



City of Tacoma
Planning Commission

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

MINUTES (Approved on 2-6-13)

Time: Wednesday, January 16, 2013, 4:00 p.m.
Location: Room 16, Tacoma Municipal Building North
Present: Donald Erickson (Chair), Theresa Dusek, Benjamin Fields, Mark Lawlis, Tina Lee, Matthew Nutsch, Erle Thompson, Scott Winship

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Erickson called the meeting to order at 4:02 p.m. and declared a quorum present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the December 19, 2012 were approved as submitted.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

1. Tacoma Waterfront Design Guidelines

Stephen Atkinson, Comprehensive Planning, provided an overview of the proposed draft of the Tacoma Waterfront Design Guidelines (TWDG), which integrate and update the design elements of the Shoreline Trails Plan, Foss Waterway Design Guidelines and the Ruston Way Plan. Mr. Atkinson discussed the general approach that staff took in developing the draft design guidelines as well as applicability, proposed use of the plan, and specific subject matter addressed in the document.

Mr. Atkinson explained that the TWDG are intended to both carry forward the design elements of past shoreline related plan documents, but also to address concerns that were raised during the Shoreline Master Program public process, primarily that new public access facilities needed to be designed appropriately for the anticipated uses and users as well as to be compatible with adjacent uses. Therefore, the TWDG apply in several ways: 1. The Public Realm and Site Elements are intended to apply to all public access within the shoreline; whereas, 2. The Building Site guidelines are intended to apply strictly to the "Dome to Defiance" shoreline area as defined in the guidelines. The TWDG is expected to be used as part of the City's administration of shoreline permits as well as by the Foss Waterway Urban Design Review Committee in their review of Foss Waterway Development Authority projects. In addition, project proponents should use and consider the TWDG in permit applications. Mr. Atkinson also provided a brief summary of the overall objectives and subject matter in the guidelines and the Commission discussed each chapter in detail.

Throughout the presentation the Commissioner's provided comments and discussion regarding specific provisions within the guidelines, including a recommendation that the City Council consider establishing a design review committee for shoreline public access or expand the purview of the Foss Waterway UDRC to include projects outside the Foss Waterway. Other comments included a suggestion that project applicants provide a shade diagram, clarifications to the building site guidelines and specific guidelines relating to pedestrian orientation, as well as other examples that could be included in the guidelines to illustrate specific issues. Staff communicated that those suggestions would be reviewed and the guidelines would be amended in accordance with the Commission's suggestions.

2. Annual Amendment #2013-06 Development Intensity Designations

Brian Boudet and Brian Boyd, an intern with the Comprehensive Planning Division, presented the proposed new framework for the Comprehensive Plan's Land Use Designations. The existing designation framework is broken into four basic classifications, based on "intensities," although it also incorporates other classifications such as Mixed-Use Centers and Manufacturing/Industrial Centers in a confusing, overlapping system. With the existing system, determining appropriate zoning within a land use area or if a use fits within an area's vision can be a tricky, confusing, time-consuming and costly process for staff, developers and the community. The proposed framework is intended to establish a more simplified and easily understood classification system, and includes the following designations: Single-Family Residential, Multi-Family, Commercial, Open Space, Industrial, Shoreline, Downtown Mixed-Use Center, Urban Mixed-Use Center, Community Mixed-Use Center, and Neighborhood Mixed-Use Center.

The Commissioners generally concurred with the proposed approach, and provided some comments and suggestions, such as:

- The "Intensity" designation has merits; it shows activity and character of land uses; and the concept of allowing limited flexibility based on the intended character of an area (not simply on the title of a designation) is important to retain.
- Consider rewording "Single Family Residential" to "Low Density Residential" or "Single Family/Low Density Residential".
- Consider changing "Multi-Family" to "High Density Residential" or "Multi-Family/High density Residential", or replacing them with "Low, Medium and High Density Residential" or something that breaks down the wide range of density in that category but still gives flexibility around edges.
- Consider breaking "Industrial" into two levels to better recognize that additional flexibility is probably appropriate for lighter industrial uses, including some of the newer clean industries.
- Consider adding a "Medical" designation or an "Institutional" designation that would include educational institutions (such as colleges) as well as medical facilities.
- Provide before-and-after maps for the comparison of the existing and the proposed designation systems.

3. Election of Vice-Chair

The Commission conducted an election to fill the Vice-Chair position vacated by Mr. Sean Gaffney who resigned in December 2012. Commissioner Winship nominated Commissioner Lee and Commissioner Thompson nominated himself. With a vote of 6 to 1, Commissioner Lee was elected the Vice-Chair and will serve through June 30, 2013.

COMMUNICATION ITEMS AND OTHER BUSINESS

- (a) The Commission acknowledged the receipt of the announcement regarding the vacant position representing District No. 2 and the article of "The Suburbs Are Dead."
- (b) Lihuang Wung briefly reviewed the tentative agenda for the February 6, 2013 meeting.
- (c) Chair Erickson has subscribed to the on-line Planning Commissioners Journal using the honorarium he had received from participating in the "Conversation Re: Tacoma" lecture series and his own contribution. The subscription is accessible to all Commissioners plus one staff. Mr. Wung, as the assigned Group Administrator, will establish the access protocol with the Journal and make it available to the Commissioners.
- (d) Mr. Wung provided an update on the planning for the Short Course on Local Planning to be held by the Department of Commerce's Growth Management Services in Tacoma on February 20, 2013.

- (e) Commissioner Nutsch inquired about when the Building Codes are amended and how citizens may get involved in the review. Staff clarified that updates to the Building Codes occur on a 2-to-3-year cycle and are essentially adoptions of relevant State Building Code requirements through administrative procedures, where the opportunities for public review are somewhat limited. Staff can provide additional information at the Commission's request.
- (f) Vice-Chair Lee indicated that Pierce Transit will be implementing a 35% service reduction in September 2013, due to the loss of Proposition 1 in November 2012.
- (g) Commissioner Winship encouraged the Commissioners to attend the "2013 Urban Studies Forum: Transportation for the Next Economy", on February 7, 2013, sponsored by the University of Washington Tacoma.
- (h) Mr. Boudet announced that the deadline for providing comments on the Draft MLK Subarea Plan and Draft EIS has been extended from January 17 to February 1, 2013.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:05 p.m.