



MINUTES
(Approved 11-04-2020)

TIME: Wednesday, October 21, 2020, 5:00 p.m.

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

ABSENT: Carolyn Edmonds, Alyssa Torrez

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 AND MINUTES

The agenda for the meeting was approved. The minutes for the October 7, 2020, meeting were approved as submitted.

C. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Public comments were not accepted at the meeting. No written comments had been submitted previously as directed in the agenda notice.

D. DISCUSSION ITEMS

1. Environmental and Climate Action Planning Update

Kristin Lynett, Office of Environmental Policy and Sustainability, reviewed the five-year Environmental Action Plan (EAP) adopted in 2016, along with its highlights and lowlights. An overview of the Climate Emergency Resolution adopted by the City Council in December 2019 was also provided to explain how it would be incorporated into the upcoming environmental and climate justice planning. Ms. Lynett went on to present the scope of work for the update plan between September 2020 and September 2021 featuring both technical and community engagement elements, the plan phases, and the draft guiding principles.

In response to Commissioner Givens' question regarding helpful Land Use policy for the EAP, Ms. Lynett explained that transportation was the largest factor of carbon emission; policies pertaining to density and job creation that de-emphasize use of automobiles would be valuable. Commissioner Karnes asked about incorporating the EAP into the municipal Comprehensive Plan, and exploring carbon sequestration methods. Commissioner Strobel made a number of suggestions for the updated EAP. Chair Petersen would like the plan to be more proactive rather than reactive, and consider joining forces with other bodies in the region to make bigger impact.

2. 2020 Annual Amendment Package - Debriefing

Stephen Atkinson, Planning Services Division, reviewed the amendment process and the schedule for the next steps. This meeting served as a debriefing for the Public Hearing on October 7, 2020; and the Commission would be casting preliminary votes on whether to recommend the three (3) applications to the City Council for adoption. At the next meeting on November 4, 2020, the Commission would finalize their recommendation by approving the Findings of Fact and Recommendations Report and the Letter of Recommendation.

Larry Harala, Planning Services Division, presented a breakdown of this debriefing and proceeded to reviewing the “Heidelberg-Davis Site – Land Use Designation Change” application. He acknowledged that public comments received were primarily in opposition of the proposal.

Vice-Chair McInnis was concerned that the Land Use designation change would lead to a major loss of public space and potentially something undesirable in the future. He suggested including a requirement for public space in the future development of the site if the proposal was adopted. Commissioner Givens had concerns about the lack of text amendment to support the intended use of the designation and the incompatibility of the R-2 residential zoning in the area. He would like to suspend the discussion for further study to be done or until a master plan for proper rezoning could be put together. Commissioner Strobel raised a procedural question about extending this proposal into the 2021 annual amendment process. While Commissioner Santhuff would like to see development at the site and in the general area, he shared the concerns for loss of public space and uncertainty of what would be developed there. Chair Petersen commented she also had mixed feelings about the proposal. Metro Parks’ application had indicated that the baseball field was not well utilized due to drainage issues. Furthermore, the site was fenced and gated; so while being a public space, it was not truly accessible to the public.

In response to the Commission’s inquiry, Debbie Terwilleger, Metro Parks, explained that the baseball field had seen an increased use by elementary sport teams. She also mentioned the Letter of Intent approved by the City of Tacoma and Metro Parks before the outbreak of COVID-19. Brian Boudet, Planning Division Manager, asked about Metro Parks’ plan for relocation or replacement of the facilities at the park.

Vice-Chair McInnis was supportive of moving the proposal forward with a recommendation for a master plan. Commissioners Givens and Strobel concurred. Commissioner Horne commented in opposition of the proposal. Vice-Chair McInnis made a motion to forward the Comprehensive Plan amendment for the Heidelberg-Davis Site and associated properties onto the City Council, with a recommendation for adoption. Commissioner Strobel seconded the motion. It passed with six (6) supporting votes and one (1) opposing vote from Commissioner Horne.

The meeting was recessed at 6:32 p.m. and resumed at 6:37 p.m.

