

**City of Lynnwood  
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES  
August 11, 2011 Meeting**

<b>Commissioners Present:</b>	<b>Staff Present:</b>
Maria Ambalada	Community Devt. Director Paul Krauss
Van Aubuchon	Kevin Garrett, Planning Manager
Chad Braithwaite	Shay Davidson, Administrative Asst.
Michael Wojack, Second Vice Chair	John Bowler, Associate Planner
<b>Commissioners Absent:</b>	
Doug Jones	<b>Other:</b>
Richard Wright, Chair	Councilmember Loren Simmonds
Bob Larsen, Vice Chair	Stephen Bourne, Architect

**Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order by Second Vice (Acting) Chair Wojack at 7:00 p.m.

**Approval of Minutes**

- Meeting of July 28, 2011

Commissioner Braithwaite referred to page 5 of 8. The last sentence under the first bullet point under his comments should be corrected to read:

*He did not think applying current parking standards to outside dining would ~~not~~ be appropriate since they are not used as often and is are not likely . . .*

*Motion made by Commissioner Ambalada, seconded by Commissioner Braithwaite, to approve the minutes as corrected. Motion passed unanimously.*

**Citizen Comments**

None.

**Public Hearings**

None.

**Other Business**

None.

## **Council Liaison Report**

Councilmember Simmonds stated that there will be a public hearing on the Interim City Center Regulation Extension on Monday night. The Council intends to take formal action at the completion of that public hearing. Following that, the Council will not meet again until Wednesday, September 7.

## **Director's Report**

Director Krauss reported the following:

- The extension of the Interim Ordinance for City Center is on the Council calendar.
- The Council is being briefed on the City Center work that the Planning Commission has been doing. Staff has been meeting with the PFD who mocked up a master concept plan for what it (PFD) would like to achieve. Most of the points raised by the PFD (except for the road) are addressed by the new amendments.
- Highway 99 Corridor was back at a Council Work Session where staff went through the issues that the Council had posed. Staff has scheduled to bring it back to the Council at a business meeting for final action.
- Director Krauss gave a status update on the Lynnwood High School EIS. It is likely that the draft EIS will be ready for public comment in October. The school district has asked the City to analyze some new alignments for the street which intersects with Alderwood Mall Parkway.
- LRT work continues. There will be a presentation on the light rail extension to the Lynnwood Transit Center by Sound Transit at the City Council meeting next week. He discussed the numerous benefits of Light Rail Transit on the I-5 corridor. This is the recommended option. The only area where the Highway 99 alignment has some better potential is in encouraging transit-oriented development. However, that area already has Bus Rapid Transit.
- Staff is working on the additional study financed by the City with Sound Transit to look at extending light rail from the Lynnwood Transit Center into the Lynnwood City Center. Sound Transit came up with three alternate routes to extend a light rail line further into the City Center. Staff recommended that they study an Alderwood Mall Parkway alignment. That study is being refined and they hope to share it with the Council in September or October.
- He gave an update on budget issues. The Mayor has informed the City Council that he is going to cut back City budgets by 6% which would translate to two positions from Community Development. The Council is continuing to work through this issue with the Mayor.

Commissioner AuBuchon asked about the status of the annexation and Costco. Regarding Costco, Director Krauss explained that the School District has to get

its work done first with the rezone, Comprehensive Plan amendment, and Master Plan. He discussed the positive revenue that Costco would bring to the City, but noted that even under the best of circumstances they would not recognize any of the revenue until 2013. Regarding the annexation, Director Krauss stated that they have heard nothing from the Court of Appeals.

Commissioner Braithwaite asked about the PFD's position on the proposed City Center amendments. Director Krauss stated that he was still not sure. The PFD has concerns about the planned street through their property, but that has nothing to do with the proposed amendments.

Commissioner Ambalada referred to a discussion she had in 2005 with a comptroller in the Snohomish County Assessor's Office who thought that the annexation would double the City's sales tax revenue.

