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CITY OF SHORELINE

SHORELINE CITY COUNCIL SUMMARY MINUTES OF COTTAGE HOUSING COMMUNITY MEETING

Monday, May 11, 2005
7:00 p.m.

Fire Department Headquarters
17525 Aurora Avenue N.

City Council:

PRESENT: Deputy Mayor Jepsen, Councilmembers Chang, Fimia, Gustafson, and Ransom

ABSENT: Mayor Hansen and Councilmember Gustafson

Also Present from the Planning Commission:

Chair David Harris, Commissioners Broili, Hall, and Kuboi

Prior to the meeting being called to order at 7:00 p.m., attendees were asked to sign in and place a dot on a map of the City indicating what parts of the City meeting attendees reside.

Tim Stewart, Director of Planning and Development Services for the City of Shoreline provided the historical context for “why Shoreline has cottage housing”.

Paul Cohen, a Planner at the City of Shoreline gave a “power point” presentation on the issues that have been identified with cottage housing.

Following the presentation meeting attendees were encouraged to ask questions and provide comments. The following is a summary of those questions, answers and comments:

- ❖ Interested in a “long term” look at the history/effects of cottage housing. People who moved into a neighborhood zoned R-4 expect R-4 development in that neighborhood – not higher density. Cottage housing is a way to get around maximum density.
- ❖ Why is the meeting not being run by elected officials? Answer: There are 5 Council members and 4 Planning Commissioners in attendance. Council directed staff to prepare and conduct this meeting. Council is the final decision making authority on the issues regarding cottage housing.
- ❖ Zoning protections are being lost without public input. Large lots attracted people to Shoreline along with good schools, adequate access for emergency vehicles,

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- etc. Cottages are linked to speeding, increased traffic, loss of ambiance. Note: property values are up 11% not 4%.
- ❖ Although he does not like cottages, at first he thought they might be an option for the elderly. He now doesn't even think they work for the elderly. A townhouse is another alternative for the elderly. Some cottages for sale near his home have been on the market for several months at \$314,000. They have just changed real estate agents. The single family house next door sold very quickly. Cottages are not affordable at \$314 per square foot. States that real estate agents now ask sellers to disclose if a cottage housing development exists or is proposed in the vicinity. The uncertainty of not knowing where and when a cottage housing development is going to be allowed is difficult. Cottages allow some to profit while others lose property value. Answer: Cottages are not intended to be affordable housing. In fact, cottage development is prohibited from applying the affordable housing density bonus.
 - ❖ Commenter lives next to Hopper Cottages. The cottages have had an emotional impact on her and her family. Her house is circa 1959. The cottages are built on one side and a very large single family home is built on the other. She worked with the developer for the Hopper Cottages. One problem was their house was not drawn to scale on the site plan for the cottages. Realtor said property values will be reduced by 10%. Who will pay for that loss in value?
 - ❖ Disappointed that the real reason the meeting was called was not included in the presentation. Stated that the reason the meeting occurred was because of the opposition to cottages in the 8th/191st area and that he was a leader for this charge. Does not care what the rules are they are ridiculous. How many cottages do we want in this City over the next 20 years? Answer: The City has planned on 350 units of cottages.
 - ❖ 15% of Shoreline's population is disabled – about 9,000 people. What are we going to do to stop discrimination against the disabled? Cottage housing is not ADA compliant. Answer: Any development of more than 10 units triggers conformance with the ADA.
 - ❖ Design by committee is not good. There has got to be a better way than cottages. The steps in cottages are unattractive to the elderly.
 - ❖ He and his wife live in the Greenwood Cottages. They feel they live in vacation land. Their cottage community embraces each other and the surrounding single family homes as a community. Cottages fit the needs of baby boomers looking for low maintenance yards. Cottages are a safe choice for single women and single mothers. Greenwood Cottages is a beautiful place to live.
 - ❖ How many of the 2600 GMA required units have been built? Answer: About 100 a year – 1,000 since 1995. Call Paul Cohen for an exact count.
 - ❖ Owner of a .92 acre property located at 1st NW has been working with a developer. The developer stated that in an R-6 zone, the maximum allowed zoning must be granted or it is a taking.
 - ❖ How does the City determine when and where a traffic problem will occur in relation to proposed developments?
 - ❖ Property value fears, are just that, fears. Cottages cost more. Small houses are needed for widows and divorcees. Cottage housing is attractive to many because

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it is single family detached living: no shared walls, people walking overhead, etc. She spoke to the previous issue of traffic impacts: exact same as for single family. She emphasized the need for living options for different people.

