

STATE OF TEXAS §
COUNTIES OF POTTER §
AND RANDALL §
CITY OF AMARILLO §

On June 12, 2013, the Comprehensive Plan Implementation Advisory Committee met in a scheduled session at 12:00 P.M. in the Commissioner’s Conference Room in 303, on the third floor of City Hall, 509 East 7th Avenue, Amarillo, Texas, with the following members present:

VOTING MEMBERS	PRESENT	NO. MEETINGS HELD	NO. MEETINGS ATTENDED
Bill Chudej	Yes	18	11
Bob Juba, Chair	Yes	18	14
Wes Knapp	Yes	18	15
Don Sanders, Vice Chair	No	18	17
Eddie Scott	Yes	18	14
Howard Smith	Yes	18	17
Dana Walton	Yes	18	12
Milford Burrell	No	15	14
Steve Rogers	No	2	1

CITY STAFF:

Kelley Shaw, Planning Director
Kathleen Collins, Planner II

Chairman Bob Juba opened the meeting, established a quorum, and conducted the consideration of the following items beginning with ITEM 1.

ITEM 1: Approve the minutes of the Committee’s May 8, 2013 meeting

Mr. Juba asked if there were any questions on the previous meeting’s minutes, hearing none, Mr. Chudej motioned to accept the minutes, Mr. Smith seconded the motion and they were unanimously approved.

ITEM 2: Report by Staff on Landscape Ordinance Review

Mr. Juba invited Mr. Shaw to discuss this item. Mr. Shaw gave the Committee an overview of Amarillo’s current landscaping standards which require the installation of living groundcover at a rate of 5% of total off street parking. He also mentioned the current standards include a tree requirement of one tree for each 5,000 square feet of developed lot area. In practice, the amount of landscaping based upon parking requirement is not uniform in City Staff’s opinion. Examples include office buildings which require very little parking and therefore require very little landscaping as compared to a restaurant which require large amounts of parking and much more landscaping. Mr. Shaw stated the intent of a landscape ordinance should be based on balancing the needs of business owners, enhancing community’s character, and promoting water conservation.

In reviewing multiple municipal ordinances, City Staff decided it best to create a new method to base landscape standards. A reasonable method involves a direct correlation based on building footprint and the amount of landscaping required. Mr. Shaw noted that City Staff suggest total landscaping (groundcover) of a site be either 10% or 15% of the building’s footprint. In order to address water conservation and provide flexibility for business owners, Staff recommends approximately 25% to 50% of the total landscaping be non-living.

Also, to address the sea of parking, Staff are reviewing the option of requiring an additional parking lot tree requirement. Mr. Shaw noted that such requirements with other Cities range from 1 tree for each 10 parking spaces to 1 tree for each 50 parking spaces. In order to find a middle ground, City Staff is proposing 1 tree or shrub for each 20 parking spaces. He referenced Western Crossing's parking area as an example. In addition to parking lot trees, City Staff are proposing 1 tree per 40 feet of frontage to create a type of streetscape which aids in promoting community character.

Mr. Shaw also mentioned establishing a point system which would encourage drought tolerant plants from a recommended plant list along with drip irrigation while discouraging strips of high water usage plants like bluegrass. Mr. Knapp asked if there would be points for artificial turf. Mr. Shaw noted this type of material may be allowed and would fall under non-living landscaping requirements. Mr. Juba asked if a business owner could landscape flower beds with drought tolerant plants and accented it with artificial turf for a pop of color. Mr. Shaw stated that this may be a possibility if all landscaping requirements were met.

Mr. Juba mentioned that updating the landscape ordinance fits well with the Comprehensive Plan, however, he believed that existing businesses would be grandfathered in. Ms. Walton asked if improvements were to be made to existing businesses, would the landscaping requirement need to be brought up to code. Mr. Shaw stated that if improvements are made to an existing structure which exceeds \$50,000 and exceeds 50% of the appraised value of the structure, new standards would apply. He also noted that expanding existing parking areas would also trigger the new landscaping standards. Mr. Chudej asked if the new standards require that a professional designer submit landscaping plans when a project exceeds a certain dollar amount. Mr. Shaw noted that Staff would look into such a standard. He also stated that Staff are reviewing the enforcement aspect of the new standards.

Mr. Juba asked if the proposed standards would apply to self-storage complexes. Mr. Shaw stated that a storage facility is unique in that it requires relatively no parking, many are on flag-shaped lots with minimal frontage, and privacy screening surrounds the property. He suggested language be written into the landscaping ordinance for circumstances that do not fit neatly. Developers of such types of businesses will have the ability to discuss it with the Planning Director to meet the intent of the landscape ordinance.

Mr. Shaw stated that Staff are applying the proposed landscaping standards to multiple types of land uses in order to define the impact it will have on business owners.

ITEM 3: Report by Staff on amendments related to elements within the Downtown Amarillo Urban Design Standards and the related development review process

Mr. Shaw distributed a working copy of the Downtown Amarillo Urban Design Standards and briefly mentioned the entire standards would not be revised. He pointed out a couple of revisions, one being substantial additions or modifications to existing structures that did not trigger anything within the existing standards and another being pedestrian-friendly development which use drive thru conveniences.

ITEM 4: Public Forum: Comments from interested citizens on matters directly pertaining to City policies, programs or services

No public citizens were present.

Kelley Shaw
Planning Director