



MINUTES

(Approved on 2-3-2021)

MEETING: Special Meeting

DATE & TIME: Wednesday, January 13, 2021, 5:00 p.m.

PRESENT (virtually): Anna Petersen (Chair), Jeff McInnis (Vice-Chair), Carolyn Edmonds, Ryan Givens, David Horne, Christopher Karnes, Brett Santhuff, Andrew Strobel, Alyssa Torrez

ABSENT: N/A

A. CALL TO ORDER AND QUORUM CALL

Chair Petersen called the meeting to order at 5:01 p.m. A quorum was declared.

B. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda for the meeting was approved.

C. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Public comments were not accepted at the meeting.

Lihuang Wung, Planning Services Division, reported that seven written comments had been received and forwarded to the Commission. The comments were on file at the Department and also available on the Planning Commission webpage for review.

D. DISCUSSION ITEMS

1. Tideflats and Industrial Land Use Regulations – Listening Session

Stephen Atkinson, Planning Services Division, provided context for the project, covering the needs and targeted timeline. The format of the meeting was then explained, each group of panelists would take turn to provide comments and engage with the Commission.

- Panel 1: ENVIRONMENTAL AND HEALTH

Councilmember Annette Bryan, representing the Puyallup Tribe of Indians, stated the significance of the Tideflats area to the Tribe as it was their ancestral homeland. The uses being discussed for the area were inconsistent with the Tribe's way of life as protected under the Treaty of Medicine Creek, and would limit their ability to serve their people. Councilmember Bryan mentioned examples of projects and energy plants that the Tribe had objected in the past five years, to make a point for collaborative and inclusive discussion during the decision making process. She also explained the unsafe condition of people living in housing near facilities in the Tideflats area, exposed to negative environmental and health impacts. Furthermore, if a natural disaster were to happen to the high-risk facilities, they would affect the Tribe's ability to fish and thus their livelihood. Cumulative impact of these facilities had also not been studied. In 2019, the City and the Tribe declared a Climate Emergency Resolution; Councilmember Bryan urged the City to take bold actions in line with the declaration. Finally, she stated that the City had an obligation to consult with the Tribe for any major development in the area.

Lexi Brewer, Sustainable Tacoma Commission (STC), echoed the need to study cumulative impacts of uses in the Port, particularly the health impacts on vulnerable community in Tacoma. In the interest of time, Ms. Brewer would focus her comments on the air quality and climate change aspects. She stated that the STC generally supported the interim regulations for its intent of setting a baseline for industrial activities in the Tideflats. However, they felt the baseline had shifted through expansion of existing uses. She would like to impose a limit on the expansion. In consideration of the City's Climate Emergency Resolution in 2019 and the ongoing update of the Environmental Action Plan with likely more aggressive goals, expansion of existing uses and further investment in fossil fuels should be prevented to stay consistent with the City's policy. Ms. Brewer also offered specific facts to illustrate the impacts of climate change.

Melissa Mallott, Citizens for a Healthy Bay, articulated the importance and benefits of the City fulfilling its role in the climate crisis. The environment would be in catastrophic risk by 2050 if significant actions were not taken to cut greenhouse gases by half. She stated that the federal and state's regulatory systems were too lenient on both standard and information disclosure requirements of the fossil fuel industry. Tacoma was a targeted city for fossil fuel development. It was critical that the City took steps to protect its residents and lay groundwork for innovation solutions that would benefit everyone. Ms. Mallott suggested incentives for cleanup of contaminated sites and allowing only clean projects. In terms of policy, Ms. Mallott called for restriction of expansion of existing high-risk facilities, limit on the volume of products moving through the facilities, and requirement for better information disclosure.

The meeting was recessed at 5:41 p.m. and resumed at 5:44 p.m.

- Panel 2: NEIGHBORHOODS

Venus Dergan, South Tacoma Neighborhood Council, explained that the Tideflats Interim Regulations also applied to the South Tacoma Manufacturing and Industrial Center (MIC). The MIC was in the South Tacoma Groundwater Protection District, which sat above the aquifer system that supplied 40% of Tacoma's drinking water. The water could become contaminated if this area was zoned M-2 Heavy Industrial District. The Neighborhood Council was concerned with the zoning and heavy industry being allowed to build over the aquifer. Ms. Dergan asked the Commission to consider South Tacoma differently than the Tideflats area for its different geography and demographics.