### **Work Session**

1. Self-Storage Code Amendment (2011CAM0002). Amendments to LMC Title 21 regarding zones in which self-storage and similar land uses are permitted.

Planning Manager Garrett introduced John Bowler who is the lead planner on this item. Mr. Bowler recapped the status of this project. In this revision the draft ordinance includes proposed zones, conditions, hours of operation, and prohibited them in commercial zones. He stated that tonight's focus would be on design issues of self-service storage facilities. The City has project design review and city-wide *Design Guidelines*. He solicited the Planning Commission's thoughts on design regulations or guidelines they would like to see for these types of facilities. He introduced Mr. Stephen Bourne who is an architect with much experience designing this sort of facility.

Stephen Bourne, 11012 Sand Point Way NE, Seattle, WA 98125, gave a presentation regarding his experience with self-storage facilities. Mr. Bourne discussed how the design of self-service storage facilities has changed and evolved. He stated that it has been a misunderstood use because it has been unregulated for close to 20 years. He explained how other cities and jurisdictions have dealt with the design challenge for this type of facility and how the industry and architects have responded to what other cities have done. He showed examples of successful facilities around the country and discussed how Lynnwood can write a code to achieve the products they want. He recommended the following:

- A 2-4 story design. Smaller land parcels would require a higher FAR to achieve that.
- Require more use of glass in the design.
- Require high quality architecture.
- Attractive lobbies with a welcoming active front like retail.

- Make sure the covered loading areas are screened from street view.
- 60% of any typical self-storage is utilized by residential customers within 2-3 miles of the facility. Self-storage works really well in a buffer between intensive commercial arterial zones and the quiet residential zone. Once a facility is full, there will be less than 20 cars a day for even the largest facilities.
- Write design regulations to limit the amount of metal and require a certain percentage of glazing on every street frontage.
- Set FAR at 1.5 or 2 in order to force multi-story densities.
- Self-storage facilities must have visibility in order to be successful.
- Set maximum setbacks as well as minimum setbacks in order to establish an arterial pedestrian feel.
- Combine requirements for glazing and setbacks with certain use requirements (such as retail).

Mr. Bourne summarized that while there will be some in industrial zones, they should not be limited to just industrial zones. They are great buffer uses and compatible in multiple zones and with surrounding uses. There is a demonstrated demand for self-storage facilities in any residential community. Smaller land parcels plus higher densities is the most efficient land use.

Acting Chair Wojack thanked Mr. Bourne for an excellent presentation.

Commissioner Ambalada asked Mr. Bourne if he had spotted an ideal place for mixed use in Lynnwood. Mr. Bourne replied that he had been asked not to talk about any specific sites. He asked if the proposal now was that self-storage facilities would be prohibited in the City Center zones. Director Krauss explained that Council has not taken this up yet. He discussed the City's goals for this. Mr. Bourne agreed with staff's direction on this. He added that in Lynnwood the only appropriate zoning for storage in the City Center would be as part of a mixed use facility. Director Krauss explained that they were considering allowing them as no more than 20% of a larger building in the City Center area. Commissioner Ambalada stated that she envisioned this as a mixed use such as retail. Mr. Bourne commented that the synergies between different uses on-site work exceptionally well.

Commissioner AuBuchon thanked Mr. Bourne for the presentation. He referred to some of the background information the Planning Commission had received at the last meeting. He asked about requirements that some cities have that these buildings be made so they can be converted to other uses at some future point in time. Mr. Bourne replied that structural system that is the most economical to be used in this part of the country is not conducive to any other use. A requirement like Commissioner AuBuchon described would force the industry to completely change how they do things. He did not recommend that requirement.

Commissioner AuBuchon asked about the type of construction. Mr. Bourne replied that it is all metal, masonry, glass, and concrete Type 2B construction which is non-combustible. Commissioner AuBuchon asked about allowing tilt-up construction. He thought that this could be quite attractive. Mr. Bourne commented that they want to make sure they have other materials besides just metal. He suggested allowing for the contractor, designer, and owner to decide what kind of materials they use as long as they fit the City's design guidelines. If staff feels they could write the code in such a way that tilt-up would be attractive, they could do it. He did not recommend prohibiting this.

