

City of Lynnwood
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
November 16, 2006

Commissioners present:

Maria Ambalada
Brian Bigler
Patrick Decker
Jeff Davies
Elisa Elliott
Tia Peycheff
Michael Wojack

Staff present:

Paul Krauss, Interim Com. Dev. Director
Ron Hough, Comprehensive Planning Mgr.
Kevin Garrett, Current Planning Mgr.
Dennis Lewis, Senior Planner
John Bowler, Associate Planner
Jeff Elekes, Deputy Public Works Director
John Ewell, Public Works Project Mgr.
Shay Davidson, Admin. Assistant

Commissioners absent:

None

Others Present:

Ted Hikel – Council Liaison

CALL TO ORDER

Due to the use of the Council Chambers by Lynnwood University, this meeting of the Planning Commission was held in the training room of Fire Station 15. Chair Decker called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. All commissioners were in attendance with the exception of Commissioner Peycheff who arrived shortly thereafter.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Bigler moved to approve the minutes of the October 12, 2006 Planning Commission meeting. Commissioner Elliott seconded the motion and the minutes were approved unanimously.

COUNCIL LIAISON REPORT

Council member Hikel reported on City Council progress with the City budget, including proposals to implement the one-stop permit center and a Highway 99 Corridor Study related to an economic development study currently in progress. Since this was the final evening for Lynnwood University, Council member Hikel excused himself to attend that function in the Council Chambers. He later returned to the Commission meeting.

CITIZEN COMMENTS

None

PUBLIC HEARING

1. Access to Individual Single-family Lots – Code Amendment:

Planning Manager Kevin Garrett introduced the subject and reminded the Commission of its brief discussion at the October meeting. The public notice for this hearing specified the fire station location, rather than the Council Chambers. Mr. Garrett explained the proposed amendment, including a reference to Fire Code section 9.06.020, which allows a reduced access width and will help determine the width of access ways on a case-by-case

basis. The staff proposal will make the subdivision code consistent with the fire code on this access issue. Mr. Garrett also explained a related change to building setbacks.

Commissioner Ambalada asked if the proposed rule changes will apply to all private property owners as well as major developers. Mr. Garrett responded that the rules will apply equally, regardless of a property's ownership.

Chair Decker opened the hearing and asked for public comments. None were offered. Decker closed the hearing and moved that the Commission forward these proposed code amendments to the City Council with a recommendation to approve. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Bigler and passed unanimously.

2. Shoreline Master Program:

Senior Planner Dennis Lewis introduced the subject and explained that most of the SMP materials have been submitted to and discussed by the Commission at previous meetings. A new Appendix "C" – Shoreline Inventory, Analysis and Characterization was distributed at this meeting and the Map Portfolio is being improved through the use of new aerial photos. Staff has now completed all required elements of the SMP and has received comments from the Department of Ecology (DOE). DOE has review authority to determine compliance of our SMP with state requirements and our next step is to submit the full package for DOE's review. During that review DOE will conduct a public hearing and may require additional changes. DOE representative David Pater was in attendance and talked about the review/approval process and timing. He recently sent his latest comments to Mr. Lewis and he indicated that one of the main issues now is how to integrate critical areas regulations into the SMP. He has not yet reviewed the newest sections on cumulative impacts and the restoration plan.

Commissioner Ambalada asked Mr. Pater how the requirements for shoreline plans came about. He provided a brief history of the Shoreline Management Act (SMA) and explained that the requirements apply to all cities and counties.

Chair Decker asked for comments from the audience on the proposed SMP. No comments were offered. Decker closed the public hearing and asked staff if it was necessary to take any action at this meeting. Mr. Lewis suggested that the Commission take some time to review the new materials and be ready to make a recommendation at its December 14th meeting. The Commission was advised that, if DOE requires significant changes to the SMP later in the process, they can be brought back to the Commission for further review.

WORK SESSION

1. Parking Code Revisions:

Associate Planner John Bowler reminded the commissioners that the first draft of proposed changes to LMC 21.18, Off-street Parking was distributed at the October meeting. An additional amendment was included in this meeting's staff report regarding the parking of trucks and trailers.

