

PLANNING BOARD MINUTES

December 11, 2002

Chair Dewhirst called the regular meeting of the Planning Board to order at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers, Public Safety Complex, 250 – 5th Avenue North.

PRESENT

John Dewhirst, Chair
Jim Crim, Vice Chair
Cary Guenther
Janice Freeman
James Young
Wayne Zhan
Ronald Hopkins

ABSENT

Virginia Cassutt

STAFF PRESENT

Rob Chave, Planning Division Manager

Ms. Cassutt was excused from the meeting.

Board Member Dewhirst welcomed Mr. Ronald Hopkins as the new Planning Board Member

READING/APPROVAL OF MINUTES

BOARD MEMBER CRIM MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 13, 2002 AS CORRECTED. BOARD MEMBER YOUNG SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 20, 2002 WAS POSTPONED TO THE NEXT MEETING.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF AGENDA

Board Member Dewhirst advised that the discussion regarding the Comprehensive Plan would be postponed to the next meeting.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

BOARD MEMBER YOUNG NOMINATED BOARD MEMBER CRIM AS THE CHAIR OF THE PLANNING BOARD. AFTER CLOSING THE NOMINATIONS, THE BOARD UNANIMOUSLY APPOINTED BOARD MEMBER CRIM AS THE CHAIR.

BOARD MEMBER FREEMAN NOMINATED BOARD MEMBER YOUNG AS THE VICE CHAIR OF THE PLANNING BOARD. AFTER CLOSING NOMINATIONS, THE BOARD UNANIMOUSLY APPOINTED BOARD MEMBER YOUNG AS THE VICE CHAIR.

REQUESTS FROM THE AUDIENCE

There was no one in the audience who desired to address the Board during this portion of the meeting.

WORK SESSION ON RECOMMENDATION TO THE CITY COUNCIL ON REASONABLE MEASURES RELATED TO BIULDABLE LANDS

Mr. Chave said he attempted to capture the Board's previous discussions on reasonable measures and buildable lands in the draft memorandum that was provided in the Board's packets. He asked that the Board discuss the memorandum and determine whether or not it meets the intent of their previous discussions. He said he also included a memorandum that was forwarded to Snohomish County and the Puget Sound Regional Council concerning population employment projections, etc. He advised that during the next two years there will be a lot of discussion around the region, and especially in Snohomish County, related to population and growth targets. It is important that the City is prepared to provide input at every juncture.

Board Member Dewhirst said the memorandum from staff appears to capture the essence of most of what the Board discussed. The one thing missing is related to SEPA Planned Actions. Mr. Chave agreed that the Board had asked to include this, and noted that SEPA Planned Actions are very much related to Number 4.

Board Member Crim referred to the list of measures the City has already taken. He said he was not clear about what the second bulleted item relates to. Mr. Chave said this refers to things like the transportation plan. The intent is to target investments and capital improvements, etc. to make sure that capacity is maintained in the City. He clarified that references to capital facilities are related to publicly funded capital facilities. He suggested that more detail could be added to this item to further describe the intent. The Board agreed this would be helpful. Mr. Chave said that transportation is an important example because there are places in Snohomish County where there is a moratorium on development because the road system is not up to standard. It is important for the City to try to reach their capacity while maintaining their important capital facilities.

Board Member Young inquired how the second bulleted item is different than the mandate in the Growth Management Act that the capital improvement program be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. He said this appears to be a statement in support of what the City is already required to do. Mr. Chave answered that Snohomish County is one example where they don't have the funding to maintain their standards, and this has an impact on development. It is not automatic that a jurisdiction can maintain their standards over time. They still have to come up with the funding. While it is supposed to be done under the Growth Management Act, it is not always successful. So far the City of Edmonds has been successful in this effort.

Board Member Young suggested that perhaps there is a more politically palatable way to rephrase this item. He suggested that it be changed to something like "Public facility capital investments shall be targeted to support anticipated growth." Board Member Crim said that while this is a duplicate of the Growth Management Act requirement, the intent of this item is to point out that the City has already targeted capital facility improvements to improve capacity. The Board agreed to the change proposed by Board Member Young.

Board Member Freeman referred to Reasonable Measure 5, and noted that the term "affordable housing" is used. She suggested that the word "affordable" has certain connotations that make people sort of shudder. She questioned if there is a way to change this term without changing the intent. Board Member Dewhirst suggested that the word "affordable" be replaced with the words "market rate." Board Member Freeman agreed that this would be a better choice of words. She said she has stated in the past her belief that people should be able to stay in their own neighborhoods when they are ready to move from their larger homes. The price of condominiums has risen significantly and has not been replaced with units that these people can afford. Board Member Crim suggested that the word "affordable" be dropped from the last sentence. The remainder of the Board agreed. They also agreed that the words "not affordable to most people living in the area" should be added to the first sentence, as well.

