Albemarle County Planning Commission
DISC Worksession
August 15, 2000

The Albemarle County Planning Commission held a worksession on Tuesday, August 15, 2000. Present were: Lee Catlin, Elaine Echols, Wayne Cilimberg, Dennis Rooker, Will Rieley, Tracey Hopper, Greg Kamptner, Jared Loewenstein, Rodney Thomas, Pete Craddock, Pete Anderson.

Approval of Minutes – August 1, 2000
The Commission moved, seconded, and unanimously approved the minutes of August 1, 2000 as amended.

Work Session – DISC Neighborhood Model—Review of Principles 3 through 6

Mr. Cilimberg announced that the discussion would follow the same format as last time.

Ms. Echols announced that on October 3rd, the county executive would hold a meeting to discuss case studies of specific DISC-like development; she noted that there is no direct comparison in the Commonwealth in counties. She pointed out that there are characteristics found in town and cities, and what the general fiscal impact is of this type of development.

Mr. Rooker pointed out that there are a number of items raised in reports having to do with fire service, road safety and other issues, and it might be helpful to look at how those issues are addressed in other communities.

Ms. Echols asked Commissioners to look over the schedule of DISC meetings and determine if it is a good schedule, adding that Planning would publicize them for those interested in work sessions. She mentioned that there were some omissions of park and open space information, and presented the missing materials.

Ms. Echols presented a letter from VDOL dated July 17, 2000, explaining that staff tried to highlight their comments as they relate to features in the neighborhood model. She noted that VDOT thought the neighborhood model would set out density of development areas, not the Land Use Plan. Ms. Echols said that staff tried to concentrate on the design features for pedestrian access, and then go into the interconnected streets and transportation networks.

Mr. Rooker suggested that the DISC committee look at the letter from VDOT and make a determination or comment on how much the entire DISC concept is dependent upon changes in road standards – road standards the county is presently not enabled to use. "If it's highly dependent upon such changes in potential transportation features….we ought to start some kind of work with state legislators to see if some of these changes might be

possible." He added, "It also indicates the extent to which we might look at private roads."

Ms. Echols responded that in the policy and regulatory section of the DISC report, there are specifics that lay out a strategy for how to deal with VDOT, as well as specifics on public roads over private roads, as DISC members felt that public roads are of such importance to the community.

Mr. Rooker said it might not be feasible to leave private road standards alone if the county can't get changes necessary to accommodate this type of development on public roads.

Interconnected Streets and Transportation Networks

Ms. Echols reported that this section deals with two major issues: interconnections and networks other than streets for single-occupancy vehicles, such as bikeways, bus routes, bike rail lines and pedestrian paths. She explained that the section in the Neighborhood Model lays out what is important about interconnections, all of which is laid out in the Land Use Plan. Ms. Echols said that the Land Use Plan emphasizes that interconnections are better than lots of cul-de-sacs. She referenced illustrations on how to make interconnections and dealing with different types of terrain, stating that the point of interconneciton is to have a number of opportunities for travel, not just a conventional road pattern with large arterials and cul-de-sacs.

Ms. Echols elaborated that the roads currently in the development areas do not provide for traffic disbursements or pedestrian paths. She stated that the biggest issue that relates to this interconnected street model is VDOT and what is currently in the street regulations. Ms. Echols said that the current VDOT regulations support curb and gutter, but do not encourage green strips on the other side of the curb with a path. VDOT prefers to have the sidewalk next to the road and will even maintain the sidewalk under current guidelines.

Ms. Echols commented, "As you make interconnections, there's more volume going on a subdivision street…VDOT says more cars, wider street – wider street, higher design speed." She said that VDOT wants subdivision roads that interconnect with adjoining property to handle all the traffic generated by the adjoining property, thus requiring the developer to widen the street, which means wider streets, more cars and higher design speed. She added that VDOT also expressed concern about maintenance of landscaping.

Ms. Echols announced that there were people present at the meeting from DISC, who could make comments and answer questions.

Mr. Rooker said it would be helpful to have DISC representatives enter into the dialogue.

Mr. Rooker asked what ITE stands for, and how those standards differ from VDOT's.

