



City of Tacoma
Planning Commission

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

MINUTES (approved as amended on 3-6-13)

Time: Wednesday, February 20, 2013, 5:15 p.m.
Location: Tacoma Public Utilities Auditorium, 3628 South 35th Street, Tacoma
Present: Donald Erickson (Chair), Tina Lee (Vice-Chair), Benjamin Fields, Mark Lawlis, Scott Winship
Absent: Theresa Dusek, Sean Gaffney, Matthew Nutsch, Erle Thompson

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Erickson called the meeting to order at 5:15 p.m. and declared a quorum present.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

1. Annual Amendment #2013-01 Drive-through Regulations

Dustin Lawrence, Planning Services Division, presented staff's responses to the questions raised by the Commission at the last meeting on February 6th concerning the proposed amendments to the Tacoma Municipal Code related to drive-through facilities. The Commission suggested adding a provision to allow bicyclists to use drive-through facilities. Since this application had been approved by the Commission at the last meeting for the purposes of public review, no further action was taken.

2. Annual Amendment #2013-09 Sign Code Revisions

Mr. Lawrence presented staff's responses to the questions and concerns raised by the Commission at the last meeting on February 6th. He acknowledged that Chair Erickson had provided additional feedback and suggestions, such as only prohibiting digital signs on core pedestrian streets, putting a special exemption in place for the Tacoma Dome and other similar uses, and refinements on feather and A-board sign regulations, which will be incorporated. The Commissioners also discussed the logic and implications of prohibiting feather signs in pedestrian-oriented areas, and suggested that such prohibition be limited to core pedestrian streets and that staff look into allowing such signs for no property line businesses. The Commission voted unanimously to authorize the distribution of the proposed amendments for public review.

3. Shoreline Public Access Alternatives Plan and Tacoma Waterfront Design Guidelines

The Commission suspended the rules to consider Communication Item #2 concerning the 2013 Annual Amendment Application #2013-05 Shoreline Related Elements.

Stephen Atkinson, Planning Services Division, presented the final drafts of the Shoreline Public Access Alternatives Plan (PAAL) and the Tacoma Waterfront Design Guidelines (TWDG) that are intended to carry forward and integrate past shoreline implementation plans, including the Ruston Way Plan, the Shoreline Trails Plan, the Foss Waterway Design and Development Plan, and the Foss Waterway Design Guidelines, as well as update the public access and design strategies to respond to the goals and objectives of the Shoreline Master Program. Mr. Atkinson also presented the proposed revisions to the Waterfront Open Spaces and Shoreline Access section of the Open Space Habitat and Recreation Element of the Comprehensive Plan with new references to PAAL and TWDG. The Commission voted unanimously to authorize the distribution of the proposed amendments for public review.

4. 2013 Annual Amendment Package

Lihuang Wung, Planning Services Division, provided an overview of the 2013 Annual Amendment Package, which included the following nine applications: #2013-01 Drive-Through Regulations, #2013-02 Countywide Planning Policies, #2013-04 Transportation Element, #2013-05 Shoreline Related Elements, #2013-06 Land Use Designations, #2013-07 Adoption and Amendment Procedures, #2013-08 Platting and Subdivision Regulations, #2013-09 Sign Regulations, and #2013-12 Regulatory Code Cleanup.

All the applications have been reviewed by the Commission and approved for public review purposes. Mr. Wung noted that staff is suggesting a minor change to Application #2013-08 where the requirement for complying with the Complete Streets Design Standards would be removed and future development projects would continue to meet the requirements of the Public Works Design Manual. This was in response to the concern expressed by the Master Builders Association. Mr. Wung also noted that there are three applications that have been removed from the package and are being conducted according to their own respective schedules; they are #2013-03 Container Port Element, #2013-10 Affordable Housing, and #2013-11 Trail-Oriented Design Standards. The Commission voted unanimously to authorize the distribution of the 2013 Annual Amendment Package for public review and set the public date on March 20, 2013.

5. Communication Items

The Commission suspended the rules to consider Communication Items #1 and #3.

On Item #1, Ian Munce, Planning Services Manager, briefly described the Sands' application for Open Space Current Use Assessment and the Commission's involvement in processing the application. He noted that such applications provide an opportunity for certain categories of open space and agricultural lands to have their property tax structure based on the current use rather than on the traditional fair market value system, and the decision authority on them is shared by the City Council and the Pierce County Council. For that reason, Mr. Munce suggested that it would be appropriate that such applications are reviewed solely by the City Council and the County Council and that consideration be given to amending the Tacoma Municipal Code to streamline the existing review process. The Commission concurred with the approach. On Item #3, Mr. Wung briefly reviewed the tentative agenda for the March 6, 2013 meeting.

6. Retreat

At 5:50 p.m., the Commission conducted a retreat and an informational session with the presenters of the Short Course on Local Planning.

7. A Regional Short Course on Local Planning

The Commission reconvened at 6:30 p.m. and proceeded with the Regional Short Course on Local Planning, which was sponsored by the Planning Association of Washington and the Washington State Department of Commerce (DOC). Approximately 50 people were in attendance. Ms. Anne Fritzel of DOC moderated the short course; Mr. Munce provided an overview of current planning efforts and issues in Tacoma; and the following formal presentations were made:

- The Legal Basis of Planning in Washington State, by Phil Olbrechts
- Comprehensive Planning: the Context and Basics, by Ed McGuire
- Roles and Relationships in the Planning Process, by Deborah Munkberg

A question-and-answer session was held after the presentations. Mr. Wung indicated that all the presentation materials will be posted on the Planning Services Division's website at www.cityoftacoma.org/planning. The Short Course concluded at 9:30 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 p.m.