

**Members**

Jeremy C. Doty, Chair  
 Thomas C. O'Connor, Vice-Chair  
 Chris Beale  
 Peter Elswick  
 Donald Erickson  
 Sean Gaffney  
 Scott Morris  
 Ian Morrison  
 Matthew Nutsch



# Minutes

## Tacoma Planning Commission

**Community and Economic Development Department**

Ryan Petty, Director  
 Peter Huffman, Assistant Director  
 Charles Solverson, P.E., Building Official

**Public Works and Utilities Representatives**

Jim Parvey, City Engineer/Assistant Director, Public Works Department  
 Heather Pennington, Water Distribution Engineering Manager, Tacoma Water  
 Diane Lachel, Community and Government Relations Manager, Click! Network, Tacoma Power

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**(Approved on 5-18-11)**

MEETING: Regular Meeting

TIME: Wednesday, April 20, 2011 4:00 p.m.

PLACE: Room 16, Tacoma Municipal Building North  
733 Market Street, Tacoma, WA 98402

Members Present: Jeremy Doty (Chair), Thomas O'Connor (Vice-Chair), Chris Beale, Peter Elswick, Donald Erickson, Scott Morris, Matthew Nutsch, Ian Morrison

Members Absent: Sean Gaffney

Staff Present: Donna Stenger, Stephen Atkinson, Brian Boudet, Shirley Schultz, Lisa Spadoni, Reuben McKnight, Diane Wiatr, Liz Kaster, Cheri Gibbons, Lihuang Wung, Noah Yacker (Building and Land Use Services); Josh Diekmann (Public Works); Shelley Kerlake (legal counsel); Kim Van Zwalenburg (DOE)

Chair Doty called the meeting to order at 4:03 p.m.

Ms. Diane Wiatr provided a special report on the upcoming "May is Bike Month" events and encouraged the Commissioners to actively participate, which is intended to promote bike riding as an alternative way to travel for work and leisure.

### **GENERAL BUSINESS**

#### **1. Billboard Regulations**

Ms. Shirley Schultz presented the "Summary of Public Comments and Staff Responses Report" that summarized all of the issues and concerns raised in public testimony received at the March 16, 2011 public hearing and through the comment period ending on March 25, concerning the proposed code revisions for billboards. The report also provided staff responses and recommendations for modifications to the draft proposed regulations, where appropriate.

To facilitate the Commissioners' discussion, Ms. Shelley Kerlake, the City's legal counsel, stated that the City Council expectations from the Commissioners was to give their fair and reasonable recommendations based on the facts presented to them from the City staff and the



comments that were expressed in the public hearing. She added that any lawsuits that may occur in the future as a result of the Settlement Agreement with the City would be entirely under the auspices of the City Council.

Ms. Schultz followed by providing an evaluation on the comments received and clarifying some of the major points that appeared to be not clearly understood by some of the commentators at the public hearing. One of the major points was a misconception that digital billboards would be replacement billboards when in fact a digital billboard could be an additional billboard in a receiving area. Aesthetic concerns were in the forefront of comments that were given, safety issues were mentioned for high traffic areas, and objections to the Settlement Agreement were raised a number of times during the public hearing. A few written comments were favorable for Clear Channel and some of the comments that Ms. Schultz expressed appreciation for some of the billboards that Clear Channel had put up as a public service. Commissioners asked what percentage spoke in favor of billboards and how many disagreed – the ratio was 95 per cent opposed to the proposed changes and 5 per cent in support of either Clear Channel or the proposed changes.

Ms. Schultz asked for suggestions from the Commissioners on what they would like to see staff address as a result of all the comments that have been submitted. The Commissioners expressed that they still have real concerns with the replacement provisions, buffer areas and receiving areas and do not wish to endorse the code as it is presently proposed. The Commissioners also brought up issues such as lighting, timeline for amortization, excluding school zones, and billboards locating on primary pedestrian corridors. The Commission noted that billboards on primary pedestrian streets and in mixed use centers are incompatible with Comprehensive Plan policies pertaining to pedestrian friendly environment.

Ms. Schultz stated that at the next meeting staff could provide additional information on the proposed receiving areas related to pedestrian streets, mixed use zoning and buffers. The schedule calls for the Commission to make a recommendation on May 18.

## **2. Master Program for Shoreline Development**

Mr. Stephen Atkinson came before the Commission to request authorization to release the revised draft of the Shoreline Master Program and associated documents for public review and comment, to set June 1, 2011 for public hearing, and to set the public comment period to remain open until June 10, 2011. Prior to authorizing the public hearing, Commission and staff discussed several topics, including the science that was used in developing recommendations for wetland buffer standards, the different standards for scientific information used under the Growth Management Act versus the Shoreline Management Act, and when and how the Department of Ecology will provide comments on the draft.

Mr. Atkinson then gave a synopsis of the staff report, including a discussion of the revisions to the preliminary draft that was released in September 2010; the considerable amount of meetings, reviews, and public comments that have gone in to developing the revised draft; the applicable State laws; the consistency of the proposed draft with the Multicounty Planning Policies, County-wide Planning Policies and City of Tacoma Comprehensive Plan; as well as a summary of the proposed amendments, including proposed area-wide rezones.

The Commissioners unanimously authorized the distribution of the draft Shoreline Master Program and associated documents, as presented, for the purpose of seeking public comments at the public hearing scheduled for June 1, 2011.

### **3. 2011 Annual Amendments**

Ms. Donna Stenger presented the draft Findings and Recommendations and the draft Letter of Recommendation concerning the 2011 Annual Amendments to the Comprehensive Plan and Land Use Regulatory Code. She indicated that the Commission had completed its review at the last meeting on April 6 of all the applications included in the Amendment Package, except Application #2011-02 Historic Preservation Plan and Code Revisions. Mr. Reuben McKnight, Historic Preservation Officer, provided a brief overview of changes to the draft Plan and Code Revisions, based on public comments, staff analysis and Commissioners' suggestions. At the conclusion of staff presentation, the Commissioners voted unanimously to forward the Letter of Recommendation, the Findings and Recommendations Report, and the proposed amendments, as presented, to the City Council for consideration for adoption.

### **COMMUNICATION ITEMS**

Chair Doty acknowledged receipt of the following:

1. "May is Bike Month!" Poster
2. Announcement regarding the three openings on the Planning Commission.
3. Announcement regarding acceptance of applications for amending the Comprehensive Plan and/or Land Use Regulatory Code for 2012.

### **COMMENTS BY LONG-RANGE PLANNING DIVISION**

Ms. Stenger reported that the City Council is scheduled on May 10, 2011 to consider the first reading of ordinance to adopt the proposed Wedge Neighborhood Historic Special Review Overlay District. The City Council conducted a public hearing in July 2010 and a study session on April 5, 2011, concerning the proposal, as recommended by the Planning Commission. The boundaries of the historic district may be modified during the Council's adoption process based upon preliminary discussion of the recommended boundaries by the Council, Ms. Stenger added.

Ms. Stenger also responded to the Commissioners' inquiry about the Old Town Historic District proposal initiated by the citizens in the neighborhood that is currently in the initial review process by the Landmarks Preservation Commission.

### **COMMENTS BY PLANNING COMMISSION**

Commissioners Morrison, Beale and Erickson disclosed their recent contacts with citizens: Commissioner Morrison was contacted by Walk the Waterfront and Citizens for a Healthy Bay; Commissioner Beale by Tricia DeOme of the Central Neighborhood Council; and Commissioner Erickson by Sharon Winters of Historic Tacoma and Doug Schafer of the Central Neighborhood Council.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.m.