Ms. Echols responded that the Institute for Transportation Engineers is the industry standard for transportation engineers, although there is a neo-traditional street manual still under consideration by VDOT. Ms. Echols noted that VDOT revised their subdivision and street which address neo-traditional developments and pedestrian friendly streetscapes to occur.

Ms. Echols said that DISC looked at comments from an ITE engineer who had put together the neo-traditional street standards, and suggested that VDOT **could** accept neo-traditional type streets in the neighborhood model **if they would**.

Mr. Rooker commented that a lot of what DISC would like to accomplish depends on VDOT, and it is helpful if there are recognized standards that allow provide a definitive source to point to. "It's difficult if you don't have something objective to look at to make a case to VDOT when the simply come back and say, 'the road you're proposing is not safe.'….from our perspective, I think that ultimately we need to have something objective to rely on."

Mr. Craddock asked if VDOT grants many exceptions.

Mr. Rieley responded that there seems to be a great deal of flexibility, but the question is how sympathetic the people in the chain of command will be. He added that the definitions and standards in the DISC report seem to be largely compatible with VDOT standards. "The areas of flexibility are on the margins – design speed and volume is a huge [issue]…I think it is going to be a big one to come to grips with."

Ms. Echols reminded Commissioners of the difficult decisions related to the Parkside development, and the road width was eventually reduced from the original plan. "That took a great deal of work, and so there is case-by-case discretion. The activities that go on at VDOT are very involved…they're very time-consuming…they're very difficult."

Mr. Rooker commented, "It gets difficult to base our planning on the expectation or hope that we're going to get case-by-case exceptions, as opposed to being able to [have standards] you can count on."

Mr. Loewenstein emphasized the importance of reviewing the ITE standards against VDOT standards. "It's a professional opinion that they will have to come to terms with."

Ms. Hopper commented that it would be nice to have input from VDOT prior to the October 3rd DISC meeting.

Mr. Rooker said it would be nice to have work done with VDOT by the time DISC discussions are finished, and define specific areas for changes in road standards that are needed. He suggested possibly bringing legislators in to assist with any policy changes needed.

Mr. Cilimberg stated that the first step is DISC Volume 1 adopted, emphasizing that it may not be possible to bring VDOT along. "It may take some real effort with VDOT over more than just a few months to get there."

Mr. Rieley agreed that after the Commission gets through Volume 1, then the Commission could get specific.

Mr. Finley asked if the county was working on approaches for Albemarle County alone or incorporating VDOT standards statewide.

Ms. Echols replied that there are a series of steps in working with VDOT—coming up with standards that the county wants them to use, then working with the state.

Ms. Catlin emphasized that the Commission needs somehow to tie back to the language in Volume 1. She emphasized that the Commission should be working toward something that will emerge as a Comp Plan recommendation to the Board of Supervisors.

Mr. Rieley mentioned that he did not see the term thoroughfare defined, and suggested defining it in some way.

Mr. Rooker commented that it seemed to be referring to streets and roads.

Mr. Anderson suggested adding the words "streets and roads" after thoroughfare.

Mr. Rieley suggested modifying some of the language in the first paragraph, related to bypasses. He stated qualifying the sentence to say, "Bypasses can sometimes start the problem over again on a new site. These roads are often designed for solely for cars and trucks." Mr. Rieley pointed out references to corridors within the document, suggesting removal of the last paragraph on Page 16.

Mr. Rooker noted that corridors are not referenced to anywhere else in the document.

Ms. Echols pointed out that DISC members were trying to introduce the fact that there are places where interconnection can happen without roads – through streets and paths instead, for example.

Ms. Catlin agreed that that description could be substituted for what's currently in the document.

Ms. Katie Hobbs, who served on the DISC Committee, emphasized that the corridors need to be safe – not so far removed that people will not use them.

Mr. Anderson said, "In other words, they need to be populated in order to be safe."

Mr. Rooker said that safety may be a consideration, but it doesn't need to be a part of this statement regarding interconnection. He added that he interpreted the references to

corridors as a way of speaking to accesses that may interconnect without transportation – such as natural pathways.

Mr. Loewenstein pointed out that corridors serve an interconnectivity purpose, but also make neighborhoods more livable.

