



MINUTES (Approved on 6-7-17)

TIME: Wednesday, May 17, 2017, 4:00 p.m.
PLACE: Room 16, Tacoma Municipal Building North
733 Market Street, Tacoma, WA 98402
PRESENT: Stephen Wamback (Vice-Chair), Jeff McInnis, Meredith Neal, Anna Petersen,
Brett Santhuff, Dorian Waller, Scott Winship, Jeremy Woolley
ABSENT: Chris Beale (Chair)

A. CALL TO ORDER AND QUORUM CALL

Vice-Chair Wamback called the meeting to order at 4:04 p.m. A quorum was declared.

B. APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES OF MAY 3, 2017

The agenda was approved. The minutes of the regular meeting on May 3, 2017 were reviewed and approved as submitted.

Regarding the previous meeting, Vice-Chair Wamback offered an apology to the members and representatives of the Northeast Tacoma Neighborhood Council. He reviewed that during the discussion of their application for an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan, he had raised a point of order concerning who was allowed to speak to present the various items. He expressed concern that his point of order could possibly be cited as an example of the government not listening to people and using the process against the people it was meant to serve. Lihuang Wung, Planning Services Division, offered an apology on behalf of staff that he had failed to point out a provision in the bylaws where presenters invited by staff could present any subject at hand, which would have allowed the second presenter to speak.

C. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Vice-Chair Wamback invited citizens to provide comments on items related to the agenda. The following citizens provided comments:

- 1) Ron Hildebrandt, Trident Seafoods:
Mr. Hildebrandt commented on the Transportation Master Plan and the uses for waterfront facilities. He reported that Trident Seafoods' internal Transportation Master Plan was focused on moving export goods within the port and preserving the heavy weight corridors that were already there. He commented that they had just signed a 20 year agreement with the Port of Tacoma and were investing heavily to repair and improve the facility. He commented that they wanted to continue serving the Tacoma area, but were concerned with the amount of traffic flowing through the other new ocean alliances in the port.
- 2) Ryan Meacham:
Mr. Meacham commented that the application for a design review program seemed limiting, contrary to development, and historically oriented. He commented that review periods by neighborhood committees would cause delays and difficulty for builders. He suggested that an urban design studio approach might be more appropriate. He commented that the proposal was very ambiguous as to how it defined a modern building, large scale, or unique character.
- 3) Joe Tieger, North End Neighborhood Council:
Mr. Tieger commented that they disagreed with the staff recommendation that they should delay up to 2 years until the design studio is in place. He commented that the proposal had suggested nothing that would delay development and that they were asking to see what was going to be

built in their community before it popped up. He commented that they felt that they would speed and enhance the process of what was being built.

4) Jim Merritt, North End Neighborhood Council:

Mr. Merritt commented that as an architect he would be concerned about going through a detailed design review, but they were only requesting community concept awareness. He noted that many jurisdictions throughout the northwest had design review. He commented that early awareness allowed the community to weigh in and in most cases improve the quality of a project.

D. DISCUSSION ITEMS

1. Dialogue with the Neighborhood Councils – New Tacoma

Mr. Wung reported that it was the 4th “Dialogue with the Neighborhood Councils” session that the Planning Commission had conducted since September 2016 as part of the Commission’s efforts to increase engagement with various community groups. Mr. Wung introduced Tom Ebenhoh, Chair of the New Tacoma Neighborhood Council. Mr. Ebenhoh reviewed a list of representative concerns, needs, and priorities of the New Tacoma area for the Planning Commission. Jori Adkins, New Tacoma Neighborhood Council, reviewed the geography of New Tacoma which included the most of the Tideflats, the Dome District, Brewery District, Downtown, and the Stadium District. She commented that they dealt with public agencies more than the other neighborhood councils due to the Dome District and the Link light rail system.

Commissioner McInnis asked what their vision was for the area. Ms. Adkins responded that their vision was to become the densest neighborhood in the City as they had a lot of transit. Mr. Ebenhoh commented that they wanted to see the waterfront developed as it was the gateway to the City. He commented that they were interested in how they would facilitate people who come there for events on the waterfront. Ms. Adkins commented that all of their neighborhoods were looking to be part of the center and that they didn’t want to lose Downtown as the center of Tacoma. She commented that they didn’t want to lose their historic buildings in exchange for density, noting that older office buildings were perfect for being turned into housing but were difficult to renovate for office use.