Commissioner AuBuchon asked about the idea of limiting colors in their design standards. There was discussion about limiting imagery in the City. Mr. Bourne summarized that he thought this would be a difficult battle to fight.

Commissioner Ambalada asked Mr. Bourne what he knows about recycled floors. Mr. Bourne replied that he has seen them from time to time, especially in conversions. He noted that they could encourage this in a "green code" where they require certain green points like Seattle does.

Acting Chair Wojack asked if they are required to have sprinklers. Mr. Bourne replied that they are. He added that single-story buildings sometimes get built adjacent to a multi-story building. Often that single-story building will fall below the IBC threshold for sprinklers. If that is a concern for Lynnwood, they would want to set a threshold and say that everything over a certain amount of square feet is required to be sprinkled. Staff indicated that was already done.

Acting Chair Wojack wondered about putting artwork on outside walls that are adjacent to residential areas. Mr. Bourne suggested mural-type work. Director Krauss suggested that a building with a lot of windows would be more attractive to a neighborhood anyway because it already looks residential.

Acting Chair Wojack wondered if the night lighting would be indirect. Mr. Bourne stated that close to a residential area he would require that all lights have to be shielded and all lights that are on the inside of buildings and that are adjacent to other buildings have to be indirect.

Acting Chair Wojack commented that he really liked the idea of internal loading zones. Mr. Bourne replied that this is very important because it hides the "messy" part of storage. He added that it is not very hard for a good designer to do. Acting Chair Wojack asked staff about incorporating landscaping into fencing. Mr. Bourne stated that in the current third generation model, fencing is high quality such as black rod iron (no chain link) and they use the building as the fence as much as possible. This alleviates the need to have a fence between the building and the property line. Mr. Bowler concurred with this and stated that they wanted to prohibit fences along the front of the building. He liked the idea of rod iron rather than chain link. Acting Chair Wojack concurred.

Acting Chair Wojack then referred to the *Draft Ordinance*, page 8, under *Use Regulations*, and asked Mr. Bowler if the units could be sublet. Mr. Bourne commented that they would want to regulate any commerce. Mr. Bowler agreed and stated that it is common in regulations from other cities that the units themselves cannot be used for anything except storage and the rental of the storage units. He noted there will be a retail element built in for the sale of boxes, packing materials, padlocks, etc. A retail operation associated with the facility and the office can be located on the ground floor front, but the units themselves have to be on the upper floors. He noted that they could put in a requirement that the retail use must be run by the facility. However, if they want the ground floor to be retail anyway this might be a moot point. Director Krauss commented on the importance of making sure that the building is appropriately designed for whatever the ultimate use is, but cautioned against over-regulating. Commissioner Braithwaite commented that the storage facility on 168<sup>th</sup> and Highway 99 has a retail building separate and in front of the main building.

Commissioner AuBuchon also referred the *Use Regulations* on page 8, he said he'd like to see something specifically prohibiting commodity foodstuffs because they might attract vermin. Mr. Bowler commented that they could add that. Mr. Bourne added that typically the self-storage ownership has a lease that specifies that those things are prohibited. Mr. Bowler agreed that well-run facilities wouldn't allow those things anyway, but they can't assume that they will have a well-run facility.

Commissioner AuBuchon asked Mr. Bourne about the load ratings on the floor. Mr. Bourne replied that they are 125 lbs per square foot compared to 60 or 70 pounds for an office. Commissioner AuBuchon thought that this might be too light. Mr. Bourne replied that he had never heard of an incident in any storage facility that has structurally failed at that poundage. He was very comfortable with that level.

Commissioner AuBuchon asked about Commissioner Larsen's previous question about the cost to the City of providing services to these facilities without receiving a tax stream. Director Krauss commented that a city that has zoning that was only designed to maximize revenues is not a city you'd want to live in. This type of facility helps to provide for a well-rounded community. These may not generate a lot of money, but they also don't generate a lot of service demand. Commissioner AuBuchon stated that they need to be concerned about what the cost is going to be to the City and what the return would be. Mr. Bowler referred to Mr. Bourne's suggestion from another city's code that limited the total square footage of self-storage in a certain zone to a certain percentage.

