

## Tacoma Permit Advisory Group

### Hybrid meeting

Meeting #44 – April 19<sup>th</sup>, 2023 2:00pm

Advisory Group Members in attendance: Layne Alfonso, Clinton Brink, Michael R. Fast, Ben Ferguson, Jason Gano, Justin Goroch, Robert Laing, Ken Miller, John Wolters

Excused: Jim Dugan, Mandy McGill, Claude Remy

Absent:

#### **2:01 Welcome**

#### **2:02 Approval of Minutes**

Meeting #43 on March 15th, 2023

Justin Goroch has one amendment to the wording of paragraph one in the Discussion and Debate section. “The city has a unit lot subdivision code on the list, with the addition **currently not in place**”.

Layne moved. Justin seconded. No further discussion or objection. Motion approved.

#### **2:03 Public Comment**

No comments were provided by the public at this time.

#### **2:04 Quick updates: City staff new items of interest**

- Administrative updates:
  - TPAG Recruitment
    - [Tacoma Permit Advisory Group](#) will be starting another recruitment. [Media and Communications](#) are preparing for another news release goal on May 5<sup>th</sup> for one month. TPAG leadership will plan for June interviews. Current member slots available are affordable housing, healthcare, and four at large.
    - There is currently one application in the queue.
  - TPU Water Design update: Ryan Cox
    - Ryan Cox city staff joined to follow up on a discussion from February 2023 meeting regarding water main designs taking one year to process.
    - He reports that project coordination for several projects TPU works on can take over a year for permits to be approved.
    - Currently there are 36 private contracts for the City of Tacoma and Pierce County. 25% of those contracts are with the City of Tacoma. Previous years show 26 in 2020, 40 in 2021, and 46 in 2022. There have been adjustments internally to alter the city’s main projects and priorities for

private contracts. There was also a budget increase to add one more staff member.

- There are several steps that can hold up processing a permit. Currently, water review signs go out to the city for external review. Water main designs must be reviewed by the fire marshals, there has been a meeting with them to improve time efficiency. The fire department has hired an external contractor to get caught up so that the fire portion is not delayed.
- There is an initial meeting for projects so that everyone who will be incorporated in the project has initial hands on it and is aware the project is coming.
- Currently TPU has seven projects in the design queue. Design water main takes 12 weeks so projects usually take about 6 months.
- Justin Goroch would like to clarify if 6 months is the total from paid to done? Is that the goal?
  - Ryan Cox answers with TPU will be meeting with the master's builder association to get their timeline and then see what the city can provide as a reasonable goal. It used to be 4-5 months pre-pandemic.
- Ben Ferguson appreciates Ryan Cox following up from February's meeting and is pleased to hear concerns are being addressed and investigated.

## **2:11 Subcommittee reports**

- Design review – Ben Ferguson
  - No updates. Working with Planning Commission and no new information.
- Housing Bills - Ben Ferguson
  - Ben Ferguson - Olympia has completed voting on the housing bills. There were 4 or 5 bills that passed. Interested to hear about how the bills are going to affect Tacoma and when they will hit Tacoma. Will TPAG have opportunities for discussions prior to the changes? Happy about a lot of the new bills and could be a good topic for the future.
  - Jason Gano – With the state law that was passed to get rid of design review boards will this be a concern for TPAG's design review subcommittee?
  - Clinton Brink – In regard to housing bill 1110 it addresses design review requirements – there will be a requirement for 4-6 units for residential zones. The current design review program is not for small home projects – it is meant for urban areas and larger projects.
  - Ted Richardson city staff states that house bill 1110 does allow jurisdictions to be grandfathered in so everything with Home In Tacoma (HIT) will not be superseded by this new bill.

- Home in Tacoma – Ben Ferguson & Claude Remy
  - Today’s discussion with City of Tacoma staff Elliott Barnett.
- Impact Fees – Mandy McGill
  - Mandy McGill was not in attendance. No further updates
- Outreach & recruitment – Jim Dugan
  - Jim Dugan was not in attendance. No further updates
- Sidewalk Policies & Recommendations – Justin Goroch and the committee
  - Very early beginnings of a voluntary fee in leu draft to bring to TPAG in the future.

**2:18 Title Two Updates – PowerPoint 1**

City Staff Chris Seaman presents on title two and three development code changes. The code adoption process flows from the national level and trickles down to the City of Tacoma. Within the city, codes are being moved, enhanced, increasing clarity, and some codes are going away. This happens on a three-year cycle. Washington State Building Code will be effective July 1<sup>st</sup>. The city cannot make drastic changes to the code that Washington state has put in place just small adjustments within reason.

