



City Commission Work Session Minutes

June 22, 2026 at 3:00 PM

City Hall Commission Chambers
401 S. Park Avenue

Present

Mayor Sheila DeCiccio; Commissioners Elizabeth Ingram, Craig Russell, Kris Cruzada, and Warren Lindsey; City Manager Randy Knight; Assistant City Manager Michelle del Valle; City Attorney Dan Langley, and City Clerk Rene Cranis.

1. Meeting Called to Order

Mayor DeCiccio called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

2. Discussion Item (s)

- a. Discussion regarding the request of Tara Tedrow to amend Chapter 58 "Land Development Code" Article, I, "Comprehensive Plan" so as to add a new policy within the text of the Future Land Use Element to permit the subdivision or lot split of lakefront property that meets specific criteria, which will impact 1020 Palmer Avenue also known as "Merrywood".

Mayor DeCiccio provided the background of the request and public concern regarding preservation of the historic Merrywood home. She noted that the lot split request should not be viewed as a special exemption and stated that each application should be considered on a case-by-case basis. She discussed ongoing efforts to update the city's preservation code and potential incentives and noted that the Bert Harris Act is not an issue as it relates to this request.

Director of Planning and Zoning Allison McGillis provided background information and statistics on lakefront properties in response to questions. She explained the request for a Comprehensive Plan amendment to allow a lakefront lot split, which was approved by the Planning and Zoning Board. She noted that the current owners have received approval to demolish the existing home, but that demolition has been paused.

Applicant Tara Tedrow gave a presentation on the request, showing aerial views of the property and explaining that the current lot size could allow for a home in excess of 55,000 square feet. She stated that the requested Comprehensive Plan amendment would allow the property to be split into two lakefront lots of more than 1.5 acres each with over 100 feet of lake frontage and would help prevent out-of-scale development on the site. She noted that the property has been actively marketed with limited buyer interest due to purchase price and significant renovation costs, and cited existing Comprehensive Plan policies she stated support the request.

Commissioner Cruzada spoke about the scope and scale of the property, noting it was a unique situation not originally intended for subdivision or redevelopment in its current form. He described the property as an anomaly and stated he was torn in his

consideration of the application, acknowledging both neighborhood character and policy considerations. He asked Tara Tedrow about the marketing process for the property. Mrs. Tedrow stated the property had been exposed to the market and shown to numerous prospective buyers, but interest was limited due to the condition of the home and the significant cost of rehabilitation in addition to the purchase price. She noted that despite extensive efforts over several months, no viable offer had come forward.

Sotheby's Realtor Mick Night, provided information on his efforts to market the property, noting that the home has been shown to over 100 prospective buyers with fewer than 20 serious buyers and multiple custom builders touring the site. He explained that the property has been actively marketed over an extended period with limited interest due to the condition of the home, the scope of required repairs, and the overall cost of renovation, which would likely exceed the cost of new construction. He stated there has been no viable interest from buyers to undertake a full restoration or preservation of the structure, and described the challenges associated with redeveloping or adapting the existing home within the constraints of the site.

In response to questions by Commissioner Lindsey, Director McGillis agreed to provide a list of the 21 lakefront lots that are at least 2 acres and clarified how upland acreage was calculated using mapping data that excludes water areas. She explained that the figures were based on property appraiser data and not surveyed boundaries.

Commissioner Russell raised the question of whether the city would lose part of its story if the house was demolished and spoke about broader implications of historic preservation and redevelopment, noting the tension between preserving community character and allowing property owners to exercise development rights. He expressed concern about the potential impact of a larger estate-scale home on the site and referenced examples of similar large residences.

Commissioner Ingram stated that while the city supports historic preservation, in some cases the cost of preservation can be prohibitive. She expressed disappointment that the home is slated for demolition and discussed whether there were options to preserve or designate the property while still addressing redevelopment considerations. In response, Mrs. Tedrow stated that efforts were made to find a preservation-minded buyer, but the cost of rehabilitation was a deterrent and no viable interest came forward.

In depth discussion followed on historic preservation efforts and impact to the city's story and the importance of increasing historic preservation efforts and incentives.

Commissioner Lindsey expressed concern about adopting a policy that applies to a single property and creates a special exemption, and supported consideration of a more uniform policy applicable to similarly situated properties. City Attorney Dan Langley explained that Comprehensive Plan amendments may be applied to individual properties and that the Commission has discretion to revise or tailor policy as needed. He stated the proposed amendment would not create a violation of the Bert Harris Act.

Commissioner Lindsey requested that staff identify other properties that could potentially be impacted by the proposed policy approach.

Mayor DeCiccio stated that each lot split application should be evaluated individually on a case-by-case basis. Mrs. Tedrow referenced prior approved lot splits and stated that the proposed policy is more restrictive than previous standards, including larger minimum lot size and frontage requirements and a lower floor area ratio. Mick Night reiterated that the property has been widely marketed with limited serious buyer interest and explained that, given the condition of the home and market constraints, redevelopment is the most likely outcome due to the economic feasibility of restoration.

There was no further discussion.

3. Adjournment

Mayor Sheila DeCiccio

ATTEST:

Deputy City Clerk Kim Breland