

Members of the 44th Ave Committee:

From: Terry Roberts

I'm glad to be of help if I can. Here is some of what I know about LUTAC and I'm including an e-mail I sent to the Newsletter on 8/24 concerning LUTAC's last meeting on 8/23.

I have been very interested in LUTAC since February. I've attended most meetings open to the public and have read most information on their WEB site. LUTAC has sweeping goals and visions for Denver. The City Council will decide what will be used. Therefore LUTAC walks a fine line. Sweeping changes create animosity. Council Members want to be re-elected. LUTAC needs neighborhood support to succeed. I've heard this message at the meetings MANY times. LUTAC wants (needs) our input to validate its proposals. LUTAC members are walking on eggs while trying to do something big. What seems to work with LUTAC is positive, visionary ideas from Neighborhood Groups. They want to create concrete plans for "invested" Citizen Groups. Probably the best message from us would be goal and vision oriented with a strong sense of the Positive. Negative input has cast a pall on meetings. When the public is allowed to participate it is usually a brow beating or whining affair.

We have plenty of time to create this "big picture vision" for Sunnyside if we act soon. We don't need to deal with details at this stage. We can also avoid issues which we're not sure about, but still address their importance.

I think it is absolutely crucial that Sunnyside put itself in the forefront now. There is already a pecking order and we are way down near the bottom. They have limited money to achieve goals, but the projects they do take on will be big and done well.

Hi Agnes,

I went to the LUTAC meeting on 8/23. It's very hard to know where to start explaining what I heard.

I guess I'll start with the consultant's presentation.

A synopsis of things pertinent to us:

There are over 24,000 different zoning code variations. Some examples of our outdated code book are:

1. You can't polish a car in some shops without first getting it washed there.
2. Some schools of dance can teach basic American dances, but not any "foreign" ones like the Tango.
3. A kosher chicken can only be slaughtered in a kosher slaughter house (special zoning). This killing involves having a rabbi present and the chicken must be plucked at the "right" time.

He gave several others, some hilarious.

The whole zone code book will essentially be thrown out to rid it of these numerous, outdated and useless codes. A new one will be written for the City. The goal is to reduce the 24,000 code variations down to 2,000. His firm has accomplished this in several cities in the nation.

The process involved will essentially consist of establishing a system of 30-40 Overlays. The Overlays will be like legal transparencies that will cover the City's neighborhoods. They will have a number, category, and "conforming uses", among their major parameters.

If your Overlay is decided to be R1 then you will be single family residence, etc. It's important to note that these Overlays might possibly (over time it is certain) change a great deal of current zoning. A restaurant in an R1 Overlay will eventually become a residence (they didn't say how). Some Overlays will deal with Transportation. West 38th may be Overlaid with a transportation designation, so might 44th for instance. Most will deal with buildings and their uses. A church would get a nonprofit Overlay.

The goal is a tremendous amount of simplification.

Questions and comments from the LUTAC Committee:

1. What about Neighborhood input and acceptance?

Answer, The Neighborhood groups have until mid September to address their own special concerns to LUTAC. After that the LUTAC committee will use its best judgement to establish Overlays for each neighborhood, business district, etc. Although this was a "hazy" answer some didn't seem to like. **A strong point was made several times to ask for Neighborhood views on benefits needed and concerns addressed. This was really stressed.** But they really have no good answer for getting community participation.

2. Why can't we get more Neighborhood group input?

Answer, Every effort is being made to solicit involvement, but most groups don't know what is going on or don't care. We need more information getting out to the public.

3. What about more affluent, aware neighborhoods hiring consultants, planners, lawyers, or what ever you want to call them to lobby LUTAC for "special, selective Overlays" at the expense of Neighborhoods less financially sound?

Answer, The less affluent neighborhoods need the oversight of the City Planners and the consultants to best solve their Overlay Zoning needs. There is less informed local leadership in the poorer areas (my paraphrasing of a rather long discussion).

4. How much in the way of resources does LUTAC and the City have to achieve these goals that are being set?

Answer, not enough at present. The most pressing issues will be dealt with first, and then the plan is to gradually implement the whole Plan. (No time table given) (How can they know anyhow).
End.

Well, changes need to be made. The Zoning laws are a mess. It looks like we won't have to worry about whether we want a bar or restaurant in a given spot. The Overlays will decide those things at the Zoning Department counter. A change would require a variance I guess. This wasn't really addressed.

And get ready for some big changes. This is pretty sweeping stuff.

However, I think it will be hard to get this type of stuff by the City Council. It made sense, but it's going to rub a lot of people the wrong way.

Terry Roberts