- Electric vehicle charging infrastructure– as of July 1<sup>st</sup> developers now need to install electrical charging for 10% of the parking stalls. This is mandated by the code.
- Energy code- direction to be more efficient.
- Fire code- High-rise sprinkler retrofit requirement. There will be one year for the city to tell developments that need to retrofit and then the client has 10-12 years to make the changes.
- 2.02.015 Neighboring properties- you cannot use your neighbor’s property unless there is permission. Contractors can be violated if permissions are not in place.
- 2.02.207 Encroachments- can happen however there must be city permission prior to doing anything in the ROW.
- 2.02.275 Political sign code is being deleted. This was deemed a freedom of speech issue.
- 2.22.040 Off-site improvements- a building development that is accruing with the same thresholds for the curbs, sidewalk, gutters, etc.

Ben Ferguson will the city work with the developer to make the changes in situational circumstances?

Corey Newton states one main goal is to unify the code. There have been situations where one code has a requirement, and another code doesn’t mention it but just because it is not there doesn’t mean the requirement is not included in another section. City staff working to increase clarity with the codes.

Robert Laing would like clarity on political sign codes within HOA and other homeowner associations.

Chris Seaman answers that the city will not dictate the signs and associations will have their own guidelines.

Chris Seaman states currently, there is outreach ongoing with the ICC code hearing process. The next step is to go to the council on May 23<sup>rd</sup> with the ordinance date of July 1<sup>st</sup>.

Ben Ferguson requests for the energy code to be reviewed. He understands it cannot be changed but if there are reasonable expectations to be available to developers when the installation is more work, and the negatives outweigh the benefit goal for more efficient heating.

## **2:35 Home in Tacoma (phase 2)- PowerPoint 2**

Elliott Barnett will continue where we left off in March's TPAG meeting with the [Home in Tacoma \(HIT\)](#) priority list discussion. City Staff Ted Richardson is joining to have input on affordable and anti-displacement questions.

Elliott Barnett started with a status update- HIT has been in the standards and zoning development stage. The planning commission has put together a draft concept and maps. It will be brought to the public for review soon. The next planning commission meeting is tonight to discuss more zoning issues and talk about areas that are not a part of the middle housing. Also, there will be an introduction to bonusing for affordable housing- the idea is you could get more when there is some type of public benefit. Elliott Barnett welcomes anyone to attend the commission meeting tonight.

Ken Miller asks what is the sense of how HIT will be affected by housing bills 1110 and 1337?

Elliott Barnett explains they took that into consideration and were holding off a little for the final bills so that they can incorporate them into HIT. They are going to be doing a side-by-side comparison and note any changes needing to be addressed, for the policymakers.

Category: Affordability and anti-displacement, Slide 10.

### ❖ Topic 5: Refrain from incentivizing any particular unit size

- Ted Richardson explains this is under review for potential bonuses when contractors provide public benefits.
- Clinton Brink clarifies this topic was in relation to parking exceptions for units 450 sq ft and smaller which is incentivizing the building of smaller units and not providing incentives for unit sizes the city needs.
- Ben Ferguson states that no parking requirements in mixed-use centers drove developers to build only mixed-use projects. Let's incentivize people to build small units but not only 450 sq ft units.

- Clinton Brink adds this is not only regarding parking requirements for 450 sq ft units but also to address and allow no parking for larger ones as well.
- Justin Goroch voices that just because parking is not a requirement, does not mean developers won't put in parking. They will do what they think is going to sell or rent. Let the market dictate what will be bought or rented out.
- Ben Ferguson adds that we do want to be "Capitol Hill" where there is no parking anywhere. There should be more incentives when development is closer to transit because then there are options for the public.
- Elliott Barnett explains that parking requirements across the board are lessening or completely going away in residential areas. He likes the idea of locational bonuses such as transit.
- Ken Miller states that the Tacoma housing community has a lot of large units available, but the need is for housing for 1-2 people. There should be some conviction on areas and what size units to encourage.
- Ben Ferguson disagrees and states that it should be on the developer, not the city. So, the market is deciding what to build not for the city to incentivize specifics.
- Justin Goroch adds things change is not allowing for flexibility as the market changes would hinder development.
- Jason Gano agrees it's the zoning from the '60s and '70s that we are trying to fix now and flexibility with market changes is key.
- Ted Richardson notes they can target the production of affordable units, not the size.
- Ben Ferguson offers the idea if the developer has 10% of the building affordable then that benefits the public and then HIT can offer the developer to build an extra level as a bonus.
- Justin Goroch mentions that there is a base density- but with the bonus, they could allow more density or higher buildings and less parking. This can allow to have something developed vs nothing at all and developers move somewhere else with fewer restrictions.
- John Wolters explains the topic was aimed at leaving it up to market developers.
- Jason Gano states bill 1110 eliminates all parking requirements for middle housing.
- ❖ Topic 9: Guaranteed review timeline or applicant gets proportionate amount of permit fee back per day late
  - Clinton Brink explains that the goal would be to give back some compensation when the city takes longer than expected.
  - Layne Alfonso worries that with guaranteed review timelines things can get out of control. Just trying to establish regular consistency across the city would be more beneficial.

