

CITY OF SEATAC
PLANNING COMMISSION
Minutes of February 4, 2014
Regular Meeting

Members Present: Roxie Chapin, Joe Adamack, Tom Dantzler, Jim Todd

Members Absent: None

Staff present: Joe Scorcio, CED Director; Steve Pilcher, Planning Manager; Al Torrico, Jr., Senior Planner; Economic Development Manager Jeff Robinson

1. Call to Order

Chairman Chapin called the meeting to order at 5:31 p.m.

2. Approve minutes of January 21, 2014 Meeting

Moved and seconded to approve the minutes as written. Passed 4-0.

3. Election of Officers

Moved and seconded to nominate Joe Adamack to be Chair. There were no other nominations. Motion passed 4-0.

Moved and seconded to nominate Roxie Chapin as Vice-Chair. There were no other nominations. Motion passed 4-0.

4. Discussion of Development Agreement process

Senior Planner Al Torrico reviewed the current procedure that is used when the City considers entering into a Development Agreement. An applicant needs to provide proof of providing a public benefit in lieu of attaining strict compliance with City codes and standards. Staff negotiates the terms of a DA per the direction of the CED Director and City Manager. Once a draft is agreed to by both parties, a Council study session occurs, followed by a Council public hearing and action.

Mr. Torrico noted there is a potential problem in that the Council is never formally asked at the outset if it is willing to consider entering into an agreement. This leaves the possibility that staff could negotiate an agreement with an applicant, only to have it rejected by the Council. That would be costly in terms of both time and money. He suggested that one option would be to have a 2-step process, where staff initially approaches the Council to determine its willingness to

consider a development agreement. If the answer is “yes”, staff would then negotiate the terms of an agreement and bring that back for Council consideration, per the standard process.

In response to a question, Mr. Torrico noted that to date, he cannot think of any proposed DAs that have not been approved once presented to the Council.

Currently, there is a \$7500 application fee for a proposed DA. Under the possible 2-step process, there could be a small (perhaps \$500) fee to initiate the pre-application process, followed by payment of the full application fee should the Council provide direction to move forward. There was a question whether this would be cost-effective to an applicant. Mr. Torrico noted that in terms of overall development costs, these fees are insignificant, plus the process would provide the opportunity for greater certainty to an applicant.

The Commission inquired regarding practice in other jurisdictions. Mr. Pilcher related what he had experienced in the last two jurisdictions he worked for, noting it was a different process in each.

Mr. Torrico noted that DAs are legislative actions, so there is never a guarantee they will received approval. However, initial consideration at a conceptual level would increase the odds of final approval.

The Commission discussed concerns of making the terms of a possible DA public too early in the process. CED Director Scorcio noted that once an applicant chooses the DA process, it has agreed to negotiate with the Council and, therefore, the public. The question is how to get the initial “head nod” from the Council.

Mr. Torrico also noted that once an application is determine to be complete for processing, a Notice of Application is provided to the public.

The Commission asked the staff to develop some possible approaches for discussion at a future meeting.

5. Misc. Code Amendments re: Hearing Examiner, SEPA Substantive Authority, Comprehensive Plan

Planning Manager Steve Pilcher presented draft code amendment language. He noted that the Hearing Examiner code is contained within Title 1 of the Municipal Code, over which the Commission does not have jurisdiction. However, there are changes being proposed in that section that relate to changes in the Zoning Code, so these are being presented for informational purposes. The intent of these amendments is to reduce conflicts within the Code and ensure issues are only being addressed in one location. He then reviewed the amendments with the Commission.

The second set of amendments concerns providing proper reference in the Code to what documents the City may rely upon for its use of SEPA substantive authority (the ability to

condition proposals through the SEPA process). It appears the current list has not been updated since the City first incorporate.

Finally, staff is proposing adding a new chapter to code to address the Comprehensive Plan, noting its purpose, what documents comprise the plan, authority for the annual amendment process, etc.

It was agreed to proceed to public hearing on these items on March 4, 2014.

6. CED Director's Report

Mr. Scorcio handed out an agenda for the upcoming City Council retreat on Saturday, February 22nd. The morning session will include a presentation of "Jurassic Parliament" by Ann McFarlane, a registered parliamentarian. Three Commissioners confirmed they would be able to attend.

He noted there are currently three vacancies in the CED department, all of which are in the process of being re-filled.

Mr. Scorcio noted that the process to fill the vacant seat on the Commission is moving forward, as there are four applicants. The City Clerk's office is arranging for interviews.

In terms of permit activity, he noted there was a 26% increase in 2013 as compared to 2012. The total number of permits is approx. 100 less than the figure for 2008. Revenue was up only 11%, indicating a lot of smaller projects. He also noted that both sales and hotel/motel tax revenues were up in 2013. All these are indications of an improved economy.

7. Planning Commission Comments

The Commission discussed the presentation on microapartments that occurred at the last meeting.

8. Adjournment

Moved and seconded to adjourn the meeting at 7:14 p.m. Passed 4-0.

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