



MINUTES (approved as amended on 12-4-13)

Meeting: Regular Meeting
Time: Wednesday, November 20, 2013, 4:00 p.m.
Location: Room 16, Tacoma Municipal Building North, 733 Market Street
Present: Sean Gaffney (Chair), Scott Winship (Vice-Chair), Chris Beale, Donald Erickson, Benjamin Fields, Tina Lee, Alexandria Teague, Erle Thompson, Stephen Wamback

CALL TO ORDER

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the regular meeting on November 6, 2013 were approved as submitted.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

1. Temporary Homeless Camps Permit Process

John Harrington, Development Services Division, presented the proposed amendments to the Tacoma Municipal Code, Chapters 13.05 and 13.06, intended to establish the permitting process and development regulations for addressing the issue concerning temporary homeless camps associated with a religious organization as provided for in RCW 36.01.290.

After rigorous discussion, the Commissioners provided the following comments, concerns, and suggestions, and requested these issues be properly addressed before the Commission sets a public hearing for the proposed amendments:

- Show mapping of churches within ½ mile of transit stops and provide more pictures of camps.
- Notice should be increased from 100 ft to 400 ft from parcel boundary.
- A 10 ft setback requirement from parcel boundary for camp structures/tents should be added.
- Recycling container should be provided along with the solid waste container.
- Warrant/background checks should be part of city requirements.
- Minimum camp area should be scalable. There should be minimum for administrative/support functions area and then a per resident square footage requirement (i.e., 150 sq ft/resident)
- Consider adding a statement that camps must follow civil anti-discrimination laws and not individual church anti-discrimination norms.
- Concern about insurance requirements and need for clarifying exact requirement.
- Concern about security, especially at night when it is difficult to see in dark corners of fenced area. Apply Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles as much as possible to increase visibility for night time security along with providing additional security scalable to the site size (e.g., 1 per 33 residents). All of this would be site dependent.
- Shower facility provision at one shower head per 15 residents was affirmed as a good ratio along with the provision of laundry facilities.
- Combine requirement for hand washing station at kitchen and dining area into one station versus one for each use.
- Desire no smoking for the camp and have designated smoking area at least 25 ft from tents.
- How is water supply and electric power provided? What type of service is provided (110, 220)?

- Extend minimum time frame for hard surface sites to 120-180 days. What about extending for non-residential sites to 120 or 180 days?
- If dogs/animals are permitted, then breed/size of dog is a concern, as well as making sure that there is a designated potty area. Also concern about dogs barking at other dogs in camp and on neighboring residences. If they have dogs already and camp can accommodate, then they should be able to keep them.
- How are camp drop-ins handled? Concern about potential bad actors being a “drop-in”. A drop-in is someone who comes in after dark and not vetted per camp standards for residents.
- What is exit strategy for homeless camps? How can we get better services for this population?
- Site size standard should be clarified that the dimension refers to open space area on the parcel that the camp will be located.
- Parking requirement should be scalable, with 2 per 25 residents plus static requirement of four for support staff.
- Extend distance to transit stops.
- If time interval is 2 years, then active camp time should be extended to 120 days.
- What is the need in numbers? Colin DeForrest, Neighborhood and Community Services Department, indicated that the need would fluctuate between 100-200 adult (over 18 years old) residents.

2. Sustainability Code Amendment (Annual Amendment Application #2014-09)

Stephen Atkinson, Planning Services Division, presented proposed topics to be evaluated as part of the 2014 Annual Amendment Application #2014-09 Sustainability Code Amendments as well as an overview of the City’s goals and policies that support sustainable urban development.

Mr. Atkinson noted that the amendments are intended to further advance the City’s goals for sustainable development, public health and active living by addressing issues identified in recent sustainability code audits, including a low impact development gap and barrier analysis performed by AHBL, a code review conducted as part of the STAR Community Rating assessment by the City’s Office of Environment and Sustainability, and code amendments drafted by the Regional Code Coordination Committee in response to the International Green Construction Code.

