

P&Z to consider downtown codes

The new development codes for Cape Coral's downtown now rest in the hands of the Planning & Zoning Commission.

The codes, complete with everything from the height and width that buildings can be constructed to the colors and architectural features that can adorn them, will be considered by P&Z during the public hearing at 9 a.m. Tuesday at Cape Coral City Hall.

“We need as many people as we can get to come out to the meeting,” Community Redevelopment Agency board member John Jacobsen said. “If you have an opinion, please come out.”

The codes establishment three distinct development districts — Gateway, Edge, and Core — and allow the city to increase density from 2,027 to 11,146 dwelling units. In some cases that will result in vertical development, with allowable building heights of six stories, with up to 12 in the Gateway district through the Planned Development Process, a stringent review that allows for public input.

Among the elements of the proposed code are:

- A provision giving the city manager or his designee the authority to unilaterally approve requests to increase density from 20 to up to 40 units per acres, based on a formula to be decided by council, and points built into the CRA codes for certain desired improvements.
- Granting the Department of Community Development director authority to approve satellite parking for businesses that can't meet current parking requirements if payment is made or mitigation requirements are met.
- Allowing restaurants as a permitted use but fast food restaurants, which would require a special exception.
- Landscaping regulations — if a developer can't meet the new requirements, they can pay a fee to a tree fund. The DCD director would decide compliance and whether the fee could be paid in lieu of the requirements.
- New mandatory architectural elements including awnings, canopies, colonnades, and arcades would be required. Other features, such as the number of windows and allowable building colors, would be regulated as well.
- Underground utilities onsite would be required for all new construction.

For more on this local story by **Kevin Duffy** see the **Saturday Breeze**.

