



MINUTES (Approved on 1-20-16)

TIME: Wednesday, January 6, 2016, 4:00 p.m.
PLACE: Room 16, Tacoma Municipal Building North
733 Market Street, Tacoma, WA 98402
PRESENT: Chris Beale (Chair), Stephen Wamback (Vice-Chair), Donald Erickson, Meredith Neal, Anna Petersen, Brett Santhuff, Dorian Waller, Scott Winship

A. CALL TO ORDER AND QUORUM CALL

Chair Beale called the meeting to order at 4:05 p.m. A quorum was declared.

B. APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES OF DECEMBER 16, 2015

The agenda was approved. Brian Boudet, Planning Services Division Manager, commented that they would need to discuss the marijuana moratorium issue as part of the Communications Items.

The minutes of the regular meeting on December 16, 2015 were reviewed. Chair Beale provided a clarification on page 2 to include that the Commission's statement that it was inconsistent with other land uses in the City to have a cap on the number of retail marijuana stores had been part of a formal letter of recommendation from January 7, 2015. The minutes were approved as amended.

C. PUBLIC COMMENTS

No members of the public came forward to provide comments.

D. DISCUSSION ITEMS

1. 2016 Annual Amendment – Assessment Report

Stephen Atkinson, Planning Services Division, provided a review of the assessment report for proposed amendments to the Comprehensive Plan and Land Use Regulatory Code for 2016. Mr. Atkinson commented that the purpose of the discussion was to consider finalizing the 2016 Amendment Work Program and accepting the Assessment Report. The broader work program was reviewed. Mr. Atkinson reported that items prioritized for 2016-2017 included Future Land Use Implementation, Mixed-use Centers Implementation, Steep Slopes and Open Space Corridors, and a Joint Land Use Study with Joint Base Lewis-McChord. Items that would be part of the 2016 Annual Amendments included Future Land Use Implementation Phase 1, Multifamily Zoning District Design Standards, Plan and Code Cleanup, Wireless Facility Code, Short Term Rentals and Bed and Breakfasts, and Sign Code.

Plan and Code Cleanup was discussed. Mr. Atkinson reported that cleanups would include changes throughout the code for consistency with the new plan; limited Shoreline amendments including standards for expansion and buffer reduction parameters; improvements for permit notifications; examination of whether they should accommodate certain kinds of nonconforming uses in neighborhoods; and Signature Trail connections to ensure multi-modal connectivity.

Wireless Facilities were discussed. There were potential revisions to comply with new Federal legislation requiring that local jurisdictions are approving collocations, replacement, or removal of wireless transmission facilities. Mr. Atkinson commented that there would likely be revisions for Conditional Use Permits and major modifications. Mr. Boudet commented that one of the things that they were going to incorporate was making collocation on existing towers easier.

Short Term Rentals and Bed & Breakfasts were discussed. Mr. Atkinson noted that current standards were restrictive in single family zoning districts with no distinction between short and long term. He commented that there were potential concerns with commercial use in residential areas, tenant behavior, and maintaining residential character.

Sign Code was discussed. Mr. Atkinson reviewed that a U.S. Supreme Court case that had affirmed that local jurisdictions could not regulate sign content. In response, they would need to look at the purpose statement for regulating signs; review all definitions to ensure they are not based on content; make sure the severability clause covers sign code if anything is invalid; add a substitution clause; and consider other limited cleanup items. Mr. Boudet noted that there was an opportunity to address additional issues in the sign code including onsite digital signs and whether height limits should be reduced for free standing signs on pedestrian streets in Mixed-Use Centers. Commissioner Petersen requested that they address temporary signage including sandwich board signs and feather signs. Mr. Boudet noted that there were recent code amendments addressing both and that it might be a code enforcement issue.

Multifamily Design Standards for R-3, R-4L, and R-4 districts were discussed. Mr. Atkinson commented that there was an opportunity to look at the R-3, R-4, and R4L districts in conjunction with infill design guidelines work to consider recommendations for zoning standards in those districts to ensure they are getting the desired orientation and design. Mr. Atkinson commented that if they could agree on core standards, it would help them look at multifamily in commercial zones as well.