Yvonne McCarty, North East Tacoma Neighborhood Council, provided personal background in connection to her work on the Neighborhood Council. She stated that being in a residential zoning area immediately adjacent to heavy industrial businesses, North East Tacoma residents had been severely affected, and listed some examples of those negative health impacts. Ms. McCarty proceeded to outline past actions by the City Council and the Planning Commission, in particular the removal of metal recycling from the list of restricted high-risk uses. She argued that metal recycling was a high-risk use. She also contended that existing businesses should not have been allowed to expand without limitation under the interim regulations. Ms. McCarty concluded her comment by making three suggestions: (1) putting metal recycling back on the list of high-risk uses, (2) placing a limit on growth of existing businesses, and (3) making those changes permanent until the completion of the subarea planning process.

Tom Ebenhoh, New Tacoma Neighborhood Council, commented that decisions made regarding the Tideflats area would have impacts on the entire City. After mentioning some positive developments in the Commencement Bay area, he stated a number of environmental concerns such as noise, smell, traffic congestion, etc. Mr. Ebenhoh also discussed the community vision for the area and the importance of responsible development. He indicated that the New Tacoma Neighborhood Council had a retreat coming up and would have more feedback to offer thereafter.

Commissioner Karnes encouraged the panelists to submit written statements following this meeting. Commissioner Strobel also had a question for Ms. Mallott about regulations implemented by other jurisdictions that she had referenced. Commissioner Givens asked Ms. McCarty about North East Tacoma residents' viewpoint on the moratorium of platting on the hill.

- Panel 3: PORT/ LABOR/ INDUSTRY

Andrew Troske, U.S. Oil and Refining (USO&R), stated that he and those at USO&R cared about the environment and shared the community's concerns. Brief background of the company was provided. USO&R had reduced greenhouse gas emission by 25% and complied with renewable fuel standards. Their projects aimed to reduce global greenhouse gas emission and stay ahead of the requirements. Mr. Troske indicated that land use regulations could address the issues of climate change by facilitating access to renewable fuels. While USO&R had made investment to lay the framework for clean fuel development, it was argued that they needed the flexibility in regulations to continue innovate and improve their existing facilities.

Eric Johnson, Port of Tacoma, explained the context of the State's Growth Management Act (GMA) and Shoreline Management Act (SMA) in relation to this regulation development process. It was crucial to protect the Port area from incompatible land uses, in turn protecting the function and viability of the Port maritime industrial services, the capital facilities and essential public services, and the habitat of shoreline area in the Commencement Bay. Mr. Johnson went on to elaborate on a series of proposals, similar to the current interim regulations, which the Port had compiled and submitted to the Commission. The aspects of equity and economic opportunities, in terms of jobs at the Port, were also touched on.

Jared Faker, ILWU Local 23, emphasized the advantage of having a major asset that was the deep water Port of Tacoma, adjacent to a major city and with seamless rail access to the interior of the country. The jobs associated with the Port depended on its ability to remain competitive and successful. It must be protected from encroachment of incompatible land uses. Mr. Faker agreed that there needed to be a buffer between the industrial and residential zones, in order for the Port to continue thriving and sustaining the good-paying local jobs.

Karen Zima, RoadOne IntermodaLogistics, provided information of revenues generated by the transportation logistic industry in the Port area, equating to the number of jobs supported by the industry. Additional information was offered to demonstrate that the Port played an essential role in the region's economy. Jobs associated with industries in the Port provided vast opportunities at various professional levels. Additionally, efforts to reduce carbon emission from freight trucks as part of the Northwest Ports Clean Air Strategy had been very successful. Other associated services had also been actively involved in the overall efforts. In conclusion, Ms. Zima wanted existing businesses to be allowed the possibility to expand and improve.

Commissioner Strobel asked Mr. Troske for further information pertaining to the USO&R's renewable operations, as well as their storage and types of jobs available. Directing towards Mr. Johnson, Commissioner Strobel wanted clarification on the conditional use permits option in the letter from the Port.

In closing, Mr. Atkinson thanked the panelists for their participation and informed the Commission of the discussion topics related to the subject of Tidelands and Industrial Land Use Regulations at the following meetings.

E. TOPICS OF THE UPCOMING MEETINGS

- 1) Agenda for January 20, 2021 meeting includes:
 - Tidelands and Industrial Land Use Regulations
 - Improvements to Commission's Operations and Procedures

F. COMMUNICATION ITEMS

The Commission acknowledged receipt of communication items on the agenda.

1) Status Reports by Commissioners

- Commissioner Karnes informed the Commission that a draft letter was being circulated among the Transit-Oriented Development Advisory Group, concerning recommendations for the Puyallup Avenue corridor design. Subsequently, the letter would be sent to the Transportation Commission for review.

G. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:20 p.m.

****These minutes are not a direct transcription of the meeting, but rather a brief capture. For full-length audio recording of the meeting, please visit:***

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