THE CITY OF ASHEVILLE

STAFF REPORT

Council Meeting Date: January 25, 2022

Subject: Text Amendment - Updating Design Review Committee (DRC) Appointments

Staff Resources: Todd Okolichany, Planning & Urban Design Director; Shannon Tuch, Principal Planner

Action Requested: Adopt a text amendment to Chapters 2 and 7 (UDO) of the City of Asheville Code of Ordinances for the purpose of updating the commission and committee structure and appointments affecting the Design Review Committee (DRC).

Background:

- On February 23, 2021 the Asheville City Council adopted Ordinance No. 4855, "Ordinance Amending Chapter 7 of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Asheville to establish new standards for hotel development."
- Ordinance No. 4855 also formalized the city's design review process and established the Design Review Committee (DRC).
- Upon adoption of Ordinance No. 4855, the Asheville City Council requested that staff return in approximately six months to provide an update.
- A report was presented to the Asheville City Council on September 14, 2021 providing an update on 1) hotel development activity; and, 2) observations regarding the review process and the application of the new hotel standards.
- A number of code clarifications were recommended as part of the staff report to Council.
- Council requested that staff return with a zoning text amendment addressing those clarifications.
- Council adopted Ordinance No. 4920 on December 14, 2021 updating development standards regulating hotels; however, revisions affecting the new DRC were processed separately to allow time for the respective bodies to review and weigh in on proposed changes.
- These changes include reducing the number of appointments that must come from both the Downtown Commission (DTC) and Asheville Area Riverfront Redevelopment Commission (AARRC) from four seats to three, and making the remaining three seats to be appointed at large by the City Council (for a total of nine seats).
- All nine seats on the DRC would continue to be appointed by City Council.

Comprehensive Plan Consistency:

- As with the previous hotel amendment, this proposal aligns with a number of themes within the *Living Asheville Comprehensive Plan* including 'Interwoven Equity' by supporting greater diversity on city boards and commissions (pp. 270-271), 'A Livable Built Environment' in that this change helps to promote great architecture and urban design (p. 139) and a 'Resilient Economy' by further implementing a comprehensive study of lodging facilities and their impact, and to develop new policies (pp. 178-179).

Council Goal(s):

- An Equitable and Diverse Community
- A Well-Planned & Livable Community

Committee(s):

- A six-month report on the new hotel development regulations was presented to the City Council on September 14, 2021.

- A memo detailing the proposed changes was shared with both the Downtown Commission (DTC) and Asheville Area Riverfront Redevelopment Commission (AARRC) on November 16, 2021, and with the Design Review Committee (DRC) on November 18, 2021. Both the DTC and DRC discussed the changes during their respective meetings in November and offered support for the changes.
- The Planning & Zoning Commission reviewed this amendment proposal at their regular meeting on December 1, 2021 and recommended approval of the request unanimously, 7:0.

Fiscal Impact:
- None

Suggested Motion:
- Motion to approve the proposed wording amendments to Chapter 2 and Chapter 7 (UDO) of the City Code of Ordinances and find that the proposed amendments are reasonable, in the public interest, and consistent with the city's comprehensive plan in that they: 1) support greater diversity and design expertise on city boards and commissions; 2) promote great architecture and urban design; and, 3) act on a comprehensive study of lodging facilities and their impact by developing new policies for hotel development.

Attachment(s)
- Ordinance - Chapter 2
- Ordinance - Chapter 7
- PZC Recommendation
- PZC Action Minutes - Dec. 1. 2021