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Board Member Dewhirst reminded the Board that their recommendation to the Council is intended to identify the issues that the Board feels should be considered. The Board is not, at this time, agreeing with any or all of the items on the list. If the Council agrees with the Board's recommendation, each item will be scheduled on the Board's agenda next year.

Board Member Young referred to Reasonable Measure 1 regarding lot size rounding. He noted that the Board agreed to do away with the concept of lot size rounding in PRD's. Mr. Dewhirst said he spoke with the attorney about this issue, and his answer was that if the opportunity for lot size rounding is available to everyone in the zoning district, it can be allowed for PRD's, as well. Board Member Young suggested that issues will be raised regarding this concept, and it is important that it is applied consistently. He said that perhaps Reasonable Measure 1 could be rephrased to "allow flexibility in lot sizing to provide for infill development of otherwise non-conforming lots." Some explanation should be provided to state that the Board's discussion on buildable lands indicates that sometimes infill development cannot occur because of very minimal discrepancies in otherwise available lot sizes. He noted that in the Board's packet is a letter from a concerned citizen about lot size rounding being used as a tool. This citizen's question was related to how the review and application of lot size rounding would be done. It should be made clear that this concept would still be the exception rather than the rule, and that it is not the Board's intent to allow subdivision developments to use the lot size rounding concept as a way to get an extra lot into a development.

Board Member Guenther suggested that they should allow lot size rounding, but they need to make qualifications requiring developers to go through certain steps before lot size rounding is allowed. Not everyone should automatically qualify for lot size rounding.

Board Member Crim referred to a letter the Board received from a concerned citizen related to a lot on Holly Street. If this lot were to be divided into two lots, one would have access off of Sixth Avenue, and the other would have access off of Holly. Therefore, the traffic impact on Holly would be the same as for a single-family residence. However, rather than discussing all of the details of each of the options now, he reminded the Board that the intent of their recommendation is to seek input from the City Council about which options they would like them to pursue further. Board Member Young agreed, but suggested that clarification on each item needs to be provided. Perhaps this would eliminate some of the concerns raised by the public and the City Council. He said the recommendation to the Council should indicate that lot size rounding would only be allowed in selective situations to otherwise non-conforming lots.

Board Member Dewhirst pointed out that these situations are not, technically, non-conforming lots. Most of them have homes on them now. The issue comes in because they are just a very short measurement away from being large enough for a second house on the lot. Board Member Crim suggested that Reasonable Measure 1 be changed to read "lot size rounding would be allowed in selective cases to provide for infill development." Mr. Chave suggested that an additional sentence be added to the end of the paragraph to state "Criteria would need to be developed to identify when this could be done." The Board agreed to both changes.

Mr. Chave said the City Attorney would likely have some cautions regarding the need to be fair in applying the lot size rounding concept equally amongst the selected zoning classifications. Mr. Chave said he would make the changes recommended by the Board and provide a new draft by Friday, December 20, 2002. If he does not hear from any of the Board members within a week, he would forward the recommendation to the City Council.

WORK SESSION ON THE POTENTIAL PRD AMENDMENTS

Mr. Chave reported that the City Attorney has been unable to draft new language to follow up on the Board's last meeting on November 20, 2002. He is working on this project, but has not yet indicated a date for completion. This could be ready for the Board's review a week before the January 8, 2003 meeting, and should be scheduled as a discussion item on the January 8 meeting agenda.

Board Member Dewhirst reported that Mayor Haakenson has requested that the Board's recommendation related to the PRD ordinance be forwarded to the City Council as soon as possible. They have been directed to hold a public hearing, which he would like to schedule for the second meeting in January. This would allow them to take public testimony, and then the

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Board could send a recommendation to the City Council very soon thereafter. Mr. Chave said the staff would advertise the public hearing for the second meeting in January based on what the Board has already talked about.

Mr. Chave advised that the staff had intended to have a computer set up to show the Board some GIS maps and so forth to get their ideas started. Unfortunately, the computer is not working at this time. He referred to the second page of his memorandum which identifies the types of things that the new GIS system can illustrate. For instance it can identify all of the non-conforming lots in the residential zones. The Board would have the ability to ask for very specific information such as showing the lots that are between 10,000 and 12,000 square feet. The purpose of demonstrating the system is to show what can be done, but also for the Board to indicate the types of questions they would like to have answered related to both the PRD ordinance and the Comprehensive Plan amendment process. It is important to understand the lay of the land when discussing these types of issues. Mr. Chave said the demonstration would be provided by staff the first meeting in January. He said that if there are any particular things the Board would like them to generate for the demonstration, they could identify those tonight.