Commissioner Ambalada thought that self-storage would pay for itself in other ways. She thought that this would be a good investment and would be good for business relations.

Acting Chair Wojack asked about night time after-hours lighting. Mr. Bourne stated that they generally have site lighting that stays on. He recommended that if they are concerned about lighting they should include requirements regarding this. Mr. Bowler added that they have off-site glare requirements already in the *Design Guidelines*.

Commissioner AuBuchon asked if Mr. Pontak had been invited. Mr. Bowler commented that he had invited Mr. Bourne for the same purpose. Mr. Bourne added that Mr. Pontak is a finance specialist and would not necessarily be able to add a lot to this discussion.

Commissioner Braithwaite responded to policy questions that staff had proposed:

- Regarding taxes, he asked if there was much difference on property tax revenue to other types of uses. Mr. Bourne explained that they are very highly valued once they are full so the city will end up with substantial property tax on new facilities because of the density.
- He stated that he was not comfortable with limiting the square footage in the city. He thought that economics would be a sufficient regulator.
- Regarding appearance, he liked the pictures showing articulation of façade. Mr. Bowler noted that in the *Design Guidelines* there is a requirement for a certain minimum percentage of façade that has to be transparent. They can adjust this percentage if desired. Under the current regulations it is limited to just ground floor, but they have changed it so that a certain percentage of the façade must be used on each floor. Commissioner Braithwaite agreed with this as well as with articulation of the building so it does not look like a big box. Mr. Bowler noted that articulation is also included in the *Design Guidelines*. He pointed out that the City of Woodinville allows these in multi-family zones as a percentage of the floor area of a multi-family project. Another possibility is that they could be required to look more like residential than commercial facilities in multi-family zones. They could apply the multi-family guidelines to some of them.

Commissioner AuBuchon thought that they had already had a discussion about having storage in multi-family zones. He spoke in support of this. Staff indicated they would look into the subject.

Commissioner Ambalada stated that she would like to see a policy in mixed-use buildings that there could be mixed use in every floor, perhaps part of the floor for storage and part for office. She thought that this would be a big selling point. Mr. Bourne replied that bulk storage does occasionally happen in a mixed use kind of a function. He noted, however, with the bearing wall system the floor is subdivided in a 10-foot grid so you don't have big open expanses for warehouse-type functions. He brought up the subject of work lofts. The building he worked on next to the old Rainier Brewery is 9 stories high with half self-storage, half

work lofts, and a couple stories of parking inside. He commented that this has to be pre-planned into the facility because it would not just happen accidentally. Director Krauss stated that they would not necessarily be prohibiting this sort of development in the proposed code. The issue becomes more about cost for the developer since mixed-use developments have more stringent building code requirements. Mr. Bourne noted that some uses, such as retail, are not conducive to upper floors. Commissioner AuBuchon added that if they have too many businesses they would end up with parking issues. Mr. Bourne concurred and noted that parking becomes the driving factor with mixed use.

Councilmember Simmonds asked Mr. Bourne if there is a general formula for how many of these might survive with a given population base. Mr. Bourne replied that they have national and regional standards for density or per capita supply. Typically this runs anywhere from 5 to 10 feet of square foot of storage area per person in a three-mile ring. Councilmember Simmonds pointed out that in Seattle there are older facilities that have been reworked. If you started from scratch and built a new building, what else could the building be used for if the business failed? Mr. Bourne replied that these facilities are not convertible to much else, however, this use has become so engrained in our culture that he is confident that they will continue to store people's goods well into the future. He pointed out that Public Storage has 2200 facilities in US, Canada and Europe. He added that if a property is shut down they can demo the buildings fairly easily. Councilmember Simmonds commented that the driving force behind these kinds of facilities is consumerism. He wondered how they would fare in a bad economy. Mr. Bourne reported that in any community that held its unemployment within a couple tenths of what it was, the facilities stayed strong. The only place in this region that they saw a serious drop in occupancy was in the Puyallup valley where there was a low population density and there were a lot of very large storage projects. There is not a direct correlation between bad economies and bad self-storage operations.

