

SEQUIM PLANNING COMMISSION
Transit Center
190 West Cedar Street
Sequim, WA 98382
Tuesday, May 10, 2011

6:00 P.M. Special Meeting

SPECIAL MEETING:

I. CALL TO ORDER, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE & ROLL CALL:

Gardiner, Protze, Richmond, and Sterhan were present. Wendt was excused.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: April 5, 2011

MOTION by Sterhan to approve the minutes of April 5, 2011; second by Protze.
Unanimously approved.

III. ITEMS FROM THE PUBLIC NOT ALREADY ON THE AGENDA

Tim Arndt and Terry Peterson were given an oath by Deputy City Clerk Bobbie Usselman.

Burkett introduced Chris Hugo as the Planning Director who starts permanently Friday, May 12. He has been with the City of Sequim as Interim Planning Director for five weeks. He outlined important projects he will be working on for the City.

David Garlington, City Engineer and Asst. Public Works Director was also introduced. He previously worked with the Washington Department of Transportation in Port Angeles. He also previously worked for Bechtel. He will be the Public Works liaison for the Planning Commission. Burkett outlined projects he will be working on for the City.

Hugo presented certificates of appreciation to the Protze, Sterhan and Gardiner who were not able to attend the Volunteer Recognition Dinner.

IV. NEW BUSINESS:

A. Zoning Code Amendments

Hugo distributed draft amendments to Chapter 18 pertaining to zoning text amendments.

Chapter 18.88 is a correction that removes the prohibition of amending the zoning code only once a year.

Chapter 18.20 Purposes of Districts has more changes. In January the tables previously in the code were removed and now are described. It was an itemized list of allowed uses. He added a

new section, 18.20.015 Unlisted Uses - Similar Use Determination, that addresses proposed uses that are not listed that allowed the Planning Director to issue a decision. This takes out numerous references throughout the section.

The R-V Overlay zone was deleted mostly due to the new Downtown Plan.

Peterson asked if there was an appeal available. Hugo indicated there is.

V. OLD BUSINESS:

A. Downtown Plan

1. Presentation of Preliminary Draft, Mark Hinshaw, LMN Architects

Hugo introduced Mark Hinshaw from LMN Architects to give a presentation on the Downtown Plan.

Hinshaw indicated he represents a team of consultants that drafted the Downtown Plan with more than 200 citizen participants from Sequim. They rely on people who live here to educate them on what the local people want. Downtowns of small communities are fragile. You need to insure there is a healthy core to sustain the City.

We tried to keep the documents concise and brief to keep it simple. The objectives are that the downtown is the center of culture, commerce and civic life; new investment in buildings and businesses; build upon the natural assets; variety and quality of available goods and services; a clear, consistent message; and “stewards” of the liability and quality of life.

“Land use and intensity” policies include being compact and walkable; core surrounded by housing gateways; nearby neighborhoods with modest infill; mix of uses; public amenities; and appropriate scale, no more than 4 stories. You need to surround the core with housing. We are not talking high density, but infill within and around the core to enhance demand of services.

“Transportation” policies include improved east-west circulation; different street types, parking as a shared resource; bicycles and electric scooters and a possible future by-pass.

“Economic development” policies including retaining existing businesses; variety of restaurant and fresh food; programming of events and festivals; organizational efforts; investment in a new City Hall; unique, destination hotel; cinema; and a “Main Street” program.

“Community character” would include distinct entries; streetscapes; pedestrian-oriented features; design standards and prominent public buildings.

“Housing” would include moderately higher density and residential neighborhoods with modest infills.

“Capital facilities” would include major civic buildings in the core; highlight key intersections; Seal Street shared public space (woonerf); pedestrian routes and corridors; way finding system, and provide more public parking.

“Parks and recreation” would include Pioneer Park anchoring the east end of the downtown core; the park could connect to Etta Street; and re-design of Seal Street to create a woonerf.

“Utilities” would include replacement of under-sized utilities; stormwater management plan and reclaimed water system.

The plan concept has short, mid-term and long term strategies. You can do some things in the next 5 years, but some may take up to 20 years. No place can transform over night.

They have translated the policy ideas into zoning concepts including the Downtown Core and two mixed use areas. It is a small town, urban downtown.

They have also identified prohibited uses for downtown districts including adult entertainment; gas stations and car washes; half-way houses and rehabilitation centers; jails and other detention or correction facilities; kennels; manufacturing and fabrication; sales, leasing, servicing or repair of vehicles, unless done entirely within a structure; warehousing, including mini-storage. Additional uses prohibited in the downtown core and mixed use 1 districts including commercial uses with drive-through windows or service kiosks and outdoor storage of inventory, materials or supplies, unless behind a building or along an alley. Also residential use on the ground level in the downtown core will be prohibited.

Development intensity is recommended using a “floor area ratio” (FAR) concept. It is important to have a simple calculation for this.

If development incorporates certain amenities, the FAR may be increased through a discretionary review process intended to ensure that each amenity both satisfies its design criteria and serves the intended purpose in the proposed location. Minor amenities might be additional streetscape features; common courtyard or green; canopy over the public sidewalk; alley enhancements and upgraded materials on buildings. Mayor amenities may include exterior public space, public art or water feature; through-block pedestrian connection; structured parking and contribution to a cultural facility in the Sequim City Center.