Commissioner Bigler expressed concern about the strength of the language in the new proposal and asked for additional background. Mr. Bowler described some of the problems the City has encountered as a result of large trucks and trailers parked for extended periods of time in the parking lots of commercial businesses. Required customer or employees parking spaces are lost and hazards result from the "canyon

effect” and the use of forklifts in parking lots during store hours. Our current code allows for limited on-site storage, provided it’s constructed properly and screened. Complaints about this problem have come from the public, from City Council members and also from some property owners who would like the City to apply stronger regulations to their tenants. The staff report suggested code language that will clarify the “no truck parking” requirement, but with some exceptions. The third exception would provide a permit process for temporary holiday season storage over a period of about two months. The City also offers a “Special Events” permit for events of shorter duration.

The Commission discussed the various aspects of these proposals, including the appropriateness of truck/trailer parking in commercial areas, impacts on the public and shoppers, location of trucks and trailers on commercial sites, length of time and other factors. There was no consensus on whether or not the two-month parking permit was a good idea, but the Commission did agree that two or three days is a reasonable amount of time to allow a truck to be loaded or unloaded if it’s waiting in line at or near the loading dock.

Chair Decker asked staff if our current regulations are ineffective. Paul Krauss replied that our regulations deal with various aspects of these issues, but there are gaps and overlaps that need to be corrected. Decker suggested that we improve what we have on the books, give it teeth, and not over-legislate. Commissioner Elliott added that we also need to provide a reasonable amount of flexibility. Commissioner Peycheff added that there needs to be limits on truck and trailer parking. Such rules won’t put them out of business.

Commissioner Ambalada asked if the City is concerned about security and public safety, since it’s not known what each trailer contains. Staff replied that the City, and especially the Fire Marshal, is very concerned.

Planning Manager Garrett asked for consensus on the proposed changes. The Commission agreed that 72 hours would be a reasonable amount of time for a truck to wait to load or unload and they agreed that storage containers (without wheels) should not be allowed.

Mr. Bowler brought the Commission’s attention to some of the other proposed changes to the Parking Code. Questions were asked and comments made about compact car spaces and how many “stacking spaces” a drive-up window should require and how they are measured. The Commission generally agreed that “shared parking” is a good concept that makes better use of space. While shared parking provisions and agreements can be complex, staff was encouraged to seek a simple approach.

Staff will consider the Commission’s input, revise the proposals and return at a future meeting for further discussion.

BUSINESS

1. Capital Facilities Plan:

Planning Manager Ron Hough reminded the Commission that Interim Parks Director Katie Anderson attended the October Commission meeting and answered questions about parks and open space. Tonight, Jeff Elekes, Deputy Director of the Public Works Department is available to discuss public works and street projects. The City Council conducted a public hearing on November 13th. The Commission should make its recommendation tonight, if possible.

Jeff Elekes responded to Chair Decker's question about a Blue Ridge area's "slalom course" by referring to the street design as traffic calming. He acknowledged Commissioner Elliott's observation that the annual CFP revisions often bump out the timelines. How the CFP is administered and adjusted is a function of the City's funding sources, which are not always available as planned. He noted that the six-year TIP (Transportation Improvements Plan) is closely related to the CFP and it represents our best shot at doing what we can with available funds. Elekes indicated that the Mayor and City Council are very serious about the CFP and have scheduled an all-day work session on next year's program.

Following the discussion, Commissioner Psycheff moved to recommend City Council approval of the 2007-2012 Capital Facilities Plan. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Ambalada and passed unanimously.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT & INFORMATION

Interim Community Development Director Paul Krauss informed the Commission of coordinated efforts of several cities to address issues related to LDMR (Low-density Multiple-family Residential) developments. He explained that these are single-family home developments, on multi-family zoned lands. The homes are sold as condominiums and these developments often come with narrow streets, minimal parking and without parks. They are very popular with developers and seem to sell quickly. A committee of planners is currently studying the LDMR issues and County staff is conducting design workshops that may affect future developments. One way that our city might take better control of development around us is to move ahead with an aggressive annexation program. The City Council will discuss this subject after the first of the year.

Planning Manager Hough briefed the Commission on upcoming meeting agendas.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn. It passed unanimously and this meeting was adjourned at 9:17 pm.

Patrick Decker, Chair