

CITY OF SEATAC
PLANNING COMMISSION
Minutes of October 17, 2017
Regular Meeting

Members present: Tej Basra, Tom Dantzler, Jim Todd, Stanley Tombs
Members absent: None
Staff present: CED Director Jeff Robinson; Steve Pilcher, Planning Manager; Kate Kaehny, Senior Planner; Al Torrico, Senior Planner

1. Call to Order

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

2. Public Comment

None.

3. Approval of Minutes

Move and second to approve the minutes of the October 3, 2017 meeting as written. **Passed 4-0.**

4. Public Hearing on 2017 Biennial Comprehensive Plan amendments

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

Planning Manager Steve Pilcher reviewed that staff is recommending the Commission take testimony from the public and then continue the hearing until its next meeting on November 7th for the purpose of deliberations and making recommendations.

Senior Planner Kate Kaehny reviewed the on-going amendment process with the Planning Commission. She reviewed the Final Docket criteria by which staff evaluated the 14 amendment proposals.

Ms. Kaehny reviewed Map Amendment Proposal M-1, Segale properties. Staff is recommending approval of this request.

Nicole DeLeon, an attorney with Cairncross & Hemplemann, spoke on behalf of the applicant. She indicated this small parcel was inadvertently not included in their map amendment request of two years ago, which was approved by the City. Approval of the change will allow for integrated development with their lands to the north.

Ms. Kaehny then reviewed Map Amendment Proposal M-2, Hillside Park. She noted that based upon available information, staff could not conclude the proposal meets the amendment criteria.

Barbara McMichael, a long-time resident along Military Rd., spoke in opposition to the request. She expressed concerns regarding noise impacts, additional traffic in the area and the loss of trees that will result from development.

Sidd Jha, applicant, questioned the staff's analysis and it being unable to conclude the proposal should be approved. He referred the Commission to a letter he submitted, which indicates reasons why request should be approved.

Bruce Bickford stated he was born in 1947 and has lived along Military Rd. since that time. He questioned how this site could be accessed off of Military Rd. He indicated the site is too steep and expressed concern about its future development.

Reed McNair, 20812 Military Rd., indicated he is somewhat pro-development but is concerned about potential traffic increases due to development. He noted that Military Rd. needs to be resurfaced.

Ms. Kaehny then introduced Map Amendment M-2A, the Tombs property. [Commissioner Stanley Tombs recused himself from this portion of the hearing]. Similar to Map Amendment M2-A, staff is not able to conclude this proposal meets the amendment criteria.

Sidd Jha spoke in favor of the proposal and expressed concern that staff had been unable to conclude consistency with the decision criteria. He noted that access to the site from Military Rd. is doubtful.

Commissioner Basra noted that while in general, he supports higher residential densities in order to meet the need for housing in the city, the burden of proof for a map amendment falls upon the applicant.

Sidd Jha referred to a letter he had submitted, dated June 14, 2017, where his firm addressed the critical areas issues with the M-2 and M-2A amendment sites. He stated that there have been changed circumstances in the area since the current map designation was made. In response to an inquiry by the Commission, he indicated that approx. 80% of the M-2 site is developable.

Ms. Kaehny introduced Map Amendment M-3, which includes 17 properties throughout the city where there is a consistency issue between the Comprehensive Plan designation and the current zoning. A total of 11 properties are proposed for rezones only; 2 for a comprehensive plan map amendment; and 4 for both a map amendment and a rezone.

Jeremy Thompson, representing Kenworth Trucking, stated concern with the proposed change of their site from its current Industrial zone to CB-C. While Kenworth has plans to relocate from this site in the next few years, they do not desire that a change be made at this point in time.

Mr. Pilcher noted that written comments had been received from some other property owners (i.e., Alaska Airlines) impacted by this proposal; those had been provided to the Commission.

The Commission asked staff how a change in zoning might impact property taxes. Staff indicated it understands zoning to be just one of several factors that the Assessor takes into consideration and that it will check with their office to see if we can obtain an official response.

Commissioner Tombs expressed concern with the proposed change of Parcel #4 (Patton property) and whether that would constitute a “takings”.

Ms. Kaehny then reviewed the Map Amendment M-4, the elimination of the Business Park plan designation and zone. This affects a total of 29 properties throughout the city.

Austin Ross of NW Kidney Centers spoke in favor of the proposal. They have acquired a site adjacent to North SeaTac Park and would find the change in zoning beneficial to their planned development at the site.

Ms. Kaehny introduced Map Amendments M-5 and M-6. There was no public testimony.

Ms. Kaehny then briefly overviewed the various Text Amendments.

Earl Gipson, SeaTac, spoke in opposition to amendment T-4 regarding potentially allowing duplexes in Residential Low density areas.

Ms. Kaehny then reviewed the next steps to be taken.

Chair Todd closed the hearing to further testimony at 6:48 p.m. and then continued the matter until November 7, 2017.

6. Worksession on Multifamily Housing Design Standards

Senior Planner Al Torrico presented information regarding the multifamily housing market in the greater Seattle area. Images of some recent projects were shown to illustrate the trend towards more “urban” styles. He also showed some images of a variety of SeaTac projects, from older, 1970s era apartments to The Reserve, the senior retirement apartments that just opened earlier this year.

Mr. Torrico also reviewed the reasons for having design standards and some of the difficulties that staff has noted the current standards present.

The Commission indicated a preference that design standards include flexibility for a developer and that they would like to see:

- sustainable design and construction
- safety for tenants
- a variety of design
- high quality projects, such as condominiums

In terms of problems with the current standards, the Commission noted the following:

- landscaping and open space standards are too stringent
- need to tailor the standards to market demand
- the need for a city-wide multifamily housing tax exemption

Mr. Torrico indicated staff will return at a future meeting with additional information and alternatives.

6. Director's Report

CED Director Jeff Robinson commented on the recent issue with food trucks at the airport's cell phone waiting lot and that staff had become aware of food trucks operating at other locations. The property owners have been advised that current City regulations do not allow food trucks.

7. Commissioners' Reports

None.

8. Adjournment

Moved and seconded to adjourn. Motion passed 4-0. The meeting adjourned at 7:41 pm.m.