The maximum building height would be 45 feet in the downtown core and 38 feet in the mixed use zones with specific setbacks.

There is a series of design standards and guidelines applicable to downtown. There would be building design standards. He outlined many ground level architectural features and criteria.

He reviewed the proposed zoning map that is not dramatically different from what we have now. They also have a conceptual transportation network.

Peterson said in the past there was more attention paid to affordable housing and asked if that was addressed in the plan. Hinshaw stated that is a topic that difficult to easily do. You can work with non-profit organizations or other funds that will work with a community for affordable housing. It is an important task to take on, but it is a city-wide effort. We have opened the door to affordable housing that you could enrich. Affordable housing is a whole other arena. The City would need to take that on as a project.

Protze said he has seen the ODT go further east and west but does not see the missing link completed in Sequim. Hinshaw doesn't recall that being brought up in the workshops.

Recess at 6:54 p.m.;

2. Public comments

Margarite Glover, 103 Pond Lane, appreciates the work that has been done. She has lived here 34 years. She is concerned that people come here to get away. She is concerned some of the pictures shown tonight look like the big city. She commented about the issues that will not allow Etta Street to go through. Some ideas are great but she wonders if they are practical. She has concerns about rebuilding homes so you can have businesses with dwelling units upstairs. She missed the zoning information but wonders if you can have a fruit stand. She appreciates the Planning Commission and hopes the energy goes from it to the Council. She has issues with high impact and utility fees so most people decide to live in the County.

Mike McAleer, 283 Fawn Lane, looks at this as what are the economics of making this work and has concerns. The developer that did cottage housing in Poulsbo or Bainbridge works in Sequim and could do the same thing. He would bring it in at about \$500,000 a unit. That doesn't compute with our demographics. The last time this presentation was given to Council a developer from Bellevue spoke and tried to do commercial on first floor with residential above, it would not be supported with Sequim's demographics. We can barely get \$.75/square foot on Washington Street. He is concerned there isn't an economic analysis that should be part of this. We have a great Chamber of Commerce here. In other communities that have Main Street, it is an expensive endeavor that competes for resources with our community organizations. The Chamber needs more financial support from the community and he doesn't feel we can support both. When the consultant provided us with his recommendation on affordable housing some months ago, Council put that on hold until the Downtown Plan was complete. It was supposed to tie

into it in the adjoining areas surrounding the Downtown Plan. As we move these recommendations forward, the results of the affordable housing study need to be brought in and incorporated in this. He studied this in the past and asked what you do with Maple and Alder Streets. We need incentives to redevelop whole city blocks. If you are going to do redevelopment you must go up. The 38' doesn't make it.

Bill O'Brien, 33 Williamson, owns the apartments at Cedar Court. They have battled over the use of Seal Street and the alley as things have grown. They have had handicapped people who have trouble getting to the bus stops. They appreciate the City improving sidewalks to help. His concern is the grand scheme of making a woonerf on Seal Street and wonders if it can be modified for access on both sides. He is working with the Zellmers and they together are the biggest property owners on Seal Street. They have not been contacted by the City to talk about the changes. When you are doing something that impacts economics and people's homes, they need to be taken into consideration. The property owners in that area will be the most impacted. He feels they should be considered more directly than just showing up at a meeting. He stated Fifth Avenue should be tied together with the bike paths. We need a bigger picture than just the core when you can tie Fifth with Washington and have traffic flow both ways.

Ron Fairclough, 153 W. Spruce, first discovered Sequim in 1957 and has lived here for 37 years. He is concerned about Seal Street, too, and the growth. He is upset with Council who seem to think Sequim is a prairie town. It is a town at the base of the mountains. He figured living here he could be sailing or in the mountains in 15 minutes. Other people who want to come here want to access the ocean and mountains. He feels Sequim could be a place for industry for companies like REI. We could have research here. He doesn't like people who come here now and don't want things to change. He wants downtown involved with the people. We need a place where people gather. We need to change from driving your car to get to everywhere. He suggests reading a book by Mr. Gruen. He stated Hinshaw has a book, too. We need to read this literature so we are all on the same page. Council is pulling against each other. We need to study the same material.

Burkett commented about affordable housing task force that put together a study on affordable housing needs. It can be integrated into the Downtown Plan. The evaluation has already been done.

Hugo distributed comments from Jon Wendt.

3. Set May 17 for deliberations and Commission recommendation

Hugo indicated at the May 17 meeting we will again discuss the Downtown Plan and make a recommendation to Council.

VI. ITEMS FROM COMMISSIONERS/COMMITTEE REPORTS

VII. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

A. Update on Planning Director selection process

Hugo indicated the City Manager already advised of this. He stated there are potential candidates for the planner position.

The City is offering an opportunity for the Planning Commission to have training from Carol Morris, a land use attorney. She is very knowledgeable on land use actions. We'll send out a notice to let you know when it will be in mid-June or July.

VIII. GOOD OF THE ORDER

IX. ADJOURNMENT:

MOTION by Peterson to adjourn; second by Richmond. **Unanimous.**

Meeting adjourned at 7:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Bobbie Usselman, CMC
Deputy City Clerk



Julie Anna Gardiner
Chair

Next regular meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, May 17, 2011.