Commissioner Waller asked how they saw the Planning Commission playing a role in the homeless crisis. Mr. Ebenhoh responded that it had been a topic of discussion at their meetings and was an issue that didn’t have easy answers. He asked if the Commission could help with finding some tangible solutions that could be taken to address it. Vice-Chair Wamback reviewed that the Commission had worked on the regulations for encampments and reasonable regulations to allow hosting of tent cities, but hadn’t been brought in to the loop on the present crisis.

Vice-Chair Wamback asked how the neighborhood council felt about some of the new housing developments having no parking requirement. Ms. Adkins responded that there were differing opinions on the issue and that she would personally welcome similar development in the Dome District.

Commissioner Neal asked if there were districts in the neighborhood where there was more concern about parking. Mr. Ebenhoh responded that it was a significant concern for the waterfront and Stadium District. Commissioner Winship asked what they envisioned for solutions. Ms. Adkins responded that there was a transition where people were not used to finding parking in the Dome District and were parking Downtown and using the Link. Mr. Ebenhoh added that the solution was a mix of getting people to use the Link and having the right parking options for the City.

3. Transportation Master Plan Proposed Amendments

Stephen Atkinson, Planning Services Division requested to move discussion item D3 ahead of D2.

Josh Diekmann, Public Works, provided an overview of modifications proposed for the Transportation Master Plan (TMP), the transportation element of the *One Tacoma* Comprehensive Plan, as part of the 2017 – 2018 Amendment cycle. He reported that the purpose was not a major update or overhaul to the TMP, but smaller modifications including cleanups and updates. He reviewed that the last version built on work like the Mobility Master Plan and the goals and policies that came before it, while ensuring that

those goals and policies were in alignment with Comprehensive Plan and Land Use goals. Work since the last update included adoption of a new Environmental Action Plan, the upcoming Safe Routes to Schools Implementation Plan, the Pedestrian Safety Improvement Program, and some increased funding opportunities. Mr. Diekmann commented that each of the documents and processes had a lot public involvement and public process that could feed into the Comprehensive Plan update. Mr. Diekmann reported that the proposed amendments included general cleanups; minor modifications to modal priority networks; performance measures with revisions to ensure that they were consistent; minor modifications to the detailed project list appendix; and a proposal to modify the Mobility Master Plan appendix. He reviewed the timeline, noting that the Transportation Commission would be reviewing proposed modifications with recommendations completed by August.

Vice-Chair Wamback asked if amendments from other Commissions went through the same screening analysis as external proposals. Mr. Wung responded that public agencies did not need to fill out an application, but were subject to the same criteria and considered with all other applications as a package.

Vice-Chair Wamback requested that the table included in their meeting packet include a third column highlighting what they hoped to accomplish with the proposed amendments.

Commissioner McInnis asked if the workload was manageable given the proposed timeline. Mr. Diekmann responded that it was.

Commissioner Woolley asked how modal network adjustment would affect things like the Tacoma Mall Subarea Plan since multi-modal transportation had been a key element of that plan. Mr. Diekmann responded that until the Subarea Plan was fully adopted, incorporating the improvements would require a larger effort than what they were proposing.

There was general concurrence for moving the item forward.

2. Application 2018-05 Design Review Program

Mr. Atkinson reviewed that the item was a continuation of the discussion of private applications under consideration for the 2018 Amendment to the Comprehensive Plan and Land Use Code. He reviewed that timeline for the amendment process, noting that once they had concurrence on which items to move forward they would begin the technical analysis phase. Vice-Chair Wamback asked what the action requested at the next meeting would be for the amendment package. Mr. Atkinson responded that they would be asking the Commission to make a recommendation to the Infrastructure, Planning, and Sustainability Committee which would determine the final work program. He added that it was not a public hearing and would be a discussion of staff resources and prioritization of the applications.

Doug Crane, North End Neighborhood Council, discussed the proposed amendment to the Comprehensive Plan, Application #2018-05 Design Review Program. He reported that they were asking for a formalized process to collect stakeholder input for determining and defining the development and growth within each neighborhood council district. He reported that their proposal focused on the massing of buildings, orientation towards the public space, and the context of the neighborhood. He commented that they were seeking images that give an idea what the building will look like, the exterior materials, and how it looks in the context of the existing block, but not interior details. He suggested that the neighborhood council was the proper venue as it was already established and was a good resource.

