

City of Lynnwood
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
August 11, 2005

Commissioners present:

Patrick Decker, Chair
Brian Bigler
Elisa Elliott
Marina Georgiev
Dave Johnson
Donna Walther

Staff present:

Ron Hough, Planning Manager
Dennis Lewis, Senior Planner

Commissioners absent:

Tia Psycheff

Others Present:

Ted Hikel, City Council Liaison

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Decker called this meeting to order at 7:00 pm. A quorum was present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made and seconded to approve the July 28, 2005 meeting minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

COUNCIL LIAISON REPORT

City Council member Ted Hikel reported on recent planning-related City Council actions, including approval of a church's food bank and the Wilson Manor plat. On Wednesday, August 17, the Council will discuss the Dept. of Community Development's Strategic Plan.

CITIZEN COMMENTS

None.

COMMISSION MEMBER DISCLOSURES

Commissioner Johnson disclosed that he is employed by Edmonds Community College but his employment will not affect his participation in this meeting.

Commissioner Georgiev disclosed that she mails information to property owners as part of her normal business, and some of those mailings may have been received by owners of Copper Ridge condominiums. She has had no outside contact with any of those owners and will continue to participate in the discussion.

Commissioner Walther disclosed her personal interest in the Good Shepherd Baptist Church proposal as the owner/resident of an adjacent condominium. She will not participate in that portion of tonight's discussion.

Council member Hikel and Commissioner Walther left the Council Chambers during discussion of the quasi-judicial Baptist Church proposal.

PUBLIC HEARING

1. Comprehensive Plan Amendments – continued

Chair Decker announced that the public input portion of the Comprehensive Plan public hearing was conducted on July 28th and was closed. No new testimony will be accepted. However, the commission's deliberation portion of the hearing was continued to this date and is still open. Commissioners may ask questions of staff, the applicants or members of the audience during their deliberations.

Chair Decker suggested that the Commission walk through the eight proposals one at a time and make their recommendations on each as they go. He declared the continued public hearing open and asked for the staff presentation.

Planning Manager Ron Hough described the Good Shepherd Baptist Church proposal and showed three different map scenarios on the overhead projector. The first showed the current Plan designations of the church property and surrounding areas, the second showed the requested amendment and the third showed the administration's recommendation. Mr. Hough explained the differences in development potential of each.

Commissioner Bigler referred to an August 7, 2005 Herald newspaper article entitled "Homes on the Run" which included statistics on mobile home parks throughout Snohomish County and the need for affordable housing. He asked staff to project two statistical tables from that article that showed Lynnwood's 17 mobile home parks and 574 park residents, many of whom are seniors. He talked about the limited remaining lifespan of older mobile homes and the need for other local housing options.

Commissioner Johnson understands the mission of the church as well as the interests of the neighborhood and feels the City has obligations to both the elderly and the children. He referred to Mr. Melby's stated ability and willingness to build a project that is compatible with its neighbors, including the Copper Ridge condominiums. He noted that the City changed the zoning to make the Copper Ridge condos possible and that the church is asking for the same zoning. If the current zoning remains, Johnson felt the impact of a new subdivision may have an even greater impact than senior apartments.

Commissioner Elliott reminded the Commission that the proposal is a Comprehensive Plan and a zoning amendment and that they are not considering a project of any kind.

Commissioner Johnson moved to recommend the applicant's original proposal. The motion died for lack of a second motion.

Commissioner Bigler made a motion, which was seconded by Johnson, to recommend the administration's recommendation, but with the Plan designation of Medium-density Multi-family instead of Low-density and with RMM zoning instead of RML. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Johnson and discussion followed.

Chair Decker talked about the effects of government regulations on housing affordability and availability. He observed that rapidly rising property values and taxes are forcing many older residents out of their homes and out of Lynnwood because they can't find alternative housing. They should be able to stay in their community. He felt the church's proposal won't bring any harm or new problems to the community and is in the City's best interests. He favors the applicant's proposal.

Commissioner Elliott expressed a concern about City services and basic infrastructure. She felt it was not a good idea to deviate from the long-range plan and approve small increases in density that will have to be serviced in several different ways. Before making

such changes, the Commission should look at the "big picture" regarding public services and infrastructure.

Following discussion, a roll call vote was taken on Bigler motion. It failed. (Bigler and Georgiev voted "Yes". Decker and Elliott voted "No". Johnson abstained)

Commissioner Johnson made, and Decker seconded, a motion to recommend the church's original proposal for Council approval. A vote was taken and the motion failed. (Johnson and Decker voted "Yes" and Georgiev, Elliott and Bigler voted "No".)

Commissioner Elliott made, and Bigler seconded, a motion to recommend City Council denial of the request. Discussion followed. Commissioner Elliott asked if multi-family stand-alone housing is really in the City's best interests at this time. She suggested the need to build a stronger foundation for growth. Commissioner Bigler urged the Commission to make a recommendation so that they wouldn't have wasted the time of staff, the applicant and all the residents who have attended the meetings. He explained that his earlier motion was an attempt to find a workable compromise.

Following discussion, a vote was taken on Elliott's motion. The motion failed. (Elliott voted "Yes" and all others voted "No")

When it was evident that the Commission could not arrive at a recommendation, Chair Decker closed the discussion of this item and concluded that it will move on to the City Council without a recommendation from the Commission.

Planning Manager Hough summarized Proposal "A" to change the timing of the Plan amendment process. Commissioner Johnson made, and Decker seconded, a motion to approve the administration's recommendation on Proposal "A". The motion passed unanimously.

Senior Planner Dennis Lewis walked the Commission through all remaining Plan amendment proposals, showing photos and maps to describe the changes.

Commissioner Bigler made, and Decker seconded, a motion to approve the administration's recommendations on proposals "B" through "G". The motion passed unanimously.

BUSINESS

H-1: Comprehensive Plan Amendments -- Recommendations

The Commission made its recommendations on each amendment proposal during its deliberations. Additional action was not necessary.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT & INFORMATION

Planning Manager Hough indicated that some upcoming Commission meetings will be cancelled due to lack of business, Lynnwood University and coming holidays.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 8:11 pm.

Patrick Decker, Chair