

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

Ricardo Noguera, 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 10-3-12)

MEETING: Regular Meeting

TIME: Wednesday, September 5, 2012, 4:00 p.m.

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

Members Present: Donald Erickson (Chair), Theresa Dusek, Ben Fields, Mark Lawlis, Tina Lee, Matthew Nutsch, Scott Winship

Members Absent: Sean Gaffney, Erle Thompson

Staff/Others Present: Brian Boudet, Ian Munce, Lihuang Wung (BLUS);
Brian Boyd, Josh Jorgensen, Nicholas Richter, Heather Carrie (Planning Interns)

Chair Erickson called the meeting to order at 4:03 p.m. The minutes of the regular meeting on August 1, 2012 were approved as submitted. Commissioner Mark Lawlis, appointed on August 14, 2012, representing District No. 5, was sworn in.

GENERAL BUSINESS**1. Regional Transfer of Development Rights (TDR)**

Ian Munce provided an update on the progress in implementing a Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program within the City of Tacoma. He explained that zoning and development regulations simply do not provide permanent protections for agricultural lands, historic buildings, open space, and affordable housing. TDR is a tool that exchanges permanent, recorded conservation easements over important lands and buildings in one location(s) ("sending areas") for increases in density in another location(s) ("receiving areas"). Counties and cities authorize the transaction(s) but the market sets the dollar value(s) of the exchanges.

Mr. Munce stated that the City's current zoning regulations provide incentives for Mixed-Use Centers and parts of Downtown to receive TDRs. The City was awarded a \$109,000 grant from the federal Environmental Protection Agency to develop and implement a TDR program, as part of the regional TDR program, which would qualify the City to use Tax Increment Financing (TIF) for targeted infrastructure improvements. The City Council is scheduled in mid-September 2012 to consider: (1) adopting a new Chapter 1.37 of the Tacoma Municipal Code (TMC) pertaining to TDR Administrative Provisions; (2) approving a resolution that would allow TDR transactions to occur between the City and King and



Snohomish Counties; and (3) entering into an Interlocal Agreement with Pierce County that would allow TDR transactions to occur between the City and the County.

The Commissioners expressed a number of comments, concerns and suggestions, such as: in the proposed TMC 1.37.050, the "environment controls" taken into account in the calculation of sending areas should include critical areas; as the TDR program is implemented, the bonus palette in the current code may need to be revisited; attention should be paid to those cases where the development rights were sold but were later transferred elsewhere through hearing or other legal processes; it may be a concern that when the City pursues comprehensive rezones, what the current TDR program allows may not be "locked in"; it is good that the proposed TMC 1.37 includes bonuses for landmarks; and it is critical to set up certain criteria, which may generate some potential interest.

Mr. Munce thanked the Commissioners for all the comments and suggestions. He indicated that, with the City Council's actions, the hope is that there is a demonstration project done at first in order to "show how the mechanics work".

2. MLK Subarea Plan and EIS

Brian Boudet provided a status report for the project. He explained how the program is being developed and also highlighted the major "players" who have parts in development of the program. There has been quite bit of community outreach done to get to this point. Ideas from City Council, Commissioners, focus groups, and the public are all being collected and reviewed and are informing the major components that will make up this Plan.

Mr. Boudet spoke about catalytic projects and redevelopment that might occur in the targeted neighborhoods. Most of the work that is occurring under this Plan is very much a work in progress. Staff is listening to stakeholders, public and people who work in the neighborhood to get information from them on what they would like to see happen in the MLK neighborhood. Mr. Boudet noted that currently the MLK area is perceived in a negative way and that the community Vision Statement reflects how they would like to see this changed. There has been some progress made but there is still work to be done to upgrade the image to reflect a more positive aspect. Mr. Boudet also spoke about the uniqueness of the MLK neighborhood in that it is both a historic area and a Mixed-Use Center. There are other components that need to be looked at when assessing the MLK District, such as size, transportation, density, employment, and housing. He also talked about major projects that are now happening in the neighborhood and some projects that are in the process of being developed.

Mr. Boudet introduced Brian Boyd and Nicholas Richter, Planning Interns, who explained how they designed posters as visual aids to the scoping process and open houses. Their projects included research on the cultural history of the area as well as interviewing historic figures from the district as part of an "oral history project." Josh Jorgensen, an intern from the University of Washington Tacoma (UWT), took another route to get input by connecting and interacting with the elementary students of McCarver. Through charettes and workshops we gathered their creative ideas on what the MLK neighborhood should look like, what community means, and how pedestrian and bicycle mobility could be improved. The kids had some great input and created wonderful pictures. Heather Carrie, also a UWT intern, is working with two other interns and the City and the Health Department to assess different components having to do with health. They have been gathering input from the community and meeting with stakeholders to identify strategies that could be incorporated to improve the health of the community and its residents as the area grows and redevelops.

Mr. Boudet summarized by saying that staff is taking a multi-faceted approach to this project, looking at the area and the possibilities through as many lenses as possible and trying to get suggestions and ideas from a broad spectrum of the community. Mr. Boudet also noted that we are still in the middle of this project and that there will be more meetings before everything is finalized. Chair Erickson encouraged fellow Commissioners to attend future open house meetings.

COMMUNICATION ITEMS

Chair Erickson acknowledged receipt of the following information/announcements:

1. Hearing Examiner's Decision on Conditional Use Permit for Building Expansion by McClendon Hardware, August 2, 2012
2. Letter from Dale Cope, July 30, 2012, concerning Electronic Signs
3. Planning Commission Accomplishments (July 2011 – June 2012)
4. Planning Commission Tentative Agenda for September 19, 2012

COMMENTS BY COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING DIVISION

Lihuang Wung provided a summary report on the Planning Commission's Accomplishments for July 2011 through June 2012 (Communication Item #3 above) and stated that the information will be submitted to the City Council as the annual report of the Commission.

Mr. Munce mentioned that one of the discussion items for the next meeting on September 19 is the proposed amendments to TMC 13.02 concerning the Planning Commission's procedures, which is a very important piece of work and will continue to be reviewed at the Commission's retreat scheduled for October 3, 2012.

COMMENTS BY PLANNING COMMISSION

Commissioner Lawlis, as newly appointed, introduced himself.

Chair Erickson commented on the significance of Sound Transit's Tacoma Link Expansion Project, and suggested that a briefing to the Commission from Sound Transit staff be arranged.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 5:24 p.m.