Commissioner AuBuchon commented on older buildings in Lynnwood that might be conducive to this type of development and suggested Manor Hardware. Director Krauss commented on the poor condition of this building. Councilmember Simmonds added that this is a historic building.

Acting Chair Wojack stated that he likes the idea of allowing some of these in a multi-family setting using the residential design guidelines. Mr. Bowler indicated he would contact the City of Woodinville for their experience with this.

### **Commissioners' Comments**

Commissioner Ambalada remarked that she enjoyed reading the handbook for how to be an effective commissioner. She asked about the possibility of having a joint meeting with the Planning Commission and the City Council on certain aspects of projects. She thought this would be a good idea, especially for the

topic of City Center. Planning Manager Garrett noted that the Planning Commission was welcome to show up at the Council Work Session on Monday night, but it's not noticed as a joint session of the Planning Commission and Council. He commented that they have had joint meetings over the years. If that is an interest of the Planning Commission they can look into doing that. There was consensus of the Commission to pursue a possible joint City Council-Planning Commission Work Session on items of mutual concern.

Commissioner AuBuchon commented that staff has found itself in situations with the City Council where it would have been helpful to have a quorum of the Commission there. It might be helpful to have everyone in the room at the same time.

Commissioner Ambalada pointed out that as a planning commissioner, they don't know each of the elected officials' platforms and priorities. A joint meeting would help to facilitate communication.

Director Krauss commented that it has been common in the past for the Planning Commission to get together with the Council once a year or so to talk about joint concerns and policy directions. He thought that this would be very appropriate, but it is unlikely that it would happen for some period of time due to the Council's heavy agenda.

Commissioner Ambalada argued that this is exactly the climate when this type of meeting is needed.

Acting Chair Wojack commented that planning commissioners are always welcome to go to the Council work sessions. He has gone to some work sessions, sat with staff, and been invited to provide his perspective. Commissioner AuBuchon expressed concern about one commissioner sitting with staff and attempting to represent the Planning Commission. He stated that the Planning Commission requires four individuals. Acting Chair Wojack stated that he did not speak for the Planning Commission. Director Krauss commented that when planning commissioners have participated it has just been to answer a question about what they remember. He agreed that they have to be careful not to represent that as a Planning Commission position. Acting Chair Wojack added that when he spoke he clarified that he was only sharing his personal views.

Commissioner Ambalada commented that although she is a commissioner, she also feels a responsibility to represent those who are not usually heard. She stated that the reason she brought up the subject is to make sure that their energy and toil contributes to the betterment of the city. She felt that coming together with elected officials at a Work Session would further this objective.

## **Director's Report (continued)**

Planning Manager Garrett reviewed the upcoming meetings.

- August 25           Cancelled
- September 8        At the fire station public meeting room due to Lynnwood University. Continued Public Hearing on the City Center regulations.
- September 22       At the fire station public meeting room due to Lynnwood University.

Planning Manager Garrett then gave an update on the Outdoor Business Activities Code Amendment (2011CAM009). Staff has put together some draft regulations following the concept discussion at the last meeting. He distributed the draft regulations and discussed new provisions including shipping containers, outdoor dining and play yards and playgrounds. The rest of the edits are clarifications and non-substantive edits. The proposal is to not allow shipping containers except as part of a temporary special event, when they are located on top of a truck trailer (LMC 21.18), and at construction sites. This would not be any change from what is already done. Outdoor dining would be allowed in any zone where a restaurant is an allowed use with some conditions. He asked for input about the outdoor seating capacity. Play yard or playground regulations have been clarified to allow these outdoors at a school or daycare facility, particularly with regard to City Center.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

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Michael Wojack, Acting Chair