Ms. Catlin asked the Commission what distinction they were trying to make with respect to the corridors.

Ms. Echols noted that the corridors would be addressed more as the Commission gets into the development of neighborhood plans.

Mr. Rooker agreed that perhaps the issue of corridors would be better dealt with somewhere else.

Ms. Catlin clarified that Commissioners would like to briefly mention that corridors could be non-vehicular, but the detail would be spelled out later. She reviewed the changes Commissioners had suggested throughout their discussion.

Ms. Catlin asked Commissioners to discuss the design approaches for this principle.

Ms. Hopper emphasized that this principle was not formatted the same other design principles, as it included an advantage/disadvantage section. She suggested incorporating these into features.

Mr. Jeff Werner of the Piedmont Environmental Council stated that doing this might remove some instruction from the document.

Ms. Hopper said that sometimes it makes sense to put the advantages/disadvantages into features, as there is subjectivity involved with describing benefits.

Mr. Cilimberg said that they don't have to be called "advantages and disadvantages," but could just be mentioned as attributes of a system.

Mr. Rieley commented, "I think these need to be qualified." He said that perhaps saying, "straight thoroughfares **may** enhance the character of rolling terrain, **may** not work well on steeply sloped inclines."

Mr. Rooker noted that "appropriate locations" make the language somewhat limiting, especially if the document becomes a part of the Comprehensive Plan.

Ms. Catlin pointed out that the word appropriate was picked up from other parts of DISC.

Mr. Cilimberg said that the Neighborhood Model is intended to give guidance, not to specify where things should or shouldn't go. "It can be instructive…in terms of the types of street systems that will work…"

Mr. Finley suggested letting the designers decide whether a certain design style is advantageous or not.

Ms. Catlin asked Commissioners if they want to use the term “appropriate” or remove it.

Mr. Loewenstein suggested using the qualifier “potential.”

Mr. Finley noted that guidance would come from engineering standards

Mr. Cilimberg commented, “For more specific parts of design.”

Mr. Loewenstein said, “But not the policy.”

Ms. Hopper said that “appropriate” is a qualified word itself.

Mr. Rooker suggested using the qualifier “generally.”

Ms. Catlin said that staff would reword the language, with the possibility that it may not survive the “final cut” of the document if it doesn’t add anything to the value of the description.

Ms. Myers said that one of the intentions was that landowners or developers not familiar with models would be instructed that these are possible patterns acceptable to the county, ones that are different from the ones they are using. “We’re trying to find a process here where people are not unsure about the preferences of the Planning Commission and of the county.” She emphasized that rewording might be necessary, but elimination would be totally counter to the DISC process.

Mr. Rieley suggested removing overly obvious references, such as “sidewalks that are pedestrian paths.”

Mr. Cilimberg asked if the term “environmental interruptions” needed to be defined.

Staff agreed to change that term.

Commissioners agreed to remove the second bullet referencing character of sloping terrain under disadvantages on Page 72.

Mr. Anderson suggested removing all disadvantages.

Ms. Catlin suggested that staff rework the disadvantages so they are not as “loaded.”

On Page 73, Mr. Rieley said he wanted to be sure that the content regarding locations shows up in this discussion.

Ms. Hopper commented that the stem pattern is mentioned in this section.

Mr. Rieley said that he wants to make sure that it is noted that the stem pattern is not encouraged.

Ms. Echols said that in some situations with steeply sloping terrain that this pattern would be appropriate.

Mr. Cilimberg suggested including a qualifying statement that it is not a pattern for standard application.

Commissioners agreed to replace the illustration of bikeways on Page 75 with an image that doesn't propose design and widths.

Mr. Finley asked about the total width of the bikeway, and commented that a lot of land would be needed to cover roads and bikeways.

Mr. Rooker responded that the bikeway section attempts to define what they are, and is not making a recommendation.

Light Rail

Ms. Echols commented that VDOT had some problems with the proposed light rail in DISC.

Mr. Loewenstein asked if the distance of intervals should be mentioned.

Commissioners suggested eliminating the illustration showing ½ mile intervals for light rail.

Mr. Loewenstein stated that it is the text that he objects to.