Future Land Use Implementation was discussed. Mr. Atkinson noted that for Phase 1 they had considered sites that could be accomplished within the timeframe, had known permit issues or development trends, are not typically key corridor sites, and are not generally commercial properties. Mr. Atkinson discussed the following areas:

- Knob Hill was an area that had been a lingering inconsistency between the policies and the intent of the regional growth center and the zoning currently in place. They were unable to do site-specific rezones in the area due to it being in the Downtown Regional Growth Center.
- North of Tacoma Community College had a number of opportunities to look at the elementary school, some issues along the corridor, and how the residential zoning relates to the commercial zoning along 6th Avenue.
- Cheney was zoned R2 single family, requiring CUPs for development at the High School and Cheney Stadium. There was a lot of potential along 19th with possible ST3 expansion and some lingering permit issues to be discussed.
- The McKinley Substation within the McKinley mixed-use center had a split zoned parcel that had been a lingering issue for finding development or use for the site.
- The STAR and SERA had a historic M-1 zoning and there was an opportunity to look at where the appropriate boundaries and transitions should be in the area.
- For Nielsen Pacific Mr. Atkinson noted 33 acres of vacant land and an abrupt transition from Manufacturing Industrial to Multifamily zoning. There were also a number of split zoned parcels that were zoned both M-2 and R-3.
- For Pearl and 33rd there was potential capacity for limited multifamily in an area that was currently R-2 zoned and was historically low density.
- Franke Tobey Jones was a retirement community that had an upcoming application for a site specific rezone anticipated in June 2016. The area was zoned R-3 PRD with an R-4 PRD in the middle. The applicant was seeking a site specific rezone to expand the R-4 PRD area.
- For Wapato Lake, the concept was to consider commercial zoning along 72nd and potential neighborhood commercial zoning along a portion of the lake. Commissioner Santhuff requested that they provide the Metro Parks master plan for Wapato Lake Park. Chair Beale expressed concern about the possibility of general commercial being visible from the park. He suggested that a review of development standards for neighborhood commercial and what they could expect to see if redevelopment occurs would be helpful. Mr. Atkinson responded that he would return with more detail on the item and that if the Commission felt further analysis or public involvement was needed they could postpone the item until the next year.

Mr. Atkinson reviewed the findings in the assessment report and noted that the staff recommendation was for the Commission to accept all the applications at this time, adding that they would return with more detail on each of the applications.

Commissioner Erickson requested an amendment to the City Code (Tacoma Municipal Code Chapter 13.02) for situations where the City Council might request a staff alternative to make the process transparent, keep the Planning Commission informed, and allow for public comment. Mr. Boudet commented that it could be incorporated into the cleanups as a clarification of the process.

Commissioner Winship motioned to accept the applications with the addition of the proposed process amendment. Commissioner Petersen Seconded. Vice-Chair Wamback amended the motion to incorporate Mr. Atkinson's comment that if the initial scoping process determines that they are in need of additional time, effort, or public process, then the potential area wide rezones could continue to the 2016-2017 cycle. The motion as amended was approved unanimously.

E. COMMUNICATION ITEMS & OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Boudet reported that the City Council had adopted Resolution No. 39356 on January 5, initiating the process to consider a temporary moratorium on new marijuana retail uses, setting a public hearing date for January 12, and referring the issue to the Planning Commission. The Commission had been asked to provide findings of fact and a recommendation concerning the proposed moratorium to the Council by January 20. Mr. Boudet commented that the purpose of the moratorium was to make sure additional stores are not licensed before the City completes the process of finalizing the new regulations. He added that the Commission could consider whether to include production and processing in the moratorium, but staff wasn't recommending it currently. Vice-Chair Wamback felt that the Commission had not been given clear authority by the City Council to discuss marijuana cooperatives. Mr. Boudet responded that in their letter of recommendation the Commission could choose to express concern that cooperatives might be established before the end of the legislative process and whether they should be included in the moratorium. Discussion ensued. Commissioner Neal requested that comments from the City Council's Public Hearing be provided to the Commission.

Lihuang Wung, Planning Services Division, reported that the Infrastructure, Planning, and Sustainability Commission had recommended a new Commissioner, Mr. Jeff McInnis, to fill the Development Community position, scheduled for Council appointment on January 12. Mr. McInnis had been invited to an orientation session prior to the next Planning Commission meeting in Room 16 at 3:00 p.m.

F. ADJOURNMENT

At 5:30 p.m., the meeting of the Planning Commission was concluded.