



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 on 3-6-13)

Time: Wednesday, February 6, 2013, 4:00 p.m.
Location: Room 16, Tacoma Municipal Building North
Present: Donald Erickson (Chair), Tina Lee (Vice-Chair), Theresa Dusek, Benjamin Fields, Mark Lawlis, Erle Thompson
Absent: Matthew Nutsch, Scott Winship

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Erickson called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. and declared a quorum present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the January 16, 2013 meeting were approved as submitted, with a clarification suggested by Chair Erickson that, under Discussion Item #2 (Annual Amendment #2013-06 Development Intensity Designations), the “medical or institutional designation” would include educational institutions (such as colleges) as well as medical facilities.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

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

Dustin Lawrence, Planning Services Division; Elliott Barnett, Development Services Division; and Jennifer Kammerzell, Public Works Department, facilitated the Commission’s review of the proposed amendments to the Tacoma Municipal Code related to drive-through facilities. The review followed up on the discussion at the November 7, 2012 meeting. The Commission raised additional issues and suggestions, including: drive-through restrictions in the downtown should be summarized in a table like the other zoning districts; the 150-foot separation requirement from bus stops doesn’t include an adequate waiver process; stacking lane landscaping buffers and screening should include provisions for maintenance and irrigation; the stacking space quantity requirement could be clarified; coffee stands shouldn’t be exempt from all standards; and incorporate illustrations and examples into the draft code. The Commission concurred with the approach staff was taking and voted unanimously to authorize the distribution of the proposed amendments for public review, with the expectation that the issues raised will be properly addressed at the next meeting and the proposed amendments modified accordingly.

2. Annual Amendment #2013-09 Sign Code Revisions

Mr. Lawrence presented staff’s responses to the questions and concerns raised by the Commission in October 2012. The issues were primarily relating to sign brightness, hours of operation, height, and minimum sign area. The Commission raised additional issues and suggestions, including: number of exempt for above-sidewalk/under-canopy blade signs; prohibition of digital changing message center signs in pedestrian oriented areas; frequency of changing messages and hours of operation for digital changing message center signs; and super regional mall and public facility exemptions on digital changing message center signs. The Commission also discussed issues relating to feather signs and A-Board signs, and suggested adding standards for feather signs and increasing the number of A-Board signs allowed per business. The Commission decided to continue the discussion at the next meeting.

3. Annual Amendment #2013-06 Development Intensity Designations

Brian Boudet, Planning Services Division, presented the proposed new framework for the Comprehensive Plan's Land Use Designations and the corresponding zoning, as well as the associated text and map amendments to the Growth Strategy and Development Concept Element of the Comprehensive Plan. The framework had been modified based on the Commission's comments made at the last meeting on January 16, and included the following designations:

- Single-Family Residential
- Multi-Family (low-density)
- Multi-Family (high-density)
- Neighborhood Commercial
- General Commercial
- Downtown Mixed-Use Center
- Urban Mixed-Use Center
- Community Mixed-Use Center
- Neighborhood Mixed-Use Center
- Light Industrial
- Heavy Industrial
- Parks and Open Space
- Shoreline

Commissioner Thompson commented that the "Single-Family" and the "Multi-Family" designations do not recognize certain types of development; for example, Single-Family does not recognize duplex or mother-in-law units and Multi-Family does not recognize single houses. He suggested alternative terms such as "Residential (low-density)" and "Residential (high-density)" be considered. Discussion ensued. Commissioners and staff acknowledged that the terms of Single-Family and Multi-Family are commonly used and understood, that the community takes high pride on these terms and the associated connotations, and that it is the City's policy to protect and preserve the single-family neighborhoods while promoting mixed-use development. The Commission voted unanimously to authorize the distribution of the proposed amendments, as presented, for public review.

4. Annual Amendment #2013-12 Minor Amendments and Refinements

Mr. Boudet presented the proposed minor and "clean-up" amendments to the Land Use Regulatory Code intended to address inconsistencies, correct minor errors, and support efficient administration of the Code. The amendments included: establishing a new Administrative Determination permit type; creating a new level of variance, the Minor Variance permit; clarifying the ability for the Director of Planning and Development Services to approve equivalent approaches as part of the interpretation and application of the code; adding provisions for a one-year, one-time permit extension for certain Land Use Permits; allowing variances in all of the Downtown Districts; clarifying the measurement of building heights; and creating a new Use Category – Craft Production. The Commission voted unanimously to authorize the distribution of the proposed amendments for public review.

COMMUNICATION ITEMS AND OTHER BUSINESS

- (a) The Commission acknowledged the receipt of the announcements regarding the "2013 Urban Studies Forum" (February 7, 2013), and the "Regional Short Course on Local Planning" (February 20, 2013).
- (b) Lihuang Wung briefly reviewed the tentative agenda for the February 20, 2013 meeting; he also provided an update of the logistic arrangement for the "Regional Short Course on Local Planning" and a status report of the 2013 Annual Amendment Package.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:50 p.m.