

PLANNING COMMISSION
Minutes of March 15, 2011 Meeting

Members Present: Daryl Tapio, Roxie Chapin, Tom Dantzler, Melvin McDonald, Barry Ladenburg

Staff Present: Cindy Baker, Community & Economic Development Director; Jack Dodge, Principal Planner; Anne Antonini, CPPW Program Manager

1. Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m.

2. Public Hearing:

A. Economic Stimulus Signs

The Chair opened the public hearing at 6:03 p.m.

Jack Dodge stated that existing Code allows banner or temporary free-standing signs up to 32 square feet. For large buildings, 32 square feet may not be sufficient; therefore, the proposed amendment would allow perforated window signs to advertise property while it is for sale, lease, or rent. The allowable sign size would be calculated based on the building façade (if the façade is 1000' or greater, a sign 10% of the façade may be installed). Since this amendment is designed to assist property owners during the current economic downturn, the signs will be called "Economic Stimulus" signs, and the allowance will expire on December 31, 2013.

This issue is scheduled to go before the Land Use & Parks Committee on March 22, with possible Council action on April 12.

Hearing no requests to speak, the Chair closed the public hearing at 6:08 p.m.

A motion was made, seconded, and unanimously passed to recommend approval of the proposed Economic Stimulus Sign Code amendment as presented.

3. New Business:

A. Communities Putting Prevention to Work (CPPW) – The Healthy Eating and Living Grant

Cindy Baker advised that the grant provides funding to explore policies and practices to help SeaTac and other cities improve their quality of life; the City is under no obligation to implement any recommendations. The City Council has directed that SeaTac will focus its efforts mainly on the transportation elements. The City will host a "Complete Streets"

workshop for staff on March 31 facilitated by Cascade Bicycle Club, the Commissioners were invited; however, this workshop is not open to the public.

Anne Antonini stated that the grant was awarded by the Center for Disease Control to King County Public Health who, in turn, awarded sub-grants to several cities including SeaTac and Highline School District (the grant sunsets in March, 2012). SeaTac's major focus will be on transportation-related issues, specifically sidewalks and bike lanes. SeaTac staff will also be looking for opportunities for physical activities for children, safe routes for children to walk to and from school, and access to healthy food sources. Existing Comprehensive Plan and other policies will be examined which dovetails with the state-mandated 2014 Major Comprehensive Plan Update and required consistency with PSRC Vision 2040. Staff recommendations will be presented to the Planning Commission and the City Council for their review.

Discussion was held about funding sources to implement staff recommendations; potential impacts to bicyclists if bicycle lanes do provide an avenue of escape for bicyclists in danger; cultural appropriateness in defining "healthy foods"; and vandalism by children to create short-cuts rather than using the sidewalks.

Doris Cassan expressed concern about the government eliminating school programs such as physical education and then attempting to add similar programs at additional taxpayer expense. Inappropriate school cafeteria food is also of concern, as well as the City's practice of hiring consultants.

Earl Gipson stated that this grant is not free money, it is taxpayer dollars that are being taken away from police and fire which is government's role. Parents should be teaching their children about healthy eating. Further, bicycles should be licensed to ensure bicyclists are paying their fair share for using the streets which are for everyone's use.

Commissioner Tapio suggested that government could buy healthy foods in bulk for distribution to those in need of assistance, rather than the food stamp program currently in place. This program could also be modified for use during catastrophic emergencies.

Cindy Baker indicated it may be appropriate for a representative from the King County Health Department to make a presentation before the Commission and answer their questions regarding these issues.

Discussion was held about long terms issues such as amending the Comprehensive Plan versus implementing policies to provide results in the short term; the increasing burden on taxpayers to provide funding for free services and the need to fundamentally rethink federal, state, and local policies regarding food, housing and medical care.

4. Detailed Commission Liaison's Report:

Commissioners Tapio and Ladenburg attended a Sound Transit open house regarding the South 200th Street light rail, and its alignment. Discussion was held about how the City could best address the issue of maintaining airport entrances at South 182nd Street and South 170th Street. It was agreed that a letter from the Planning Commission to Sound Transit expressing their concerns would be prepared.

A Lake To Sound Trail open house is scheduled for Wednesday, March 16 at 5:00 p.m. at the Burien Community Center. Additional information can be obtained by accessing the City's website calendar.

5. Planning Director's Report:

Cindy Baker thanked the three Commissioners who sit on the Zoning Code Update Ad Hoc Committee for their dedication and patience as the Committee addresses the very difficult City Center parking structure regulations.

On March 22, Ms. Baker will be making a presentation to the City Council in answer to their directive that she reduce staff by one (management equivalent) position as part of the proposed reorganization. She has requested data from affected divisions/departments to assist in her analysis of the issues. (The new permitting software system the City will implement in late 2011 will allow for much more effective reporting than the system currently in place.) The Council may make a decision at their April 12 meeting.

Cindy anticipates implementing “a cup of coffee” with the construction industry regarding mainly building permits to assess where changes to City processes could improve our customer service.

6. Planning Commission Comments (including suggestions for next meeting's agenda)

None.

7. Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned at 7:00 p.m.