

SEQUIM PLANNING COMMISSION

Transit Center
190 West Cedar Street
Sequim, WA 98382
Tuesday, June 7, 2011

6:00 P.M. Regular Meeting

Meeting Agenda:

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

Gardiner, Peterson, Protze, Sterhan and Wendt were present. Arndt was absent; Sanford (previously Richmond) was excused.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: May 10 and May 17, 2011

MOTION to approve minutes of May 10 and May 17, 2011 by Sterhan; second by Protze. **Unanimous.**

III. ITEMS FROM THE PUBLIC NOT ALREADY ON THE AGENDA - None

IV. NEW BUSINESS: - None

V. OLD BUSINESS:

A. Downtown Plan

1. Continue deliberations on Plan – Section V. Land Use Regulations

Gardiner likes the prohibited uses category on the Land Use tables.

On downtown uses, Peterson is concerned about the disconnect between increasing the residential density and the prohibition of ground level residential. He feels the market will justify ground level residential use off of Washington if impact fees were adjusted and zero lot line allowed. He would like to see the restriction removed completely and let the market determine whether a specific property warrants higher density housing or commercial use. This is a better way to encourage higher density, therefore more affordable housing in addition to conventional affordable housing programs. Additionally, another way to encourage downtown residential is to add development bonuses for those who do choose to build commercial down and residential up. Under the prohibited uses, the prohibition against drive-thru windows or service kiosks in the downtown core in Mixed-use 1 districts not only affects coffee stands, but banks as well. Those uses should be regulated on a case-by-case basis according to traffic flow and safety concerns, not prohibited outright.

Wendt commented under 18.57.010 in downtown Mixed-use 1 districts, “auto-oriented uses would gradually disappear, sidewalk-fronting buildings would predominate, and visible surface parking lots would be replaced with parking behind buildings or within structures,” he feels those words are the key to making this plan work. Up until now we have been very successful in building a town for cars, and on Washington there is hardly room for people to sit on benches or enjoy outdoor dining. Auto uses predominate. If we want to have a vibrant, vital downtown, we have to build a place for people rather than cars. Also the surface parking will be replaced with parking behind buildings. Surface parking lots are economically unproductive. They don’t generate any useful income. The proper place for parking is in structures. We have a good opportunity with construction of the new city hall to look at incorporating structure parking as part of that building. He feels it is within the scope of local government to provide a utility like parking, the same as it provides streets, water and sewer. Structure parking at city hall would be within easy walking distance to downtown and we could get rid of some of the parking downtown or open it up for use such as outdoor dining, pedestrian benches, bicycling, etc. Merchants think if you park in front of their store, then you have a customer. That is true to have “a” customer. If you walk, you walk past numerous stores and you may shop in 2 or 3 of those. It is similar to what Costco does – they rotate stock to make you walk around the store to see more product. The same principle applies to walking instead of parking in front of a store. He encourages using those words above in 18.57.010, and the principle that they stand for.

Hugo said it will be important that there is consensus viewpoint as a recommendation is formed. Hugo stated staff will not be supportive of the first two comments above. He will make arguments against them. However, he will recommend the Commission’s statements as given.

Gardiner stated in 18.57.030 she likes the concept of bonuses as it works well. She likes the brevity of it.

Peterson stated in 18.57.040 rather than giving a FAR bonus for individual works of art or water features, he would prefer a contribution to a water work/art fund designed to promote our irrigation heritage. Perhaps this could be a long-term goal for the development of the northeast corner of Sequim Avenue and Washington Street. He has a vision of what the community could take pride in that represents our heritage in our irrigation past, instead of individual art around town. That would be under major amenities 2. It doesn’t mean they can’t do something on their own, but a collective effort would be more effective. He would prefer the verbiage of #2 be similar to #5.

18.57.050, maximum building height allows 10 feet more than the current code. There are no objections to the building height change.

Concerning 18.57.060, Peterson stated the setback lines don’t take into account line of sight issues in intersections, nor do they allow for variety of appearance and function that helps retain the small town feel. Discussion pursued on the Clallam Title Building

causing vision issues for vehicles. Peterson feels not all buildings should be exactly the same. Gardiner agrees with Peterson's comments concerning intersections but not for the entire length of the street.

There was discussion concerning setback lines in the past and currently in downtowns. Hugo stated he will not support this suggestion. Hugo stated if we would look at redesigning an intersection that would be a design element of it. There is social argument about prime intersections not having zero setbacks.

For 18.57.070 Parking Standards, Peterson commented that senior housing age of 62 is not as typical as 55 for a retiree age. In most housing areas here 55 is the age limit, not 62. Hugo stated the lower you make the limit, the more risk you are putting the demand on the street. Gardiner suggested 1.5 spaces for one-bedroom or greater. Hugo stated 1.5 is the standard for the City. Peterson suggested 1 space for one-bedroom and 1.5 for larger.

