

STAFF REPORT FOR THE PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING OF FEBRUARY 23, 2022

FILE NO: ZA-2022-0050

AGENDA ITEM: 6B

STAFF CONTACT: Hope Sullivan, Community Development Director

AGENDA TITLE: ZA-2022-0050 For Possible Action: Discussion and possible action regarding incorporating design standards that promote sustainability into Carson City Municipal Code (“CCMC”) Title 18 Appendix, Division 1: Land Use and Site Design.

Staff Summary: Citizens’ Climate Education, a nonpartisan grassroots advocacy organization, will present design concepts that encourage sustainable design. The Commission will consider these concepts and determine if it would like to consider the incorporation of these design concepts as part of the Title 18 update. If the Planning Commission would like to consider incorporation, a public hearing will be scheduled for a future date.

PROPOSED MOTION: no action proposed

DISCUSSION:

Representatives of Citizens’ Climate Education (“CCE”) will be speaking with the Commission regarding incorporation of environmental best practices in land development in Carson City. As described by its membership, CCE “is a nonpartisan grassroots advocacy organization that empowers individuals to educate key stakeholders, policymakers, and the general public about effective solutions to climate change. By working with local, state and federal agencies and governments, CCE builds political will for long-lasting climate solutions. . . . CCE envisions transitioning to a global clean energy economy that is structured by the principles of inclusivity, equity, and sustainability.”

Staff has met with CCE and believes that some of the concepts espoused by CCE may make sense for the City’s Development Standards. Carson City Development Standards Division 1: Land Use and Site Design provides design standards intended to foster quality design of office, commercial, multi-family, public, industrial and institutional projects.

This item is an opportunity for CCE to present its ideas, and for the Planning Commission to identify if there are concepts it would like incorporated into the Development Standards as part of the Title 18 update.

Attachments:

Statement dated February 23, 2022 from CCE

Citizens' Climate Education
Presentation to Carson City Planning Commission
February 23, 2022

MIDGE:

Thank you for welcoming us to speak at your meeting. Our goal is to encourage the implementation of environmentally friendly practices in our community so Carson City doesn't continue to be among the fastest warming cities in the country.

We belong to an international group called Citizens' Climate Education which is a non-partisan, grassroots organization working to create the political will for a more stable climate. We encourage the Planning Commission to add criteria to the development code requiring government, business and private projects use environmentally friendly practices to lessen the effects they will have on the warming of the planet.

Some of you may remember that the City formed the "Capital City Sustainability Partnership" about four years ago when Bob Crowell was mayor. This group, comprised of the city manager, public works staff, some businesses, and engaged citizens, worked to develop ideas that would reduce the City's GHG emissions and save money at the same time. The Partnership has not met since the pandemic began, but it laid the groundwork for some of the ideas we'd like to present to you today since the City is in the process of a comprehensive code review.

CHAS:

We have a number of suggestions that we would like the City to consider and since the Planning Commission make recommendations to the Board of Supervisors on land development issues, we're starting with you. Today, I'd like to start with a high-level list, but we'd be happy to return to this body and work with staff to develop these ideas in more detail. Some items on this list are more relevant to site development and others to buildings, and some fall in the middle. I'll start with site development.

Site Development:

1. Adopt LEED Neighborhood Development Guidelines.
2. Require Low Impact Development. The City's drainage manual encourages LID, landscape planning and infiltration of roof and impervious surface runoff, but as far as I can see does not require it. We'd like to see it required in code.
 - a. Require native and drought resistant trees and plants.
 - b. Plant deciduous shade trees to the west of houses and buildings to provide shade from the hot summer sun in the afternoons.
 - c. Encourage the use of permeable surfaces that allow water to reenter the aquifer and require the use of downspout infiltration systems such as trench or drywell designs.
3. Require light colored building materials for roofs and siding which will reflect the sun's heat rather than absorb it.

4. Use "cool pavement" technology for streets and paths wherever feasible.
5. Encourage subdivision and building layouts that maximize opportunities for Passive Solar Design and orientation.
 - a. Face larger windows toward the south to capture warmth in winter (when sun is low in the sky.)
 - b. Provide adequate roof overhangs on the south side to protect against the sun's heat in the summer when the sun is higher in the sky.
 - c. Place thermal mass inside the south-facing windows to absorb the sun's heat and to radiate that heat back into the living space in the evenings.
6. Require solar panels on rooftops wherever feasible. At a minimum require wiring in new homes to be solar compatible.
7. Increase the required share of EV capable parking spots at new buildings and current multi-family housing.

Buildings:

1. Adopt the IECC (International Energy Conservation Code)
<https://climateaction.nv.gov/policies/energy-codes/>
2. Require LED lights in new homes.
3. Require a minimum 200-amp electrical panel to accommodate EV charging.
4. Require high-efficiency electric appliances rather than gas in new homes.
5. Use heat pump systems rather than traditional gas furnaces and air conditioning.
6. Increase the minimum building insulation requirement for roofs, exterior walls and windows

These practices for new developments and retrofits/remodels will increase home and building values for minimal cost and reduce heating and cooling bills.

We hope that all building projects will use environmentally friendly practices. We need our city to stay cool and comfortable and beautiful.

We would be happy to work with the City to develop specific language on these items as the City goes through its code revision process.

Sincerely,

Citizens' Climate Education

Midge Breeden, Chas Macquarie, Rob Bastien, John Cobourn, Cheryl Pawluk, Sandra Koch, M.D., James Breeden, M.D.