Mr. Cilimberg indicated that the section attempts to show that moving from bus to light rail service, certain areas are targeted for pickups.

Mr. Rooker suggested including some kind of caption to explain the illustration.

Mr. Anderson suggested including a comment that states light rail typically stops further apart.

Mr. Rooker noted that the paragraph is not a descriptive feature but a qualitative statement about what should be done.

Commissioners agreed to take feature and the bullet out.

Ms. Catlin reviewed changes mentioned for this section.

Parks and Open Space

Ms. Echols said that the general idea about parks and open space is there should be more parks and open space; the location and function of that at the neighborhood level need to be considered in new development proposals. There needs to be separation of school needs for recreation from regional needs. DISC emphasized that schools need to have their recreational space to meet program needs; things over and above this should be met at a separate location to provide sites with pedestrian access. She noted that this is a shift from the current county coupling of schools and parks, as it requires more to separate the two. Ms. Echols said that it goes against the long-held belief that combining the two provides economies of scale.

Mr. Finley asked if this proposal would take away playing fields from schools.

Ms. Echols explained that currently, when the county builds elementary schools, it builds an elementary school building with one large playing field, then builds 2 playing fields to serve general public recreational needs. She noted that the fields are not required as part of the school, but are built along with the school because it is easier to get fields all at once and to fulfill parking needs.

Ms. Echols noted that DISC believes that the mutli-purpose playing field should remain with the school, and whatever amenity is needed should be put on a site that better pedestrian access and walkable neighborhoods.

Mr. Loewenstein said, "I can't imagine that that distance is going to be so great that it's going to encourage more pedestrian use."

Ms. Hopper commented, "Twenty-five acres for a high school. That's not going to be a neighborhood center, no matter what."

Mr. Craddock noted that in the past, rural schools were considered community centers. "I don't think you can divorce the park from the school, maybe [only] in an urban area."

Mr. Rooker said he did not see anything included about limiting the size of school facilities.

Ms. Echols responded that it was part of the missing documents presented at the beginning of the meeting.

Mr. Tom Loch of DISC said that they realized the challenges, but acknowledged that a town center should be planned with the recreational facilities involved. "We didn't want to not include it and leave it to what we're doing now, which is larger playing fields further and further out into the neighborhoods."

Ms. Hopper said that having the playing fields as part of the neighborhood center makes sense, but for a public facility, the school yard section is too restrictive.

Ms. Hobbs said that building schools in two-stories, as DISC recommends, leaves land open for fields. She said that Carrsbrook, Woodbrook, Northfieds has no park, but has Woodbrook schoolyard.

Mr. Rieley said that DISC looks at parks in a fundamentally different way than in the past. "I think that this is one of the most important pieces of this whole document." He suggested adding a stronger statement about the way open space knits together and structures the development itself.

He suggested adding a statement that says "the open space system should provide an important framework for the organizational development and serve as a connect development to join different development areas in addition to preserving important aspects of the natural environment."

Mr. Finley asked if he was including the playing fields in this.

Mr. Rieley replied yes.

Mr. Anderson suggested having this section tie back to the previous chapter, and also include reference in the first chapter to this section regarding parks and open space.

Ms. Catlin commented that connectivity again would not have to be transportation.

Ms. Hopper noted that Mr. Anderson's comment would go on page 16

Mr. Finley wondered who would own and manage the recreational fields, expressing concern about the staffing involved with community activities. "When do we get around to considering some of the ramifications in terms of management and ownership."

Mr. Rooker said that on Page 78, there are statements regarding publicly and privately owned facilities.

Mr. Cilimberg acknowledged that the maintenance and operations issues are something the county will deal with as part of the next phase of review once the form of development is created.

Mr. Finley expressed concern about requiring parks in developments.

Mr. Rooker commented that requiring open space is exactly what the Commission currently does. "I don't think this in any way expands the county's power in dealing with proposed developments. It just better defines what might be expected…"

Commissioners agreed that the current language leaves enough room for a number of possibilities of ownership and maintenance of the different park types.

Definitions and features of the park types

Mr. Rooker said that the term "visual supervision" is not appropriate. Commissioners agreed to remove the whole bullet, and agreed to reword "appropriate" locations.

