

CITY OF SEATAC
PLANNING COMMISSION
Minutes of January 21, 2014
Regular Meeting

Members Present: Roxie Chapin, Joe Adamack, Tom Dantzler

Members Absent: Jim Todd

Staff present: Joe Scorcio, CED Director; Steve Pilcher, Planning Manager; Al Torrico, Jr., Senior Planner; Kate Kaehny, Senior Planner; Mike Scarey, Senior Planner; Economic Development Manager Jeff Robinson; Engineering Review Manager Ali Shasti; Building Services Manager Gary Schenk

1. Call to Order

Chairman Chapin called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

2. Approve minutes of January 7, 2014 Meeting

Commissioner Dantzler noted that he had recommended the SeaTac Area Plan be retained as a reference document. The minutes were then approved as corrected, 3-0.

3. Presentation on Microapartments

CED Director Joe Scorcio introduced Cathy Reines and Jim Potter of Footprint Investments, LLC. He noted that Footprint is one of the primary developers of microapartments in the Seattle area and that Mr. Potter had contacted the City in early 2013 to express his interest in potentially developing a project here in SeaTac. Discussions with staff have continued intermittently since that time, resulting in the invitation for Footprint to address the Commission.

Cathy Reines presented a PowerPoint presentation. Footprint manages all of the projects that have built. She noted that a slight majority of their tenants are women, as their projects provide a safe environment. Approx. 10-20% of their tenants do own cars, but typically, these projects do not provide off-street parking.

Rents are typically 60% the cost of a standard studio apartment, ranging from \$500 - \$1000/mo, depending upon location. Monthly rent includes all utilities, internet, etc. Units are also furnished. Most of their projects feature rooftop decks, on-site bicycle storage, common kitchen areas, etc. Projects are built efficiently and to green building standards.

Tenants stay a minimum of 90 days, with the average stay being approx. 14 months.

She presented slides of their projects in Wallingford and Capitol Hill (two sites).

Typically, they are looking for local government regulations to not require any parking or impact fees. They also seek housing tax exemptions if available. Cost savings are important to the overall ability to provide affordable units.

Footprint usually targets areas with a “walkscore” of around 90. (Walkscore is a Seattle company). Mr. Potter noted that the 154th Station Area has a score of only 45. However, construction of a project could help drive up the overall score.

Mr. Potter noted that in SeaTac, they would target a \$500 - \$700/mo. range. A project would need to include between 50 – 100 units.

Mr. Potter and Ms. Reines responded to a number of questions from the Commission, staff and audience:

- Typically, only one common area per building is provided. Many tenants prefer to frequent local restaurants and other activities.
- In total, their projects are running near 100% occupancy.
- Tenants are making a lifestyle choice.
- The extension of light rail to Highline CC will help drive demand.
- Pets are allowed in their units, with no size restrictions.
- Most units are single occupancy; 2% of all rooms are large enough to accommodate a couple.
- Although some projects do have a small amount of parking, it typically isn’t provided. Mr. Potter noted that “parking isn’t a protected class.”

Mr. Potter and Ms. Reines were thanked for attending and providing information.

4. Angle Lake Station Area Plan

Kate Kaehny, Senior Planner, reviewed the planning process that is underway. She noted that funding for the project is a mix of City and Community Transformation Grant (CTG) funds. She reminded the Commission of the Spring 2013 Urban Land Institute Technical Advisor Panel report, which began to inform the planning process. She also noted that the City Council had agreed to sign the Growing Transit Communities Compact at their last meeting, indicating the City’s support for planning for transit-supportive uses in the area around the light rail station.

The planning process will include a strong public involvement program, in addition to analyzing pedestrian and bicycle connections and providing an urban design framework and implementation strategy.

Ms. Kaehny noted that a consultant has been selected and work has begun. Staff intends to keep the Commission updated on a monthly basis and will also inform of public involvement opportunities.

5. Major Comprehensive Plan Update

Senior Planner Mike Scarey reviewed the reasons behind the need to complete a major update to the Comprehensive Plan. These primarily relate to changes in State law and the receipt of new housing and employment forecasts. He presented a timeline for completing the work, which will primarily occur during 2014 (final adoption must occur by June 30, 2015). Staff is working on developing a public participation plan for encouraging input into the process.

6. CED Director’s Report

Mr. Scorcio noted that the City Council will be holding a retreat on Saturday, February 22nd. The morning session will include a presentation of “Jurassic Parliament” by Ann McFarlane , a registered parliamentarian. The Commission is invited to attend.

He also announced that the Council may be having a meeting on March 18th, which would ordinarily be the evening for a Planning Commission meeting. This may require an adjustment to the Commission’s schedule.

Mr. Scorcio noted that the process to fill the vacant seat on the Commission is moving forward.

He also advised that staff will be making a presentation to the City Council on February 11th regarding the state of marijuana/I-502 implementation.

Finally, Mr. Scorcio noted that in 2015, the National American Planning Association conference will be held in Seattle. Staff will be working to find opportunities for Commission members to attend at least a portion of the conference.

7. Planning Commission Comments

Commissioner Dantzler noted a potential code violation occurring within the Angle Lake Station Area. Mr. Scorcio stated that staff is investigating this matter.

8. Adjournment

Moved and seconded to adjourn the meeting at 6:55 p.m. Passed 3-0.

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