Board Member Guenther said that in previous discussions it has been mentioned that most of the undeveloped infill lots have critical areas. Perhaps these critical areas could be identified on a map. Mr. Chave said they could show a combination of lots and then identify the known critical areas. However, the problem is that the City does not have a comprehensive inventory showing where the critical areas are. As developers do the critical areas checklist, site specific investigations are done. The critical areas database is incomplete at this time.

Board Member Freeman asked that a map be created to identify where lots are available for development through a legal subdivision. For example, it could identify properties that are large enough to subdivide into two lots. This would enable them to pinpoint where there is land for possible development or redevelopment under the current zoning. Mr. Chave said this type of information could be shown on a map.

Board Member Dewhirst inquired if it is possible to identify the areas in the City that do not have sewers or have sub-sized sewers. Mr. Chave said that is not something that is currently in the GIS system at this point. He said he could find out from the Engineering Department whether or not they have that kind of information.

Board Member Freeman inquired if the color differentials on the maps could be adjusted by the staff. She said she finds it hard to separate the color differentials on the large maps that the City currently has. Mr. Chave said he has heard comments that some of the colors are a little too close to the same. Also, Board Member Freeman said the street names on the large map are much too small and only occur once on the map, even for long streets.

Board Member Dewhirst said there are several areas where the existing land use map is currently a bubble, which can be open to all kinds of interpretation. He said he sees these as the toughest areas the Board will have to deal with. He questioned if they can get a land use breakdown for the bubble areas, parcel-by-parcel, to identify the actual use today. This would give the Board more ability to avoid problems in the future, and would be an incredibly valuable tool for both the Board and the City Council. Mr. Chave said the concern is exactly how much information you can show on the map without it getting overly complex. This type of information could be provided for specific locations identified by the Board. The challenge will be at the staff level in trying to compare zoning to land use in these locations.

Board Member Dewhirst said one thing that seems to be missing is a process for reviewing the Comprehensive Plan Map. Will the Board entertain requests from the public that certain areas be changed, or will the Board merely be translating the bubble map to a specific boundary map? Mr. Chave said that if the Board wants to accomplish this project next year, they would want to translate the bubble map to a specific boundary map only. If they want to get into bigger issues such as potentially rezoning areas, this would be better accomplished the following year as an update to the map. The year 2004 is when the City is supposed to be planning with the new growth targets. Trying to combine the two efforts might mix up the issues.

Board Member Dewhirst suggested that the process be clarified so that the correct message can be put out to the public. He suggested that staff provide an outline of the process to identify the issues the Board would be looking at next year and those that will be postponed until the Comprehensive Plan update, etc. They should also identify a time frame for the project.

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For the purposes of reviewing the PRD Ordinance, Board Member Young inquired if subsets of critical areas could be identified on the map to indicate those that are developed and those that are not. He asked that the map show how many undeveloped lots are located adjacent to critical areas. Mr. Chave said they could also show those lots that are already subdivided, but vacant.

Board Member Crim said it is important to provide a time frame for the Comprehensive Plan Map process so that it can be identified on the extended agenda for 2003. Mr. Chave suggested that the chair and vice chair meet with the staff to prepare an extended agenda in advance of the next meeting. They scheduled a meeting with staff for 8:30 a.m. on January 3.

REVIEW OF EXTENDED AGENDA

Board Member Dewhirst noted that usually the Board receives their annual report on Adult Entertainment in January. Mr. Chave said this would not be scheduled for the first meeting in January.

PLANNING BOARD CHAIR COMMENTS

Board Member Dewhirst inquired if the City Council adopted the Transportation Element of the Comprehensive Plan yet. Mr. Chave answered that they approved all of the plan amendments forwarded to them. They also approved the Comprehensive Plan Map amendment and confirmed denial of the rezone, just as the Board had recommended. The ordinances are scheduled to be formally adopted next week.

PLANNING BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Board Member Crim referred to a memorandum he received from Sound Transit dated November 26, which provides an update of the process. Apparently, the negotiations between Sound Transit and Burlington Northern/Santa Fe are still ongoing. There is no estimate as to when the issues might be resolved, but until there is resolution, the project is at a standstill.

Board Member Crim thanked Mr. Dewhirst for leading the Board for the past few years.

Board Member Guenther advised that he would be absent from the two meetings in January.

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD, THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED AT 8:00 P.M.

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