Mr. Finley commented that a greenway might not have a destination.

Ms. Catlin asked if Commissioners felt it was important to mention how greenways relate to buildings.

Commissioners agreed that it was important to clarify what greenways and greenbelts are.

School Yard

Mr. Rieley stated that he agrees with Mr. Craddock that in lots of areas the function of the school is a main civic facility in the community. He said that his concern is that in trying to piggyback on the efficiency of parking and pursuing public land just one time, we are overburdening the school sites with recreational programs that hurt the school. "Monticello is a good example of a beautiful site that was clobbered with too much program, and most of that additional program was recreational fields that didn't have anything to do with the school." Mr. Rieley said that separating recreational programs from school programs will not diminish community use of school facilities, but will just keep it in scale with individual buildings.

He suggested adopting a principle that school fields serve the schools, and serve other public functions when school is not in session.

Mr. Craddock said that traditionally, schools have been in control of fields, noting that a field like Monticello is used on weekends for soccer etc. He said that Parks & Rec. has talked to the schools about sharing expenses, noting that a lot of the time for the community is at the school's expense.

Mr. Rieley agreed, adding that his concern is overburdening the school with additional fields that are just for recreational use and have nothing to do with ancillary use at schools.

Mr. Anderson said that the challenge is to spread out the facilities in a way that fits more neatly into the community.

Mr. Loewenstein emphasized that pedestrian accessibility is highly important.

Mr. Rooker pointed out that facilities like Whitewood Park are used more by neighbors in the area than Albemarle High School. He emphasized that this approach speaks to the development areas only, and provides more opportunities to find school sites, as it will be easier to find a 10-12 acre for school and a separate 5-acre site for park.

Ms. Hopper said that this section seems to contain a deeper level of detail and accompanying need for regulation than other sections.

Mr. Rieley suggested endorsing this "as a general principal, and put some of the specific language in the follow up sections."

Mr. Finley mentioned that there might be minimum standards for school sizes.

Mr. Loewenstein mentioned that the recently acquired 55-acre site for a northern elementary school would likely need to include more than just a school, but in its location it is unlikely there will be more pedestrian traffic to the site. "I have some real concerns about how to make this work in reality."

Mr. Rooker said he agreed that there might not need to be this level of specificity in the comprehensive plan document, and suggested not specifying sizes of school sites.

Mr. Anderson said that if the statement were re-worded as a vision of what should happen, it would be consistent with the general ideas of the DISC model.

Ms. Catlin asked Commissioners how they would rework the section to reflect the Commission's wishes.

Mr. Rooker suggested eliminating the entire section under sizes, and just including a general statement that school sites should not be looked at as the only park areas within the neighborhoods. "There are circumstances where it might be appropriate to separate playing fields and/or park areas from schools."

Ms. Echols said that DISC members felt it was important to include a positive statement about school sizes, because the county standards call for much larger schools.

Mr. Rooker commented, "I'm in favor of the general statement. I'm not real comfortable with specific [references to size]."

Ms. Catlin noted that it seems a definition of the removed recreational space is missing.

Ms. Hopper said that if there were developments that have green space within them, then the need for school facilities would diminish.

Mr. Rooker said that he would like a general statement that schoolyards should not be provided as the sole park & recreation areas serving the neighborhoods.

Mr. Anderson suggested phrasing the statement in a positive rather than a negative way.

Mr. Cilimberg emphasized that this section is about parks and open space, and the schoolyard is just one way of providing recreation areas.

Staff agreed that they have the concept, and would work on the language.

Ms. Catlin confirmed with Commissioners that the size section would be deleted.

Ms. Echols suggested adding a page for recreational playing fields.

Commissioners agreed.

Ms. Hopper suggested re-wording the first paragraph of the schoolyard definition section to state "…design and equipped for recreation associated with the school such as baseball, soccer, football." [remove reference to large scale]

Commissioners also agreed to remove the section on features and sizes, as those references are too specific.

Commissioners agreed to use the word "meadow" and not "heath."

Commissioners agreed to delete any references to homeowners associations in the "Eyebrow" section.

Commissioners agreed to move the cul-de-sac reference to the end of the section, and move the second bullet in the "Close" section to one of the road sections.

