CALL TO ORDER:

Mr. Dustin Best, Council Chair, called to order the March 26, 2024, Special Joint Meeting of the College Township (CT) Council and Planning Commission (PC) at 6:02 PM and led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chair Best welcomed all members of Council, PC, Staff, DPZ CoDesign, and the public to the kick off meeting of the Dale Summit Area Plan and introductions were made. Chair Best turned the time over to Ms. Schoch, AICP, Principal Planner, who offered a brief introduction to the process of the Dale Summit Area Plan, the Charrette and an overview of the joint meeting that took place on January 24, 2024.

Ms. Schoch introduced Ms. Marina Khoury and Mr. Michael Weich of DPZ CoDesign and turned the time over to them.

Ms. Marina Khoury’s presentation “A Renewed Vision and Code for the Dale Summit Area” was broken into four sections: 1) A new vision plan for the Dale Summit Area; 2) What is a Form-Based Code (FBC)?; 3) Calibrating Dale Summit’s FBC; and 4) Examples.

NEW VISION PLAN FOR DALE SUMMIT

Ms. Marina Khoury reviewed the Dale Summit Vision which states:

“The overarching Vision of this Area Plan is to transform Dale Summit into The Gateway to College Township. Establishing Dale Summit as an attractive and instantly recognizable place within the context of a larger Township, Region and County. The community envisions an activity hub that is vibrant,
economically prosperous, socially equitable and environmentally sustainable. A place, which through proactive planning and well-tailored regulations, strike a sound balance between encouraging business and industry expansion, while remaining respectful to important community livability factors such as improving housing affordability, providing sufficient public services, and lessening traffic congestion through improved connectivity for all transportation modes.”

Ms. Marina Khoury reviewed the existing conditions assessment and offered the initial zoning takeaways.

- A large portion of the area precludes residential development.
- Minimum lot widths preclude many ‘middle-scale’ residential types which are needed according to the marketability report.
- Density and Floor Area Ratio (FAR) are poor predictors of form, and can be controlled by the height and overall form instead. FAR is your most limiting factor to encourage redevelopment.
- The impervious lot coverage is too restrictive, precluding small lot development.
- Height measurement too restrictive, yielding 2-3 stories max typically.
- Setback are excessive which has encouraged a car-centric environment and parking in front yards.

A Charrette was held in June of 2023. The community was engaged and provided these key points:

- Confirmed strong interest in Dale Summit evolving to serve as a hub of activity, potentially with multiple smaller centers.
- Confirmed desire for more walkability – still some skepticism about the details of how it can happen here.
- General support for the findings in the market analysis:
  - Strong interest in entertainment, indoor recreation, food & beverage uses.
  - Interest in variety of smaller housing types.
  - Recognition that need for office and industrial is limited – can be accommodated in a mix with commercial and housing.
- Strong interest in the idea of building State College’s local identity connected to the outdoors by adding trails, bike lanes and walking connections to connect to protected lands.

The Master Plan demonstrates the potential for placemaking and support for greater density to include a wide range of residential building types, smaller single family homes. Cottages on small lots with alleys will serve young families, empty-nesters and other price and maintenance sensitive households. There is a need for traditional rental apartment units as a key area of unmet demand serving a broad population.

The Dale Summit Area Plan will respect property lines, create center nodes, create greenways and parks, create a new urban pattern of blocks and streets, and includes street connectivity.

WHAT IS FORM-BASED CODE?

Form-Based Code (FBC) is a zoning regulation that fosters predictable built results and a high-quality public realm by using physical form (rather than separation of uses) as the organizing principle for the code. A FBC is a regulation, not a mere guideline, adopted into city, town, or county law. A FBC offers a powerful alternative to conventional Euclidean Code.

The primary goal of FBC is to shape public space to:
- Place buildings to create a desirable public realm;
- Design great streets; and
- Regulate building form.

Ms. Marina Khoury offered that FBC is a code of vision, an illustrative plan, in an easy to understand and transparent code. The six (6) main elements of a FBC:

1. Place buildings to create a desirable public realm;
2. Design great streets;
3. Regulate building form;
4. Support for walkability;
5. Support for mixed use;
6. Support for a unique local identity.

Ms. Marina Khoury offered that FBC is a code of vision, an illustrative plan, in an easy to understand and transparent code. The six (6) main elements of a FBC:
1. Regulating Plan and Zones
2. Subdivision Standards
3. Street and Civic Space Standards
4. Building and Frontage Standards
5. Administration Standards
6. Definitions

Ms. Marina Khoury shared information about the economic, health, equity, social, and environmental benefits of walkable urbanism.

CALIBRATING DALE SUMMIT’S NEW CODE

The ideas for FBC in the Dale Summit Area include:

- Remove Floor Area Ratio (FAR) and Density – instead control density by height and lot coverage
- Reduce setback and increase lot coverage
- Allow a broader range of uses and unit types, including small lot developments and Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU’s)
- Allow pilot projects to have an expedited review process
- Provide useable, programmable, and intentional open spaces
- Adopt contextual street standards (First – Land Use; Second – Transportation – transportation design must be subordinate to urban design in walkable places)

The FBC regulating plan will include the following:

Section 1: General Provisions
1. Applicability
2. Intent
3. Zones, described
4. Non-Conformities

Section 2: Subdivision Standards
1. Transportation Standards
2. Block Standards
3. Zoning
4. Platting Standards
5. Civic Space Standards

Section 3: Zoning Regulations
1. Building Placement
2. Setback Requirements
3. Encroachments
4. Projections into the ROW
5. Building Heights
6. Building Elevations
7. Form Standards
8. Uses
9. Parking Standards
10. Landscape Standards
11. Fencing
12. Sign Standards

Section 4: Thoroughfares/Right-of-Ways
Section 5: Administration
Section 6: Definitions
 EXAMPLES

Ms. Marina Khoury shared examples of implementation of Form-Based Code around the country including examples of Mixed-Use Centers, Mixed-Use Center buildings, Neighborhood Mixed-Use, Amenities & Open Spaces, Single-Family Residential and Multi-Family dwellings.

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS

At the conclusion of the presentation, Council and Staff thanked DPZ CoDesign for the excellent presentation. A lot of information was presented in an easy to understand format.

Mr. Brumbaugh stated that it important to understand that this a long process with long-term objectives.

Council and PC offered the following:
- FBC is an innovative concept for the Centre Region.
- This is a long-term commitment to the revitalization of the area.
- The land, using FBC, will be used in a better fashion.
- FBC gives developers more profitability.
- Need to develop incentives to utilize the Dale Summit Area.
- Challenges in redevelopment of already existing structures:
  o Streets/Blocks
  o Working with developers
- There may be a resistance to something new/different.

NEXT STEPS:

Ms. Schoch offered that Staff will prepare a DRAFT remand letter for Council to review and approve. Once the remand is given to the PC, she opined that the PC will take a step-by-step approach to review each section of the Draft FBC over the next 4 to 5 months. There is the potential for a third Joint Meeting to provide PC comments to Council.

The public is invited and encouraged to stay engaged in the process.

ADJOURNMENT:

Chair Best called for a motion to adjourn the March 26, 2024, Special Joint Meeting of the College Township Council and Planning Commission.

Mr. Ray Forzit, Planning Commission, made a motion to adjourn. Chair Best seconded the motion.

Chair Best adjourned the March 26, 2024, Special Joint Meeting at 7:59 PM.

Respectfully Submitted By,

Adam T. Brumbaugh

Adam T. Brumbaugh
Township Secretary/Manager