As to why they wanted concept design review, Mr. Crane noted that it had been recommended by the AHBL as part of a mixed-use centers review, the Planning Commission, and the North End Neighborhood Council. For where to begin, he reviewed the AHBL's characterization of Proctor as an established historical neighborhood commercial center with medium intensity development of 1-3 story buildings built up to the sidewalk. He noted supporting policies from the Comprehensive Plan Design and Development Element including policies DD-1.1, DD-1.5, DD-1.6, DD-1.7, DD-5.13, and DD-5.14. Mr. Crane reviewed photos of development in the Proctor area while discussing the supporting policies. He commented that the Proctor Station building had a face that took up an entire block and had a monolithic look to it, unlike anything else in the neighborhood. He commented that they needed to make sure that when they put new buildings in the quality of materials were enhancing or in concert with existing materials in the mixed-use center. Mr. Crane commented that without strict adherence to the referenced policies from the

Comprehensive Plan the bonus height program magnified the incompatibility of development. He noted an example where a new residential building created a large white wall that obstructed sightlines.

Mr. Crane reviewed TMC 1.45.020 which noted the purpose of neighborhood councils to foster communication and play an advisory role in City government decisions. He commented that the North End Neighborhood Council had cumulative decades of education in different disciplines and that the early feedback given to a potential developer would be beneficial. He commented that the intended result would be a collaborative approach to defining how the future of the City looks, better development, and overall stronger communities. He reviewed that they were supportive of the City's design review initiative and that they wanted to collaborate on the design review process by introducing the proposal immediately before incorporating it into the City's process.

Mr. Atkinson reviewed staff's project description for the application and discussed whether it met the assessment criteria. He noted that for criterion 2, many studies had been done of the issue. For criterion 3, he noted that the amount of work required would be significant and would require additional consultant services and staff resources. The staff recommendation was to consolidate the application into the scope of work for the citywide design review project. Mr. Atkinson acknowledged the community concerns about early engagement and reported that staff was considering administrative measures separate from an eventual design review process. He commented that the intent was to have the design review item be part of the work program discussion on June 7, 2017.

Commissioner McInnis commented that a design review program had been a long time coming and he was glad that it was before the Commission.

Commissioner Winship expressed concern about what would happen if a developer ignored feedback and proceeded with construction. He asked who would be the arbiter on what was allowed, what the time frame would be, and what the appeal process would be. He noted that densification was also a goal of the Comprehensive Plan, asking how they reconciled that with the existing scale of Proctor.

Commissioner Petersen concurred with Commissioner Winship, commenting that she would hate to make a false promise to community members. She noted that the application discussed building height as a concern, which was determined by zoning and not part of design review. Mr. Crane suggested that there could be a compromise where they would allow bonus height only if it fits the character of the center, adding that they were not suggesting that developers not be allowed to construct larger buildings.

Vice-Chair Wamback expressed concern that the community meetings proposed in the application would have no impact. He suggested that the staff recommendation would better accomplish what the neighborhood councils were requesting, which was arbitrated decision. He commented that he would support the staff recommendation to consolidate the application with greater design review.

Commissioner McInnis commented that because they were so grandiose in their vision of what design review would look like they kept putting it off. He suggested that they needed to get started and begin working through the details, because otherwise it would be a long time before anything happened.

Commissioner Woolley concurred with Commissioner McInnis on getting design review started and moving forward. He noted that early engagement was great component of the design review process, but not a step that they could jump straight into. He suggested that the City would benefit more in the long run if they took the time to actually develop a design review group.

Commissioner Santhuff commented that he appreciated staff's approach to address the concerns put forward and looked forward to seeing design review. He commented that the application talked about preserving the character of neighborhood centers and that he hoped design review would be more about development enhancing the character of those places.

E. COMMUNICATION ITEMS & OTHER BUSINESS

Brian Boudet, Planning Services Division Manager, provided the following updates:

- Communication item E-1 reviewed the procedures and practices of the application process. Mr. Boudet commented that the process was very flexible and applications could come in at any time.

- Communication item E-2 included a copy of Amended Resolution No. 39723, adopted by the City Council on May 9, 2017, setting off the Tideflats Subarea planning process. The resolution consolidated three items that were before the Commission into the subarea plan process and allowed for consideration of interim regulations. Mr. Boudet reported that there was discussion of an interlocal agreement to coordinate among the Port, the Puyallup Tribe and City.
- It was unclear how much direct involvement the Commission would have regarding the emergency declaration in response to homeless encampments, but it was possible that there could be some regulatory changes as part of addressing the issue.

Mr. Wung reported that for Commissioners with expiring terms it was the appropriate time to submit applications and seek to maintain their positions. If they weren't seeking reappointment, it was requested that they spread the word about the vacancies and encourage their affiliates to apply for those positions.

F. ADJOURNMENT

At 6:22 p.m., the meeting of the Planning Commission was concluded.