

**CITY OF SEATAC**  
**PLANNING COMMISSION**  
**Minutes of November 5, 2013**  
**Regular Meeting**

**Members Present:** Daryl Tapio, Roxie Chapin, Tom Dantzler, Joe Adamack, Jim Todd  
**Members Absent:** None

**Staff present:** Joe Scorcio, CED Director; Steve Pilcher, Planning Manager

**1. Call to Order**

Chairman Tapio called the meeting to order at 5:34 p.m.

**2. Recognition of Commissioner Dantzler for 20 years of service**

CED Director Joe Scorcio reported that at last week's Volunteer Recognition luncheon, Mr. Dantzler was noted for 20 years of service to the City. As Mr. Dantzler was unable to attend, Mr. Scorcio presented him with a certificate of recognition and a pin commemorating his years of service.

Mr. Dantzler commented on his motivation for giving back to the community through service.

**3. Approve minutes of October 15, 2013 Meeting**

Moved and seconded to approve the minutes as presented. Approved 5-0.

**4. Potential code amendments regarding SEPA Categorical Exemption Thresholds, public notification procedures**

Planning Manager Steve Pilcher noted this topic had been discussed with the Commission at prior meetings and that staff wishes to solidify proposed thresholds before proceeding to public hearing at the Commission's December 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting. It is also necessary to provide a 21-day comment period to the State Dept. of Ecology, interested tribes, and other agencies prior to taking any action. He stated that staff is recommending establishing higher thresholds that are consistent with the highest threshold of neighboring jurisdictions. A chart of those jurisdiction's thresholds was provided in the Commission's packet.

After discussion, the Commission directed that the following thresholds be proposed for public comment:

- Single family residential: 9 units
- Multifamily residential: 20 units
- Barns, etc.: 10,000 sq. ft.
- Offices, commercial, etc.: 12,000 sq. ft.
- Parking lots: 50 stalls

- Landfill or excavation: 750 cubic yards

Public notification procedures were also discussed at prior meetings. Staff is proposing reducing the size of mailed notification districts to 300 feet for Type II project permits (administrative decisions) and 500 feet for Type III project permits (these require public hearings). The only exception would be for Essential Public Facilities Conditional Use Permits, where the existing 1000 feet notification district would be maintained.

The Commission raised the issue of the notification signs that are required to be erected on the site of a proposed project. These are typically expensive to obtain, as each sign must be individually fabricated at a local sign shop. The required dimensions (3' x 4') were also noted as difficult. It was suggested that perhaps the City could produce the basic sign and then sale those to project proponents. It was agreed that staff will draft some amendment language to address this concern.

Mr. Pilcher noted that the amendment packet for public hearing on December 3<sup>rd</sup> will also include the change to eliminate the ADU report requirement.

##### **5. Potential code amendments regarding “Economic Stimulus Signs” and “Micro-Apartments”**

Planning Manager Steve Pilcher noted that the Sign Code had been amended in 2011 to allow the use of “economic stimulus signs” to assist in the sales, lease or rental of properties. This provision contains a sunset date of December 31, 2013.

There appears to be only one property currently using these types of signs, the SeaTac Office Center on International Blvd. (Mr. Pilcher handed out a photograph of the building and sign). When staff contacted the building manager earlier this year to remind them of the need to remove the sign at years’ end, they requested consideration of extending the time period in which they can be used. Any extension will require an amendment to the code; staff is requesting direction from the Commission of whether an extension should be considered and, if so, for what duration of time.

After discussion, the Commission agreed that a two-year extension should be considered. Staff will add that proposal to the list of code amendments to be considered at the December 3<sup>rd</sup> public hearing.

The second issue concerns “micro-apartments,” sometimes known as “efficiency apartments” or “apodments” (which is a copyrighted name). Earlier this year, staff was contacted by a local developer who has built several of these projects in Seattle and other area cities. He had expressed interest in developing a project in the 154<sup>th</sup> St. Station area. Staff is bringing this issue forward to the Commission for initial discussion and to determine if there is interest in pursuing it further.

Typically, these projects provide no off-street parking, as they do not cater to tenants who own cars. In fact, bicycle parking is usually a greater need. In addition, these projects often do not have significant on-site open space or community gathering areas, instead relying upon the local

area to provide gathering spaces. Staff has noted that these features of an urban area are not yet found in the 154<sup>th</sup> St. Station area.

CED Director Scorcio noted that as the Transit Oriented Development (TOD) market becomes saturated at the light rail stations to the north, developers will begin to look at sites in suburban locations. He indicated that it is possible that future amendments to the Growth Management Act may require local jurisdictions to provide accommodation for this housing type in certain locations.

The Commission discussed that future tenants could spend their dollars in the local market, which would help it to grow businesses related to their needs. However, they also expressed a concern of these projects turning into low-income housing. There was also concern about the lack of off-street parking. Concern was also expressed regarding the potential conversion of older buildings into this housing type.

Staff was asked to check the building codes to determine if there is a minimum required size for a dwelling unit. They were also asked to contact Tukwila and see if they are also considering this housing type.

It was noted that these projects could meet a housing need for certain groups and since they are a unique type, they could be highly regulated as to location, new construction only, number of occupants per unit, etc.

The Commission agreed to continue consideration at a future meeting and requested staff to invite a developer of micro-apartments to attend an upcoming meeting.

**6. CED Director's Report**

CED Director Joe Scorcio reported that as part of on-going internal process improvements, City staff has recently examined the right-of-way use permit process. He reported that for one type of ROW permit, staff had determined ways to reduce the time of processing from 12 to 3 days.

Planning Manager Pilcher informed the Commission of an upcoming "Puget Sound Equity Summit" to be held this Friday evening and Saturday at Highline Community College.

**7. Planning Commission Comments**

None.

**8. Adjournment**

Moved and seconded to adjourn the meeting at 7:13 p.m. Passed 5-0.

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