

Members

Donald Erickson, Chair
 Sean Gaffney, Vice-Chair
 Theresa Dusek
 Benjamin Fields
 Mark Lawlis
 Tina Lee
 Matthew Nutsch
 Erle Thompson
 Scott Winship



Minutes

Tacoma Planning Commission

Community and Economic Development Department

Martha Anderson, Interim 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

747 Market Street, Room 1036
 Tacoma, WA 98402-3793
 253-591-5200 (phone) / 253-591-2002 (fax)
www.cityoftacoma.org/planning

Approved on September 5, 2012

MEETING: Regular Meeting

TIME: Wednesday, August 1, 2012, 4:00 p.m.

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

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

Members Absent: Theresa Dusek

Staff Present: Brian Boudet, Ian Munce (BLUS); Josh Diekmann (Public Works)

Chair Erickson called the meeting to order at 4:05 p.m. The minutes of the regular meeting and public hearing on July 18, 2012 were approved as submitted.

GENERAL BUSINESS**1. Code Streamlining 2012**

Ian Munce facilitated the Commissioners' review of the public comments received at the public hearing on July 18, 2012 and through the comment period ending on July 20, concerning the "Code Streamlining 2012" – proposed code amendments for (1) allowing "live-work" and "work-live" uses in Downtown and Mixed-Use Districts; (2) increasing SEPA review thresholds; and (3) adding a parking exemption for existing buildings in Commercial Districts outside Downtown and the Mixed-Use Districts. Mr. Munce presented a draft Findings and Recommendations Report and a draft Letter of Recommendation for the Commission's consideration.

Concerning the "live-work/work-live" component, Mr. Munce indicated that, in response to public comment, staff is recommending two modifications to the provision of "up to 10% of new floor area may be added for the purposes of creating living or working space without triggering a change in use." The modifications would clarify that 10% of new floor area may be added either



internally or externally, and clarify that the provision does not extend to adaptive reuses that involve more than 20 dwelling units or more than 12,000 square feet of commercial space in a particular building.

Commissioners discussed how these proposed regulations could increase possibilities for converting buildings to include “live-work” and “work-live” units, and following lengthy debate as to whether or not live-work should be applied to new construction, the Commissioners voted 4-3 in favor of “live-work” and “work-live” units being allowed for existing buildings only. Commissioners in favor of this expressed an increased comfort of approving the “reduced package” as a phase-1 trial that could be expanded to include new buildings if there was measurable success and future demand. The majority of Commissioners supported narrowing the application as a tool for funneling the anticipated “live-work” and “work-live” development to existing structures as an incentive to their reuse and consistency with City sustainability objectives. As to the proposed threshold for the number of “live-work” and “work-live” units allowed per building, some Commissioners suggested allowing up to 40-50 units. In the end, the Commission voted 4-3 in favor of setting the threshold at 20 units.

The Commissioners also brought up the need for supplemental code provisions to address life safety issues. Discussion ensued, and the Commissioners suggested adding a general design requirement that exterior additions shall be in conformance with the character of the existing building.

Regarding the “SEPA review thresholds” component, the Commissioners were concerned that increasing the threshold for parking to 40 spaces may be inconsistent with the policy of discouraging new surface parking lots in the Downtown and Mixed-Use Centers. However, some Commissioners acknowledged that the City has existing code for regulating parking and that in the past very few SEPA determinations added conditions for parking development.

Concerning the “parking exemption” component, the Commissioners agreed that the parking regulations applicable to the C-1 and C-2 Commercial Districts should be less restrictive.

The Commissioners voted 7-0 in favor of approving the draft Findings and Recommendations Report and the draft Letter of Recommendation, as amended, and acknowledged that there were certain issues the Planning Commission was not in full agreement on and that these issues should be highlighted in future staff presentation to the City Council.

2. 2013 Annual Amendment

Ian Munce and Brian Boudet presented the 2013 Annual Amendment Assessment Report, which evaluates the following twelve applications against the required assessment criteria in *TMC 13.02.045.F*: Drive-through Regulations, Countywide Planning Policies, Container Port Element, Transportation Element, Shoreline Related Elements, Development Intensity Designations, Adoption and Amendment Procedures, Platting and Subdivision Regulations, Sign Regulations, Affordable Housing Regulations, Trail-Friendly Regulations, and Plan and Code Cleanup.

Concerning Shoreline Related Elements, there was concern expressed by the Commission about rescinding three shoreline related elements of the Comprehensive Plan, i.e., the Thea Foss Waterway Design and Development Plan, the Ruston Way Plan, and the Shoreline Trials Plan. Mr. Munce indicated that the policy principles of these documents were incorporated into

the Shoreline Master Program (SMP) in 2011 and critical design elements from these three plans will be identified and incorporated into the Shoreline Design Guidelines, and/or the Comprehensive Plan, and/or development regulations.

Concerning Development Intensity Designations, Mr. Munce and Mr. Boudet indicated that this is a huge endeavor that may be accomplished in phases. This endeavor would amend various elements of the Comprehensive Plan and the Land Use Regulatory Code to revise the current land use designation approach from Land Use intensities to a more simplified and easily understood classification system.

Concerning Platting and Subdivision Regulations, Mr. Munce described that this mainly consists of raising the flexible threshold for short-platting from 4 lots to 9 lots, which is allowed under State law.

Concerning Sign Regulations, the Commissioners and staff acknowledged that this work is not intended to be a comprehensive review of the sign code, but rather with a focus on digital on-premise signs. Chair Erickson pointed out that when studying issues relating to billboards in 2011, the Commission recommended against digital billboards but realized that appropriate regulations may be lacking for non-billboard digital signs and that the Commission would like to start a conversation about sign code revisions that would address this concern.

The Commissioners voted unanimously to approve the Assessment Report, accept the 2013 Annual Amendment Package, and move the twelve applications forward for technical analysis.

COMMUNICATION ITEMS

Chair Erickson acknowledged receipt of the following information/announcements:

1. Cancellation of the Planning Commission's meeting on August 15, 2012.
2. Planning Commission Tentative Agenda for September 5, 2012.

COMMENTS BY LONG-RANGE PLANNING DIVISION

Mr. Boudet provided an update on Medical Cannabis Nuisance Code adoption by the City Council on July 31, 2012, and acknowledged the efforts by the Planning Commission and the Medical Cannabis Task Force. Mr. Boudet indicated that the Planning Commission open seat for District 5 seemed to be on track to be filled in the near future.

COMMENTS BY PLANNING COMMISSION

None.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 5:35 p.m.