Mr. Harala provided an overview of the “View Sensitive Overlay District – Height Limit Change” application. There were approximately 70 comments received on the subject, mostly in support from the Narrowmoor neighborhood and some with suggested modifications. In response to public comments, Mr. Harala presented two (2) modifications to the proposal for the Commission’s consideration – one would remove Node 4 entirely and the other would exclude 5 lots in Node 2 from the consideration for height limit reduction from 25 to 20 feet.

Chair Petersen was opposed to approving this proposal, stating that she did not find it justified or equitable. Commissioners Strobel and Givens agreed with Chair Petersen and noted additional issues to reinforce their argument. Commissioner Santhuff acknowledged the Narrowmoor neighborhood for bringing the application forward and recognized that there was strong support to move forward the proposal in the comments received. He also mentioned the request to regulate vegetation from the public comments. Ultimately, Commissioner Santhuff expressed support for the proposal. Referring to Commissioner Santhuff’s comment on vegetation and the City’s consideration for tree canopy as well as environmental stewardship, Commissioner Karnes came to an opposite conclusion to not forward the proposal onto the City Council. Vice-Chair McInnis agreed with Commissioner Santhuff’s reasoning that the proposal should be considered for its strong support from the community; there was also the advantage of tax revenues generated from view properties. Commissioner Givens inquired about the possibility of applying the 20-foot overlay to only the uphill side of the area.

Commissioner Strobel made a motion to move forward the View Sensitive Overlay District – Height Limit Change to the City Council as “Not Recommended for Adoption.” Commissioner Karnes seconded the motion. It passed with five (5) votes in favor and two (2) votes in opposition (from Vice-Chair McInnis and Commissioner Santhuff).

Regarding the “Minor Plan and Code Amendments” application, Commissioner Strobel abstained from the discussion, because he had contributed to drafting one of the proposals contained in the application pertaining to the acknowledgement of the Puyallup Tribe of Indians. Lihuang Wung, Planning Services Division, reported to the Commission that no comments had been received in respect to this application. He reviewed the proposed amendments, noting a modification to Issue #31 “Nonconforming Rights Re-establishment” based on a request previously made by Commissioner Givens. The Commission accepted the modification. Vice-Chair McInnis moved to forward the application, as modified, to the City Council for adoption. Commissioner Givens seconded the motion. It passed with six (6) votes in favor and one (1) abstained.

E. TOPICS OF THE UPCOMING MEETING

- 1) Agenda for November 4, 2020 meeting includes:
 - 2020 Annual Amendment (Recommendations)
 - Urban Design Studio (Workshop)
- 2) Agenda for November 18, 2020 meeting includes:
 - Home In Tacoma Project (Workshop)

F. COMMUNICATION ITEMS

- 1) Mr. Boudet reported to the Commission of the following:
 - On October 13, 2020, the City Council renewed the six-month Tideflats Interim Regulations Extension. They also adopted an amendment requesting the Planning Commission to study and make recommendations for non-interim regulations by April 2021.
 - The City Council also adopted the Infill Pilot Program 2.0 on October 13, 2020. They doubled the size of the program, and provided directions to the Planning Commission to speed up and increase the scope of the Home In Tacoma project.
- 2) Lihuang Wung, Planning Services Division, informed the Commission that Sound Transit had extended their deadline for the Tacoma Dome Link Extension Project Online Open House to November 2, 2020.
- 3) Status Reports by Commissioners
 - Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Advisory Group – Commissioner Karnes provided a summary of the Urban Land Institute (ULI) report that had been presented at the TOD Advisory Group’s last meeting on October 19, 2020. The report emphasized the need to allocate land for affordable housing in Tacoma. There was also a presentation about the Tacoma Dome Link Extension station.
 - Housing Equity Taskforce – Commissioner Karnes reported that the engagement plan was in the works. The statement from the City Council regarding meeting the growth strategy would be taken into consideration. The taskforce would also meet with representatives from Seattle and Minneapolis to discuss their experience with similar issues.

G. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:36 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:*

http://www.cityoftacoma.org/government/committees_boards_commissions/planning_commission/agendas_and_minutes/