Neighborhood Centers

Ms. Echols noted that this section is more difficult to describe, but DISC members found it useful once they got a grip on what it entailed. Ms. Echols explained that a Neighborhood Center is a destination where activities occur, and could be a place of great density or high intensity, a recreation area, or even a church. She emphasized that the role of a Neighborhood Center is a focal point within a neighborhood.

Mr. Loewenstein noted that the second sentence states "in most cases, the Center is to be a core of activity," and asked in what cases is the center not to be the core of activity?

Ms. Echols replied that church may not be the core of activity in the neighborhood, but a park that provides for passive recreation may be.

Mr. Loewenstein asked about the fact that this part of the DISC report includes specificity in terms of development densities.

Ms. Echols replied that the goal of this section is trying to build more dense neighborhoods with a focus; densities are mentioned in the Land Use Plan and make the center important.

Mr. Loewenstein wondered if the actual figures need to be included.

Mr. Cilimberg replied that the densities are in the Land Use Plan.

Mr. Rooker suggested removing the entire statement relating to density, as it has nothing to do with the center.

Mr. Rieley noted that most of the other components of the DISC document include discussion of the physical implications of each principle, but in this section, there is no discussion of form.

Ms. Meyer mentioned that "all sorts of things that could be centers are referred to in the other principles" such as a square, shopping centers, schools, etc. "The key thing here is that some of the centers might be existing….it's not always a new thing."

Mr. Rooker pointed out that the third sentence in the text on page 19 implies that a center is in a mixed-use area, which seems to contradict the description on page 85 that refers to a center as a school, park or employment center (not mixed-use).

Ms. Meyer suggested stating on page 19 that a center "may" be in a high-density area.

Ms. Hopper expressed concern with the caption of Figure 5:44 "and is a popular gathering spot for residents from as far away as 50 miles." Commissioners agreed to remove the distance reference.

#6 Human scale, size of buildings

Ms. Echols said that this principle attempts to address size of buildings in relation to people, and the walkability between buildings. She said that in Virginia, there is only regulatory authority through Entrance Corridor and Historic District type restrictions to deal with building appearance. Ms. Echols pointed out that through setbacks and height restrictions and relationships to the street, comfortable features can be built.

Referencing Page 86, Ms. Echols pointed out examples of how spatial and closure affects the look and feel of a street and neighborhood; the drawings illustrate how you can create spatial enclosure by the relationship of buildings to the street, setbacks and where you place street trees. She mentioned that this section in the DISC model is included so that people who are making designs can incorporate particular features in the designs and bring them to the county for approval. Ms. Echols emphasized that these particular features are intended to help define elements that make humans feel comfortable: spatial enclosure, narrow streets, and street trees.

Mr. Loewenstein asked, "How [can we] best nail this sort of thing down so that – given that it is not regulatory – we have a way to encourage this by our action as a body so that it will stimulate further thinking along the lines that we'd like to see." He added, "This is one point that is fraught with difficulties…we need to back up and look at how this section could be made effective."

Ms. Echols acknowledged that this is a "tough concept" to regulate. She said that the only way to address scale is through setbacks and heights, changing the Zoning Ordinance to support the setbacks and heights. Ms. Echols added, "This gives guidance as to what [a developer] can do."

Mr. Finley asked if there would be something specific in design standards about height.

Mr. Rooker mentioned the suggested regulatory changes needed to achieve desired design elements. He said that most of the language in this section seems to be descriptive except for Page 87, which speaks to spatial enclosure ratios, definition of rations by street trees. Mr. Rooker suggested that the section be modified to remove the implications that these are the only locations where these designs might be appropriate.

Mr. Loewenstein commented that there are more specifics associated with this section than with many of the others. "This is a somewhat more nebulous concept, and regulation of nebulous concepts always involves considerable difficulty." He added that he wonders if some of these changes to the Zoning Ordinance will be possible.

Mr. Anderson said that you can meet all of these standards and still have a hideous end result; he cited Northeast Philadelphia as an example. "At best, these are rules of thumb."

Mr. Anderson suggested changing Page 20, first sentence after italics, to state: "People like to be in places that are built on a human scale"

Mr. Rieley suggested striking "landscaping" and putting in "landscape elements."