Mr. Atkinson discussed the purpose for each of the topics to be considered, including:

- Electric vehicle charging stations
- Shower and changing facilities
- Short and long term parking
- Setback dimension exception for exterior insulation
- Sideyard setback exception for rain barrels, cisterns and other rainwater catchment systems
- Light trespass
- Low impact development gaps and barriers audit

The Commission requested that Mr. Atkinson give consideration within the scope to the location of heat pumps within residential side yard setbacks and to explore strategies for incentivizing green roof installations. Mr. Atkinson noted that other sustainability amendments will be considered as part of other projects and the Commission’s future work program and that staff will return with draft language for the Commission’s review for the topics discussed.

3. Urban Forestry Landscaping Code Update (Annual Amendment Application #2014-10)

Elliott Barnett, Planning Services Division, provided background on the proposal. The Commission reviewed proposed Landscaping Code changes in 2011-2012, but concerns were expressed at that time and the project went on hold. This year, the Commission is taking up aspects which were well-supported, with the intent of getting more urban forestry benefits from the landscaping code that the City requires.

Mr. Barnett gave an overview of the approach. He described proposed new requirements, which would include street trees and parking lot landscaping changes, as largely filling gaps and improving consistency between existing requirements. In terms of planting better, changes proposed would apply best practices to the general landscaping requirements for trees, shrubs and groundcover. The proposal also includes options to increase flexibility. Tree size flexibility (small, medium, large) would be a new way to incentivize getting larger trees. In addition, incentives would be available to promote desired features in exchange for a range of benefits. Landscaping Master Plan is a new concept intended to allow large agencies to gain additional flexibility. To support this approach, staff are considering revising the Urban Forest Policy Element to include canopy coverage goals by land uses (which would be optional, not required).

The Commission discussed the proposals and made comments including:

- Several liked the idea of tree size flexibility, including recognizing the need for appropriate soil volume. Several questioned what system is most appropriate to create the small, medium and large lists – tree size, tree canopy, or trunk width Diameter at Breast Height (DBH) were all discussed, perhaps in combination. Mr. Barnett stated staff will explore this issue further and report back.
- Several questioned the appropriateness of allowing setback flexibility as described, which raises broader issues such as neighborhood character. Mr. Barnett clarified that no requirements are proposed for one, two and three-family development.
- Verify the final canopy coverage goals from 2012. Several Commissioners questioned whether opening the subject of canopy may raise concerns.
- Add the Realtors Association and all the commenters from last time to the outreach list.
- Clarify that trees only when “feasible” does not mean when it would be more costly.
- Support for trees along industrial corridors.
- More important than height is tree health and survival – don’t discount smaller trees that may be appropriate in some cases.
- There is a need for enforcement to target street tree removals and excessive pruning. Trees within the public right-of-way should be protected. This is a high priority issue.
- Clarify that native landscaping is not always appropriate in every case.
- Be prepared that Pacific Avenue and Stadium Way will likely come up as part of this discussion.

COMMUNICATION ITEMS AND OTHER BUSINESS

Lihuang Wung, Planning Services Division, provided the following information:

- (a) Sound Transit held a Long-Range Plan Update Scoping Meeting in Tacoma on November 18, 2013.
- (b) “Conversations RE: Tacoma – Getting the Vibe” is scheduled for November 21, 2013.
- (c) The Infrastructure, Planning and Sustainability Committee’s meeting of November 27, 2013 has been canceled.
- (d) The Planning Commission’s agenda for December 4, 2013 may include Hilltop Subarea Plan & EIS, and various 2014 Annual Amendment Applications (e.g., Growth Strategy, Mixed-Use Centers Review, Land Use Designations, Open Space Element, and Minor Plan and Code Amendments).
- (e) The South Downtown Subarea Plan and EIS and associated code amendments, as recommended by the Planning Commission, will be the subject of the City Council’s Study Session and Public Hearing on December 3, 2013.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:54 p.m.