Peterson brought up the issue of parking in downtown. Gardiner stated there are 287 public parking places in the downtown core per Joe Irvin. The need may not be as great as the perception of the need. There was general discussion concerning parking. There was agreement the Director could reduce shared parking requirements to allow 20% bonus.

18.57.080 Design Standards and Guidelines Applicable to Downtown. Wendt stated the illustration shows scrubs beneath the trees but they are not identified as to how many. He suggests one tree plus a certain number of shrubs. Protze feels lavender should be used since it is the lavender capital of the US. Hugo suggests in the future we may want to come up with a suggested planting list for such uses.

Hugo stated the Design Review Board (DRB) also discussed the Downtown Plan. It was suggested a photometric plan that shows the site, parking area, building flood lighting and shows where fixtures are and cutoffs of the shades are to show how the lights perform on the site. It also shows foot-candle specifications. Gardiner supports that concept. Hugo said it will not be added here, but for the overall zoning code.

Peterson stated none of these guidelines address parking structures. He feels you need more lights in a structure. Hugo feels it is a good point. The DRB has guidelines for city-wide, but for downtown this is what will be the guide and rules. Hugo will ask LMN. Peterson said to have a functional parking structure it could encompass a city block. Hugo said LMN needs to be consulted on this topic. Wendt suggests it include retail on the first level. Peterson suggests if that is the case the developer should get some kind of break.

Regarding curb cuts, Wendt suggested small businesses sharing curb cuts, and whether businesses should get a density bonus for that. Hugo said all of the FAR bonuses are

called amenities. He will have to think of where that would go and try to come up with something.

There were no comments on sidewalk/frontage improvements. Hugo said the DRB noted 30' minimum spacing would suggest you could do it 100', 500' or a mile. They felt it should be maximum spacing, no more than 30'. You need to have species that don't overwhelm the street. There was consensus "minimum" should be "maximum."

On screening of trash areas, Sterhan felt a wood enclosure could deteriorate over time. Hugo feels there will be peer pressure if areas are not maintained.

18.57.080B Building Design. Peterson feels the building design standards are too restrictive. It is up to the building developer to decide whether he wants windows on the street or not, based on their intended use. A restaurant may want street exposure, or it may want a private and exclusive environment. Offices may or may not wish to have street exposure. This is rightly a market decision. The architectural features list is a formula for making the downtown buildings over time look different but really all the same instead of a uniquely, small town, eclectic collection of buildings and uses, and will look like every other large suburban commercial center. He believes this limits the abilities of the average small business owner to succeed and will limit most future development to larger, deeper pocket investors. We need to do what we can within reason to encourage and help existing and future small businesses to grow and survive in our community.

Gardiner feels one of the key elements of ground level transparency is to provide pedestrian security or eyes on the street, a self-policing action, within a society. When you start putting up solid walls you become blind. The more you have, the less safe the environment is, especially after 5:00.

There was general discussion concerning window treatments. There was not consensus with Peterson's comments. There was consensus with the language about safety by Gardiner regarding ground level transparency, the purpose of eyes on the street is a primary concern with the 75% and it provides natural self-policing in a social environment that we do not want to lose.

Ground level architectural features. Hugo stated the DRB was concerned about 2b and suggested adding point values to each feature where a canopy might be worth 10 where a flower basket is worth 2. Gardiner feels Peterson's points about the private sector are appropriate here, namely depending on the nature of the business whether it can afford these features. LMN suggests to merely try to balance it out by adding floral baskets and planters to the same item. Hugo supports that. Gardiner does not like the point system.

Peterson indicated 2a requires a canopy or awning and it is also shown in 2b. Hugo feels we need some thresholds of whether different features kick in for redevelopment. It was agreed 2b needs to have thresholds as to when they kick in. Hugo will work on that.

There was discussion of a plinth, a decorative footing on a door. It should be illustrated. The kick-plate illustration should be corrected.

Sterhan suggested separating out building items and street items in the list, or combining the street items. It was agreed pedestrian seating option should be added to the list. Other regulations must be maintained such as ADA.

2c. Treatment of blank walls. Hugo stated DRB recommends changing the 50' to 30'. Gardiner does not want to see 50' blank walls, even if 30' is covered with vegetation. The Commission has consensus to change 50' to 30'.

2e. Sterhan feels painted concrete block should be allowed. Hugo stated these restrictions are only on the pedestrian side of the building and is unclear here and will be fixed.

