

CITY OF SEATAC
PLANNING COMMISSION
Minutes of May 17, 2016
Regular Meeting

Members present: Joe Adamack, Robert Scully, Jim Todd
Members absent: Roxie Chapin, Tom Dantzler (both excused)
Staff present: Acting City Manager Joe Scorcio; Acting CED Director Jeff Robinson;
Steve Pilcher, Planning Manager; Mike Scarey, Senior Planner; Anita
Woodmass, Senior Planner; Kate Kaehny, Senior Planner; Justin
Rowland, Planning Intern

1. Call to Order

Chair Adamack called the meeting to order at 5:32 p.m.

2. Public Comment

Earl Gipson spoke in favor of City Council members being able to testify at Planning Commission meetings and his opinion that four of them being present at a meeting doesn't not conflict with the Open Public Meetings Act. He indicated a bigger concern is with planning professionals serving as Planning Commissioners.

3. Approval of Minutes

Moved and seconded to approve the minutes of the April 19 and May 3, 2016 meetings. **Passed 3-0.**

4. Public Hearing on GMA Consistency Amendments re: Environmentally Sensitive Areas (SMC 15.700)

Chair Adamack opened the public hearing at 5:32 p.m.

Senior Planner Mike Scarey indicated that staff had prepared a revised memorandum, dated May 17th, that included some changes from what was communicated in the Commission's packet. Copies of the memorandum are available to the public at the rear of the Council Chambers. Mr. Scarey then began to overview the proposed revisions.

Daryl Tapio testified that he had evaluated the wetland regulations in relation to the west side of Bow Lake and the potential of redevelopment of these properties. He stated he was concerned about the increased buffer widths contained in the proposal and also language relating to minimizing the impact from site features such as light fixtures, pets, etc. He reminded the Commission that the RCW (Revised Code of Washington) and Washington Administrative Code (WAC) are not the same; the former is adopted law, while the latter are administrative guidelines formulated by State agency staff.

Earl Gipson provided a copy of an appeal packet related to a prior issue that occurred in his neighborhood and impacted his property. He indicated that both the City's actions and inactions had been responsible for the drainage problem. Mr. Gipson stated that the City should be required to reimburse a property owner for the cost of any critical area study that proves there is not a critical area on their property.

Mr. Scarey explained the proposed language regarding wetland buffer and what alterations will be allowed.

Mr. Tapio indicated that existing development, when located within a defined buffer width, should be allowed to remain and redevelop.

Mr. Scarey then continued with the presentation, highlighting changes that were made regarding Critical Aquifer Recharge Areas (CARA). He indicated that one option would be to use the term "Wellhead Protection Area" in lieu of CARA. He then reviewed the proposed schedule for moving this item forward in order to meet the State deadline of June 30th.

Commissioner Todd suggested that redevelopment should be allowed within buffers areas where development already exists, as long as measures are taken to protect existing wetlands.

Planning Manager Steve Pilcher stated that staff will want to check with State regulatory agencies on this issue.

Mr. Tapio stated that in regards to protecting groundwater resources, he does not support sending critical area studies to water districts for their review and comment, as this could cause unnecessary delays.

Mr. Gipson stated that if a site is considered to be "grandfathered" and therefore exempt from some current regulations, that should be placed on the property title.

The Chair closed the public hearing at 6:20 p.m.

Chair Adamack then outlined potential options for possible action by the Commission. He suggested they could move the amendments forward to the Council without a recommendation.

Mr. Tapio suggested the item be directed the Council's Land Use and Parks Committee.

After discussion, it was moved and seconded to forward the amendments to the City Council with a recommendation of approval, including the suggested amendment by Commissioner Todd to allow redevelopment to occur when existing development is already located within a required buffer. **Passed 2-1.**

5. Implementing Regulations for the Angle Lake Station Area

Senior Planner Anita Woodmass provided a quick briefing. She noted staff has contacted approximately 16 major property owners within the district, but has not received any comments at this time. She stated that the complete draft of the draft regulations will be posted on the City's website by the close of business on Friday, May 20, 2016.

Ms. Woodmass noted that a SEPA Addendum has been issued for the proposal and that the State Dept. of Commerce has indicated that their review period has closed, with no comments.

The public hearing has been scheduled for May 31, 2016. Staff desires a recommendation from the Commission at that time; if that is not possible, the June 7th meeting would be available. City Council action is anticipated on June 28th.

Commissioner Todd indicated he is concerned that the regulations allow mobile food vending as a use on the plaza at the light rail station. He also questioned the issue of ground floor transparency for medical uses.

6. Ground Floor Commercial requirements in Multifamily Projects

Senior Planner Kate Kaehny indicated this issue had been introduced at the last meeting. Staff is proposing these amendments in response to City Council direction to remove barriers to development from the Code. She reviewed a PowerPoint presentation that overviewed three geographic areas that would be impacted by the proposed elimination of the requirement for ground floor commercial as part of a mixed use residential project.

Commissioner Scully questioned the broad scope of the proposal. He stated concern that eliminating this requirement in areas surrounding the light rail stations won't meet the goals of the various plans. He suggested staff take a closer look at this issue.

Acting CED Director Jeff Robinson indicated in his communications with developers interested in the 154th St. Station area, the requirement to provide the current code specified amount of ground floor retail has proven to be an impediment to housing projects.

Commissioner Todd suggested that a lower standard (25%?) could be applied.

The Commission asked staff to take a closer look at this issue and return with a revised proposal. Ms. Kaehny indicated staff could do so at the June 7th meeting.

7. CED Director's Report

Acting City Manager Joe Scorcio commented that SeaTac is a redeveloping city and that our regulations need to take that into account. He also stated that there are too many zone districts and advocated a more streamlined system.

Mr. Scorcio provided a brief summary of budget discussions held at the last City Council meeting.

Mr. Robinson noted that staff will be presenting at the Community Leadership Academy this Thursday evening.

Mr. Pilcher announced that the recruitment process for replacing retiring Senior Planner Mike Scarey has begun; the position will be refilled at an Associate Planner level. He also stated that the City Council's Code Compliance Committee has established 5:00 p.m. on the 4th Wednesday of each month as their regular meeting schedule, commencing on June 22nd.

Mr. Scorcio commented on the departure of Senior Program Manager Soraya Lowry from the City Manager's office after 21 years of working for the City. Ms. Lowry has accepted a position with Sound Transit.

Kate Kaehny announced there is a questionnaire available regarding community gardens and urban agriculture issues. Responses will be accepted until late July.

8. Planning Commissioner Comments

None.

9. Adjournment

Moved and seconded to adjourn. Motion passed 3-0. The meeting adjourned at 7:18 p.m.

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