

Members

Donald Erickson, Chair
Sean Gaffney, Vice-Chair
Tina Lee
Matthew Nutsch
Erle Thompson
Scott Winship
(vacant)
(vacant)
(vacant)



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

Kurtis Kingsolver, Assistant Director/City Engineer, Public Works Department
Heather Pennington, Resource Planning Manager, Tacoma Water
Diane Lachel, Community and Government Relations Manager, Click! Network, Tacoma Power

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(Approved on 5-16-12)

MEETING: Regular Meeting and Public Hearing

TIME: Wednesday, May 2, 2012, 4:30 p.m.

PLACE: Council Chambers, Tacoma Municipal Building, 1st Floor
747 Market Street, Tacoma, WA 98402

Members Present: Donald Erickson (Chair), Sean Gaffney (Vice-Chair), Tina Lee, Matthew Nutsch, Erle Thompson, Scott Winship

Staff Present: Elliott Barnett, Brian Boudet, Jana Magoon, Ian Munce, Dian Wiatr, Lihuang Wung, Noah Yacker (BLUS); Mike Carey, Josh Diekmann, Lorna Mauren, Ramie Pierce (Public Works)

Chair Erickson called the meeting to order at 4:33 p.m. The minutes of the April 4, 2012 meeting were approved as submitted. The minutes of the April 18, 2012 meeting were approved with the following amendments (additions and deletions) to the last paragraph of the "Medical Cannabis Moratorium":

"Upon completing the discussion, Chair Erickson suggested that the proposal be divided so each alternative could be considered independently. Vice-chair Gaffney indicated that he had made a motion already to forward all four alternatives out for public review. Chair Erickson asked if there was a second to the Vice-Chair's motion. It was releasing all four alternatives for public review. A motion to that effect was made by Vice-Chair Gaffney and seconded by Commissioner Winship. Chair Erickson, who was instrumental in promulgating Alternative #3, acknowledged the concern voiced by staff over the CUP approach because it would require greater staff involvement and therefore potential staff liability, and proposed that the alternative be withdrawn."

GENERAL BUSINESS

1. Subarea Plans Update

Ian Munce, Acting Manager of the Long-Range Planning Division, provided an update of the South Downtown Subarea Plan and EIS, a \$500,000 project funded by the Puget Sound Regional Council's Growing Transit Communities Program. The project is in the data collection stage, seeking community input, and scheduled to produce a draft plan this fall. The Station Working Group, a 37-member advisory group representing a wide range of interests, was



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recently established by the City Council and is up and running. Mr. Munce also noted that staff has submitted a grant application to the State Community Economic Revitalization Board (CERB) seeking funding support for the North Downtown Subarea Plan and EIS, a project proposed to supplement the South Downtown and the MLK subarea plans.

Brian Boudet, Long-Range Planning, provided an update of the MLK Subarea Plan and EIS. Staff has conducted community workshops, scoping meetings, online surveys, and focus groups. All these avenues have helped in getting community dialogue that will help in drafting a plan that takes into account public concerns. Staff has also shared with the City Council the progress being made on the project thus far. Mr. Boudet stated that the focus in developing the Plan both from the City Council's viewpoint and citizens of the targeted neighborhood is to have a Mixed-Use Urban Village with all the amenities that is both a safe place to live and an area with employment opportunities.

2. Transfer of Development Rights (TDR)

Mr. Munce provided an update of the TDR program development, a part of the regional effort aimed at achieving the goals of watershed protection, historic preservation, open space protection, and facilitating the development of affordable housing. The plan is to have a functioning TDR program in place by this summer. He also discussed a number of TDR-related issues, including the bonus palette in the land use code, bonus heights, tax increment financing, receiving areas, sending areas, and relevant policies in the Comprehensive Plan.

PUBLIC HEARING

1. 2012 Urban Forestry Landscaping Code Update

At 5:00 p.m., Chair Erickson called to order the public hearing on the proposed Urban Forestry Landscaping Code Update. Ramie Pierce, Urban Forester, provided a summary of the proposal, which included several key components, i.e., aligning landscaping requirements with the Open Space Habitat and Recreation Element of the Comprehensive Plan, incorporating canopy coverage in the zoning requirements, increasing flexibility of the existing requirements, and providing options to meet canopy requirements such as credits and fees in-lieu-of.