- Ben Ferguson states this was a law that was considered in Olympia. There is no accountability in some agencies however he feels that is not the case in Tacoma. Not in favor of this topic as it feels like not partnering with the city.
  - Jason Gano can they have a timeframe and then if it is not met they can start building anyways while the permit is still in review?
  - Ben Ferguson explains that it is the city's job to make developments safe. A potential idea could be a fast lane for repetitive developers. With consistency in design work, they can go in the fast lane because they have proven to take less review time.
  - Layne Alfonso agrees there must be a level of accountability but not punitive.
- ❖ Topic 14: Extend MFTE to smaller projects to incentivize infill and empower mom-and-pop developers
- Ted Richardson states that the MFTE minimum unit is currently 4 but TPAG is wanting to see this across Tacoma in smaller units.
  - Clinton Brink feels this would allow the city to help smaller projects. The more help the city can give the better.
  - Ken Miller states this could encourage home ownership as well.
  - Ben Ferguson agrees with Ken Miller. Why do we have it in the first place? Why not open it to all areas so different developers in different zones have the option?
  - Layne Alfonso opposes that the city has mid and high-commercial areas for a reason why should we extend it city wide?
  - Ben Ferguson states the 12-year program only being in the mix-use center does not allow incentives for the other ones that are not affordable. MFTE should be incentivized for affordable developments to be built everywhere.
  - Elliott Barnett states with HIT the MFTE is going to be extended from centers to multifamily areas, all mid-scale areas, and some options for neighborhood commercial areas later. Some state limitations for where MFTEs can be approved. He encourages this topic to be part of the discussion to include to the council.
- ❖ Topic 23: Create a down payment/construction financing assistance program for mom-and-pop owners to develop their yards
- Ted Richardson explains to construct a financing assistance program it could be part of an anti-displacement policy for individuals.
    - One option is to provide financing to low-income homeowners so they can build an additional unit on their property. This way the original homeowner cannot be displaced.
    - Another option is that if there is financing to a higher-income owner then the new unit has to have an affordability requirement so that whoever moves into this new unit will be someone in the affordability section, so they are not displaced.

- Clinton Brink feels it would be utilized more for anyone who wants to build not just specifically if you are trying to incentivize fill-in for homeowners in the backyard. The idea of providing financing, because it is so hard for them to get building loans, is a limited program but better than nothing.
- Ben Ferguson says something to consider for market rate people is a repayment program. With the portion of the rent they make they opt into a repayment program to refill the government funds.
- Ben Ferguson would like to add a unit lot subdivision as he feels it is the best thing we can do for affordability and anti-displacement. Allowing someone to sell a part of their property with an AUDU instead of just renting it out provides the option to buy.
- Ken Miller supports Ben Ferguson's point. Seattle, Bremerton, and parts of Pierce County have subdivisions and this is common in other jurisdictions.
- Clinton Brink states that the new house bill 1110 may also address it and allow it.

### **3:26 Future topics**

Reviewed the list:

- Solid Waste Collection & Development Projects
- Sidewalk Policies & Recommendations Subcommittee
- E-permits
- Process alignment: Commercial vs. Residential permits requirements
- TPAG Mission Statement
- Long Range Planning – update from city staff
- Urban Forestry team for presentation
- Pedestrian/Emergency Access DADU's

### **3:28 Final Comments**

Elliott Barnett will continue to discuss the package of initial draft proposals and soon concepts will be available to the public.

Ken Miller asks if any topics on the priority list are not worth discussion in regard to HIT? Elliott Barnett feels there is some version of each topic in the package already and that all topics are good to continue discussing.

### **3:29 Adjourn**