

CITY OF SEATAC
PLANNING COMMISSION
Minutes of July 17, 2018
Regular Meeting

Members present: Tej Basra, Roxie Chapin, Tom Danztler, Brandon Pinto, Jim Todd and Stanley Tombs

Members absent: None

Staff present: Steve Pilcher, CED Director; Anita Woodmass, Planning Manager; Kate Kaehny, Senior Planner; Brianna Burroughs, Associate Planner

1. Call to Order

Chair Basra called the meeting to order at 5:34 p.m.

2. Public Comment

None.

3. Approval of Minutes

Moved and seconded to approve the minutes of the June 19, 2018 meeting as written. **Passed 6-0.**

4. Worksession on Sign Code amendments

Associate Planner Brianna Burroughs presentation of materials provided in the packet. Discussed proposed reorganization of the Sign Code in three categories of signs, arranged by zoning. She noted issue of political signs; they will be placed under the temporary sign section.

The Commission raised question of maximum size of signs allowed in residential zones, indicating they might be too large. Ms. Burroughs pointed out there is a gradation of sizes allowed that is dependent upon lot size. Staff is trying to move the code away from content-related or use-related regulations and use the zone and site size as the determining factor.

Concern about eliminating the references to types of uses. Ms. Burroughs noted it is necessary in order to avoid content-related regulations. Continued concern that this could allow greater sign sizes that possible under the current regulations.

Ms. Burroughs provided clarification of the Supreme Court decision regarding content neutrality and the difficulty of discriminating between different land uses.

Discussed concerns regarding electronic message signs in residential zones; as drafted, only Tyee High School and Chinook Middle School would be allowed one.

Ms. Woodmass stated that staff is working with the Legal Department to clarify our obligations under the SCOTUS decision. Staff will be preparing a table that compares current allowances to what is being proposed, so that the Commission can have a good basis for comparison.

Discussed banner that is occasionally strung across S. 188th St. and the possible precedence it could establish. Staff is discussing this issue with the Parks Department.

5. Worksession on Multifamily Housing Design Standards

Senior Planner Kate Kaehny stated that this is anticipated to be the final review by the Commission prior to proceeding to public hearing on August 7, 2018.

Reviewed comments from last PED Committee meeting. One is how to best achieve compatibility adjacent to Residential Medium zones: shouldn't the Townhouse standards also be used in these areas? The Commission agreed to apply this same standard.

Second question regards whether to use the term "recreation space" or "open space." CM Scorcio had suggested using the term "residential space," but staff could not find that term in use in other areas. Commission discussed what would be preferable.

Third issue revolves around whether developers should get credits for being adjacent to public school sites, in addition to public park sites. Ms. Kaehny noted this wouldn't provide much benefit, given other standards contained within the draft regulations. Commission agreed that schools should not be included within this reduction allowance.

Discussion of whether private balconies should be allowed to meet open space requirements when a site is adjacent to a park site. Ms. Kaehny reviewed a table demonstrating various means the current standards, which require more than the staff proposed amendments. (Currently, the code doesn't allow balconies to count towards open space requirements).

Discussed how to best "cap" the amount of recreation space required on-site and how this relates to the demographics of the city (particularly in regards to play area requirements). Ms. Kaehny noted a developer could request a departure from these standards if it did not correlate with its planned marketing. She suggested looking towards language that Burien uses, that is responsive to an individual business plan.

CM Forschler advocates less requirements, instead, allow the developer decide what is necessary to meet his/her marketing plans.

Acting Planning Manager Anita Woodmass expressed the need for regulations to balance what is necessary to protect the needs of the public while not restricting the ability of more progressive developers to propose good projects.

Ms. Kaehny inquired whether the Commission is in concurrence with allowing a pedestrian corridor to count towards both required open space and landscaping.

Ms. Kaehny addressed the issue of screening private outdoor open space, whether at patio levels or on balconies. The Commission concurred with the staff recommendation.

She then introduced concept of allowing for a reduction in required street frontage landscaping to align with building setback standards (reduce from 20 to 10 feet). Staff is also proposing to allow frontage and building facade landscaping to be combined so that only 10 feet in total is required; currently the requirement would be for 10 + 5 feet (15 feet total).

Staff is also proposing to allow a larger front yard setback within higher density residential zones, in order to provide more flexibility to the developer.

Staff is also proposing to adjust setback and lot coverage standards in medium density residential zones, reducing the front yard setback to 15 feet, the rear yard setback to 10 feet and maximum lot coverage to 55%.

Ms. Kaehny then reviewed a few minor revisions to make the code more flexible and also some changes in regards to building design. She also noted that staff is not recommending any changes to development incentives.

She then reviewed the possible future schedule; the Commission concurred with having the public hearing

CED Director's Report

New CED Director Steve Pilcher discussed:

- SAMP environmental process;
- New hires at the City;
- Vacant positions in the Planning Division;
- Airport Proviso;
- Shorelines Management Plan update.

Commissioner Comments

None.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:22 p.m.