



MINUTES (approved as amended on 6-5-13)

Time: Wednesday, May 15, 2013, 4:00 p.m.
Location: Room 16, Tacoma Municipal Building North
Present: Donald Erickson (Chair), Tina Lee (Vice-Chair), Theresa Dusek, Sean Gaffney, Mark Lawlis, Erle Thompson
Excused: Benjamin Fields, Matthew Nutsch, 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 May 1, 2013 meeting were approved as submitted.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

1. South Downtown Subarea Plan and Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)

Cheri Gibbons, Planning Services Division, distributed the public comments on the *Draft South Downtown Subarea Plan and Draft EIS* received during the comment period between March 26 and May 3, 2013. The comments included the transcript of the public hearing on April 25, 2013. She provided an overview of the scope of the project, the public outreach efforts, and the next steps. She indicated that the comments were generally very positive and supportive, and no substantial changes to the draft documents would be expected. The Commissioners acknowledged that some agencies such as the Department of Transportation and the Tribal Council were concerned about the potential impact of the area-wide SEPA review on their authority and responsibilities in project-specific reviews. The Commissioners also suggested that the documents need to better articulate the complex issues relating to public transportation, level of service, and impact fees. Vice-Chair Lee recused herself from the discussion, since she had submitted comments on behalf of Pierce Transit.

2. Mixed-Use Centers Zoning Code Update

Brian Boudet, Planning Services Division Manager, provided an overview of the Mixed-Use Centers Code Update project, which is designed to evaluate the existing regulatory standards applicable within the centers and identify potential barriers to achieving the desired development. He outlined the proposed scope, schedule, and public outreach approach, as well as some of the initial findings from staff's preliminary review. Discussion ensued. The Commissioners provided the following comments and suggestions:

- Stormwater is a major concern.
- Minimum density may not be feasible for those who desire to develop duplexes.
- Infrastructure is a deal breaker and barrier to development.
- Low impact development if done right works great.
- Consider pervious surface on sidewalk in front of the building, not just rain gardens away from the site.
- Urban design goals should incorporate pedestrian safety.

- Cities such as Vancouver, B.C. often control up-zoning with a focus on targeting smaller geographical areas, rather than undertaking massive rezones that often cause expensive and uncoordinated utility upgrades all over the place.
- Seventeen mixed-use centers may be too many for the size of the City of Tacoma.
- The development community will ask in which centers they should invest/develop first.
- Consider Tax Increment Financing (TIF).
- City can incentivize capital improvements.
- Surface water and wetlands are important issues and may require joint planning with Pierce County.

COMMUNICATION ITEMS AND OTHER BUSINESS

- (a) The term of three Commissioners representing District No. 4, “Environmental Community”, and “Architecture, Historic Preservation, and/or Urban Design” will expire on June 30, 2013, and the recruitment process for filling the vacancies has begun, with applications due to the City Clerk’s Office by June 14, 2013.
- (b) North Downtown Subarea Plan and EIS Project’s kick-off community meeting is scheduled for May 29, 2013, 5:30 p.m., on Bates Technical College Downtown Campus.
- (c) The City Council conducted a study session on the 2013 Annual Amendment on May 14, 2013, and will conduct a public hearing on May 21, 2013.
- (d) The next Commission meeting on June 5, 2013 will feature the Planning and Development Services Department’s Strategic Action Plan, and the Planning Services Division’s work program for the next 18 to 24 months. Chair Erickson requested that the Commissioners provide suggestions for the work program to staff prior to the next meeting.
- (e) The Amtrak Station Relocation Citizens Advisory Committee’s recommendations were presented to the City Council’s Economic Development Committee on May 14, 2013. The presentation made by Chair Erickson, who also served as the chair of the advisory committee, was well received.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 5:12 p.m.