Chair Erickson called for oral testimony. The following comments were received:

- (1) Shawn Hoey** (Master Builders Association of Pierce County) – Mr. Hoey had submitted a letter to the Commission. The MBA was concerned about the onus placed upon private property owners for adhering to the canopy coverage requirements in the City-owned right-of-way (ROW); the threshold requirements pertaining to “exterior improvements”; the lack of nexus between changing the exterior of a building and requiring a private property owner to meet canopy coverage requirements in the ROW; the discrepancy between actual cost and in-lieu value for residential or for other land uses; and the 25% canopy coverage for multifamily development being too high.
- (2) Bill Rehe** (Port of Tacoma) – Mr. Rehe commented that the Port supports the City's overall goal of urban forest policy; the 30% canopy coverage goal is not being met by the proposed code changes; the City should retain current codes that exempt required landscaping and street trees in areas that such requirements would interfere with adjacent or intersecting

railroads, stormwater ditches or national security requirements; the Port is opposed to removing the current exemption for interior landscaping in industrial parking lots less than 20,000 sq. ft.; the Port should be allowed to average their canopy coverages over all of their sites or at off-site location; Tacoma should focus on broad ecological goals and not be tree centric when managing stormwater runoff; the Port is opposed to the requirements of City evaluation and approval of the Port's Urban Forestry Management Plan; and the Port should be allowed one year grace period to provide adequate time to prepare the Urban Forestry Plan. Mr. Rehe also submitted a hard copy of his remarks.

(3) Joe Brady (Metro Parks Tacoma) – Mr. Brady had submitted a letter to the Commission. Metro Parks supported the City's goal of achieving 30% tree canopy coverage by the year 2030, and was pleased with adding an option within the code for "Self-Managed Agencies", but was concerned that the City's oversight of Metro Parks operations, as currently drafted in the code, is beyond the purview of building landscaping regulations and contradict the definition of a self-managed agency.

(4) Carl Teitge (citizen) – His objection to the Ordinance centered on the section that proposes that the City will eventually attempt to put the responsibility for maintaining the right-of-way off on the property owners and the requirement goals for canopy coverage will give property owners unexpected consequences and that the Ordinance as it currently written will never really have the outcome that is being proposed. Mr. Teitge used the example of how certain ordinances in the past had the unforeseen result of not working as planned and resulting in blockage of view sensitive properties in the City. He feels that this ordinance that pushes for a certain type of trees (Red Oak) for landscaping purposes will have the same outcome.

Chair Erickson closed the public hearing at 5:20 p.m. and stated that written comments may be submitted until May 11, 2012.

COMMUNICATION ITEMS

Chair Erickson acknowledged receipt of the following information/announcements:

1. The Department of Ecology is accepting public comments on Tacoma's Shoreline Master Program through June 7, 2012.
2. The Planning Commission is accepting applications for amending the Comprehensive Plan and/or Land Use Regulatory Code for 2013 through June 29, 2012.
3. Planning Commission Tentative Agenda for May 16.

COMMENTS BY LONG-RANGE PLANNING DIVISION

Lihuang Wung distributed the Public Review Document for the Proposed Land Use Regulations concerning Medical Cannabis for the Commissioners' review in preparation for the upcoming public hearing on May 16, 2012.

Mr. Munce referred to the interaction between Councilman David Boe and the Commissioners at the last meeting on April 18 and suggested that the Commission may want to consider developing a joint work program with the City Council, with the goal of coming to more of an agreement with each other and working on items of importance to each other. He brought up

the proposed Code Streamlining effort as an example of what will be undertaken by the Commission and the Council on a fast-track review schedule, to be accomplished by the end of the year. The work is aimed at improving the land use code to facilitate the economic revitalization in Downtown and other mixed-use centers, and pertains to SEPA review threshold, live-work and work-live units, and commercial parking requirements. The Commission will begin to review and discuss these issues at the next meeting on May 16, 2012, Mr. Munce indicated.

COMMENTS BY PLANNING COMMISSION

The following disclosures were made by three Commissioners:

- Chair Erickson met with representatives from the American Institute of Architects (AIA) and Historic Tacoma who were interested in a number of issues currently being worked on by the City but concerned about being able to stay abreast of the progress.
- Commissioner Nutsch attended an informal meeting with a group of technology entrepreneurs who were brainstorming ideas for attracting new businesses to the City, particularly in the technology industry.
- Vice-Chair Gaffney met with Councilman Ryan Mello and staff from Metro Parks Tacoma concerning the proposed Urban Forestry Land Use Code Update, and will bring forward his observations at the next meeting on May 16, 2012.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 5:36 p.m.