Ms. Hopper suggested deleting the last sentence in the italics which speaks to creating buildings people enjoy being in.

Mr. Loewenstein expressed concern about the caption in 2-18, suggesting that it end with "…definition of the space."

Mr. Loewenstein said that the caption for Figure 2-19 about the "most charming residential street" is a bit overstated. Commissioners agreed to refer to it simply as charming.

Mr. Rieley commented that the concepts of scale and spatial clarity are terribly important, and should be clearly articulated. "I wonder if that should be attempted on a more general scale."

Ms. Catlin suggested that there be separation of definitions of scale and spatial clarity, and elimination of the advocacy tone.

Mr. Rooker said that the language on Pages 20-21 references European villages, but doesn't ever say why the form is good.

Mr. Anderson stated that the photos are very compelling, but the text is negative and awkward. He suggested using diagrams and photographs that encourage more comfortable design.

Mr. Loewenstein said, "It doesn't seem to me that the design approaches in this section are…even close to comprehensive." He pointed out that there may be design approaches not mentioned here at all that are highly acceptable.

Ms. Echols said that this section could be improved with a list of elements needed to achieve comfortable design – building height, set backs, streetscape, ratios and architectural treatment – with some being regulatory, some not.

Mr. Rooker commented that he would like to avoid having this look like an ARB effort.

Mr. Cilimberg wondered if the Commission is trying to tackle too much. He suggested listing out the elements that help create better development patterns – sidewalks, parking next to them, street trees, etc.

Mr. Rieley said that the most compelling parts of this section are the examples included, although specifics about setbacks, sidewalks, and street trees also help achieve better design. "It can't be prescriptive, but it should lay out principles in a very clear way, and it should give some examples that are specific."

Mr. Cilimberg said that the regulatory aspect is not an effort to force design standards, but to allow them, noting that the Zoning Ordinance currently prohibits some of the DISC-recommended design elements.

Mr. Loewenstein emphasized that there needs to be some kind of way to strongly encourage this.

Mr. Cilimberg said that the tone of the document should not be heavy handed.

Mr. Loewenstein clarified that he would like to include proactive language that encourages better development patterns.

Ms. Hopper noted that the issue is more philosophical.

Ms. Catlin asked, "Are we talking voluntary or mandatory?"

Mr. Anderson said that this section should encourage people to do the best, in such a way that they have a glimpse of what good is.

Mr. Finley wondered if it is really the job of government to create design standards.

Mr. Anderson said that this section just attempts to offer design approaches.

Commissioners agreed that this section should include examples of desired design elements and patters, including photographs that demonstrate spatial enclosure, etc.

Mr. Rieley suggested defining the desired elements, and stating why they are important.

Mr. Anderson suggested including descriptions of elements/features in the beginning of the section, followed by photographs/illustrations, not saying that they are the only options.

Commissioners agreed to include photographs demonstrating design elements.

Mr. Rooker asked fellow Commissioners how they felt about the architectural treatments referenced beginning on Page 88. He suggested referring to them as "examples" of architectural treatments.

Mr. Loewenstein pointed out that it is important to find as many domestic examples as possible, as the European examples may not resonate well with everyone.

Commissioners agreed that on Page 89, the bullet "arcade front" under features should be removed.

Commissioners agreed that the bullet "row houses" should be substituted with townhouses.

Mr. Finley asked if the proposed setbacks of 5',10',15' with 25' maximum would be acceptable.

Ms. Echols responded that there is supposed to be a range offered.

Mr. Loewenstein suggested removing bullet #5 on Page 90 because it prescribes a specific use for terraces.

Mr. Cilimberg suggested stating "the terrace could be used as an outdoor activity area."

Commissioners agreed just to remove the bullet referring to terrace uses.

Mr. Anderson pointed out that the illustrations in the sideyard section are very useful.

Mr. Cilimberg asked if the set of examples in terms of clarity and scale, building heights, and architectural treatments was complete enough.

Mr. Rooker said that an illustration in the building heights showing changes in material and texture (as mentioned in the text) would be helpful.

There being no further discussion, the worksession concluded at 8:30 p.m.