4. Roofline. Peterson questioned the pitch of the roofs. Hugo said DRB talked about this, too. When you get to a 4 and 12 you have a residential-type roof. They are trying to make it characteristically urban and dramatic. It is a matter of aesthetics. Shown are 12 and 12 roofs. If you drop below 6 and 12 it goes away. It will not limit the construction ability. There was discussion concerning construction.

5. Screening Rooftop Mechanical Equipment. Sterhan asked about setbacks of screening and material specification. Hugo said it would have to meet the setback of any other wall, and it would have to meet architectural requirements.

C. Sign Design. Hugo said the sandwich board is being addressed by Council at this time with the new sign code. Hugo stated C1 should state "Pole signs shall not be allowed in these three districts," not two districts. The bottom example of projecting signs is not currently allowed. We are proposing to change it.

Zoning Map. Gardiner stated in the past we reviewed the city center and about how the core was defined. Hugo said the frame of the downtown core is projected to 20 years out. The district is defined to give it the most energy over the next 20 years, especially for more residential downtown. There was general discussion about the market for first floor residential. Peterson proposes houses in the future commercial areas, rather than property owner renting it has only one option now retaining as a rental or in future convert to usable commercial with tenant and tenants upstairs. When you take away the option of renting downstairs space it isn't economically viable. If we are able to build ground level as residential plus units upstairs, it gives property owner option, the City has more people living in the core. We should encourage that rather than discourage it.

Street typology map. Hugo gave a history of the ODT missing link. We will be redoing the Transportation Master Plan (TMP) starting this year and it will be multi-modal. We will make sure we have a good final route. We can make a commitment the ODT route is

handled there. We need to stay something in this document it should be addressed with the TMP. Hugo will find a place to comment in the draft.

Protze suggested bicycle racks downtown. Hugo stated that is coming this summer.

Recommendations were generally discussed again and agreed as follows:

1. Housing on the second floor vs. living in rear or store or rear lot secondary buildings as residential. Some structures are not suitable for second floors.
2. The northeast corner of Washington Street and Sequim Avenue be acquired as a sister park to the southeast corner.
3. Complete the ODT missing link through the TMP.
4. Drive-thru businesses not allowed in DC, but allowed in mixed-use.
5. In 18.57.020, make B2 verbiage the same as B5.
6. In 18.57.060, in DC only 5 feet setback on intersections needs to be larger due to safety issues. (Example: Clallam Title – Second and Washington)
7. In 18.57.080, scrubs planted at sufficient densities.
8. In 18.57.080, making a shared curb cut a minor amenity.
9. In 18.57.080B, add language about safety regarding ground level transparency: the purpose of eyes on the street is a primary concern with the 75% window treatment and it provides natural self-policing in a socially dynamic environment.
10. In 18.57.080B2, fix the illustration for kick-plate and add “plinth.”
11. In 18.57.080B2c, reduce the wall distance from 50’ to 30’.
12. In 18.57.080B2e, limit it to pedestrian street frontage, not side and rear.
13. In 18.57.080C, allow projecting signs.
14. Street Typology Map – include ODT missing link in Transportation Master Plan.

Hugo will talk to LMN about parking structures and lighting, landscaping, and ground floor retail and parking. Hugo will advise the commissioners by email.

2. Public comments - None

3. Make recommendation to City Council

MOTION that the Planning Commission recommend to City Council the Downtown Plan as presented with the above changes discussed tonight by Wendt; second by Sterhan. **Unanimous.**

VI. ITEMS FROM COMMISSIONERS/COMMITTEE REPORTS - None

VII. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

A. Update on Senior Planner selection process

Hugo reported two candidates were interviewed today. Both were 20+ year planners. There was concern about a long term commitment. He may make an offer to one for a shorter term and continue looking.

B. Ad hoc code amendment packages on the horizon

Hugo stated you will be receiving code amendment packages to review in the future and described a few issues.

C. Volunteers for Comp Plan Update Steering Committee

The Comp Plan Steering Committee is looking for two members from the Planning Commission. He described the purpose of the committee, being a monitoring committee that won't deal with the substance of the plan but will be the gate-keepers of how the public input is designed and managed in the process, and will control when the progress is satisfactory and appropriate to go to the next step in the work program. The committee will meet 6-12 times over the course of the process. Staff will bring to them the major draft components of what will constitute the milestones of the process. When the committee agrees with the milestone, it will come to Planning Commission and then to Council for approval of the process. It is a critical function in terms of the efficacy of the process and can use good people in the committee.

Commissioners will think about who to appoint or volunteer for the next meeting.

VIII. GOOD OF THE ORDER

IX. ADJOURNMENT:

MOTION to adjourn by Peterson. Unanimous.

Meeting adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,


Bobbie Usselman, CMC
Deputy City Clerk


Julie Anna Gardiner
Chair

Next regular meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, June 21, 2011.