan. To that end, if the City were to adopt language similar to the non-regulatory components of the previously proposed amendment it would provide additional policy guidelines that would assist the Planning Board and Council when making determinations on requests for rezoning and amending the FLUM. Though it would still allow for flexibility in that decision making process as needed. Additionally, as the City continues to pursue the initiative of correcting the existing map inconsistencies between the FLU and Zoning maps, an amendment such as this would provide another tool to help guide the City's efforts in identifying appropriate map changes.

III. ITEMS OF DISCUSSION

ITEM A CONTINUED: Third, instead of entirely discounting the regulatory components of the previously proposed amendment, the City may also consider allowing an expanded list of zoning districts within the entire Commercial Corridor. In this scenario, there would be no TCO, and within the boundaries of a CCO, only rezonings to RMF, CLT, CPO, CBD, CHV, PUB, and PUD-M would be permitted. Low intensity residential districts (Residential Single Family One, Residential Single Family Two, Residential Mobile Home, Rural Heritage, and Planned Unit Development-Residential) and the Industrial district would be prohibited. This would ensure that only commercial, higher density residential, public, and mixed uses would be possible for development and redevelopment within a CCO. Below is the existing description of the Commercial FLU designation from the FLU Element of the City's Comprehensive Plan and staff's proposed amendment language which would implement this potential planning option.


Existing in Policy 2.1. The following land use designations are established for the purpose of managing future growth: Commercial. Permitted uses include the full range of offices, retail, personal and business services, automotive, wholesale, warehousing, related commercial activities, and accessory uses customary to permissible uses. Other uses related to and consistent with commercial development such as houses of worship, public facilities, public utilities, communications facilities, hospitals, group homes, adult family care homes, assisted living facilities, and limited residential use associated with a commercial building, may be permissible under certain circumstances. Commercial development shall not exceed a floor area ratio of 3.00 and the maximum impervious surface for development within this category shall not exceed 85 percent of the site. Zoning districts considered appropriate within this FLU category include CPO, CLT, CHV, and CBD.

Proposed Commercial Corridor Overlay. The City recognizes the importance of State Road 70 and US Highway 441 as the City's primary commercial corridor roadways and desires to follow a considered, limited, and consistent approach to encourage development and expansion of commercial and mixed-use opportunities in close proximity to the commercial corridor roadways to eliminate uncertainty and foster infill and compatibility with existing development. To this end, the City has identified the Commercial Corridor as being that area generally within one to two blocks of each of these roadways, but as more specifically delineated as the CCO on Map 1.2 in the FLUM Series. The intent of the CCO is to provide additional and varied commercial opportunities in locations in close proximity to the City's major arterials and adjacent residential areas. Within the CCO, the continuation of existing uses will be permitted. Rezoning of lands within the CCO will be limited only to the RMF, CLT, CPO, CBD, CHV, PUB, or PUD-M Zoning districts, and only within the FLU designations appropriate for those districts.

After a lengthy discussion, the consensus of the Board was to have Planner Smith bring back revised amendment language which excluded the regulatory components and instead provide a more aspirational vision for the City's commercial corridor; to revise the maps to exclude existing industrial parcels; and re-look at the map boundaries in regard to the current commercial property uses and parcel boundaries.

IV. Chairperson Hoover adjourned the meeting at 7:10 P.M.

Submitted by:



Patty M. Burnette, Secretary

Please take notice and be advised that when a person decides to appeal any decision made by the Planning Board with respect to any matter considered at this proceeding, he/she may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceeding is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based. General Services' media are for the sole purpose of backup for official records.