

CITY OF SEATAC
PLANNING COMMISSION
Minutes of September 5, 2017
Regular Meeting

Members present: Roxie Chapin, Pam Pollock, Stanley Tombs, Jim Todd
Members absent: Tej Basra; Tom Dantzler (both excused)
Staff present: CED Director Jeff Robinson; Steve Pilcher, Planning Manager; Al Torrico, Senior Planner; Brianna Burroughs, Associate Planner

1. Call to Order

Chair Todd called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

2. Public Comment

Earl Gipson inquired about what changes are under consideration for the multifamily housing design standards. He urged the Commission to focus on concise writing and to not include policy language within the Zoning Code.

3. Approval of Minutes

Move and second to approve the minutes of the August 15, 2017 meeting as written. **Passed 4-0.**

4. Briefing on Sign Regulations and Content Neutrality

Associate Planner Brianna Burroughs introduced herself to the Commission and provided an overview of the issue of content neutrality for non-commercial signs. She noted that in June 2015, the United States Supreme Court issued a ruling in the case of Reed v. Town of Gilbert (Arizona). In June of this year, several Washington cities adopted revisions to their codes to ensure they are compliant with the Court's decision.

The Town of Gilbert had placed various restrictions on the display of temporary outdoor signs: ideological signs, political signs, and temporary directional signs. The standards all varied in terms of allowable size and duration of use. Reed was the pastor of Good News Community Church, which did not have a permanent location and therefore used temporary signs to direct individuals to their place of worship. The Town cited the church twice for violations of the sign code: for exceeding time limits and also for failing to include the date and time of the event on their signs. The church sued.

Ultimately, the church won because the Town was using the content of a non-commercial sign to determine how it would be regulated. Although the City of SeaTac has yet to experience a problem, it is advisable for our regulations to be revised to ensure "content neutrality." In other words, sign regulations should not be based on their content.

Staff will be reviewing the Sign Code to see what needs to be amended to ensure compliance with the Court decision and will return with proposed revisions at a future date.

5. Worksession on Multifamily Housing Design Standards

Senior Planner Al Torrico noted that staff had provided a copy of SMC 15.510, with problematic areas highlighted in yellow. Staff has not yet begun to develop specific recommendations, but in general, finds the standards to be too prescriptive.

Commissioner Tombs expressed interest in seeing staff’s vision for what the regulations should be encouraging. Mr. Torrico encouraged him and all the Commission to think of what issues they believe the design standards should address and how that might be done effectively.

6. Director’s Report

CED Director Jeff Robinson noted that the Airport staff will be making a presentation on the Sustainable Airport Master Plan (SAMP) at the September 26 City Council meeting.

Planning Manager Pilcher reminded the Commission of the upcoming State APA Conference, which will be held in SeaTac.

8. Commissioners’ Reports

None.

9. Adjournment

Moved and seconded to adjourn. Motion passed 4-0. The meeting adjourned at 6:14 p.m.