- ❖ Cottage housing is more appropriate in multi family zones. What are required side yard setbacks?
- ❖ Against cottages. Why did the design of cottages change after the construction of Greenwood Cottages? Issues: quality development and parking.
- ❖ What fits better in Shoreline neighborhoods? Cottages? McMansions? Can we change the code to do cottages "right"? She lives in Greenwood cottages and loves it. She loves the community there. There is demand for cottages, a waiting list for the Greenwood cottages developers units.
- ❖ Not necessarily opposed to cottages. Citizens don't like cottages. Why are they good for us? Go to state legislature to ask for a variance from the GMA. Suggested that the city come up with a better model for accommodating growth and changing demographics. Cottages may work if Greenwood is the model. Answer: Reduce the bulk and scale of cottages; community asked for a look at cottages and we will be taking that information into consideration as we provide recommendations to Council. Providing a diversity of choices for changing demographics is a good idea.
- ❖ Builder a cottages at 1634 Fremont Avenue N: used Greenwood cottages as the model. At first many of the neighbors complained. He then met with the neighbors several times to work on the issues. All of the neighbors ended up happy. He stated he wanted to build cottages with footprints that were 750 to 850 sq. ft., but was told by the City that the footprints could not exceed 600 sq. ft. Limiting the basement height to 6ft. is a bad idea – it should be taller.
- ❖ An alternative to cottage housing: small houses on small lots. She is bothered by the discretionary permits/exemptions. PADS is responsible for enforcing the Code. Public confidence in the enforcement of the Code will reduce fears. Citizens shouldn't have to enforce the Codes.
- ❖ Comment regarding a lot at 1st Ave. NW/Richmond Beach Road: 6 houses on less than an acre; let's say there are 100 trees requiring that 20 trees will be retained; Asked how developer will compensate for the loss of trees? Answer: tree retention and replanting is the same for cottages as for single family development.
- ❖ Goal – no more impacts by cottages. Main objections: traffic and quality of life. Answer: # of people residing in one traditional SF home is on par or greater than the number residing in two cottages.
- ❖ 1) Cottages are condos; 2) No cottages in single family neighborhoods; 3) This may cause problems with GMA, but Council, Commission and staff can find another solution outside of single family zoning.
- ❖ Greenwood Cottage resident commented that she does not want large single family homes to be constructed on the lot behind Greenwood Cottages if it redevelops, but would like to see cottages.
- ❖ Father sold homes in Shoreline. He worked on the vision for Shoreline. Shoreline has good real estate. Decision not to buy Firlands from the state was a

mistake. City has done nothing to improve North City. Shoreline has good schools. There is scientific evidence that more space is healthy, less dangerous.

- ❖ Comment on good Seattle Times article on cottage housing in Kirkland.
- ❖ Comment regarding cottages at 8th NW/193rd – Some cottages are too tall and look like tall milk cartons.
- ❖ Commenter lives on 190th one cul de sac away from proposed 16 units of cottage housing. Not against cottage housing, but do fear the over concentration of it.
- ❖ Commenter has experience with Meridian and Ashworth cottages. Requested the demographics on current residents of cottages regarding owner occupied vs. rental and value of homes.
- ❖ Purposeful planning of cottages – well thought out and planned. Cottages do not help with maintaining, sustaining or creating a sense of community with existing community.
- ❖ Elaboration on “why does Shoreline allow cottages” answer: to Conserve land, preserve resources, low maintenance yards. If there is not enough housing, prices go up and it becomes too costly for our kids to grow up and live in Shoreline. There is no right or wrong. There is value in all comments. Announced idea of Senior Cottages – community seniors would be given first chance to purchase a cottage in their neighborhood. The senior could downsize and that would also open up a single family home to the housing market. Suggested combining the pro and con groups into one or more integrated work groups.
- ❖ Rezoning requires proper public notification. Suggested that cottage housing require a zone change to R-8 or R-12. He mentioned that cities required to meet GMA that are not meeting their housing targets are paying penalties. Questioned the idea of allowing density bonuses for expensive housing or should these bonuses only be allowed for affordable housing.

No On Cottages Group – led by Matt Torpey

- Cottages should be located near commercial areas
- Cottages are OK in areas that allow condos/higher densities
- Cottages should be located near mass transit
- How was the GMA growth target of 2,600 units determined? How is it enforced?
- Cottages should not be allowed in single family zones
- No objections to allowing cottages in R-12 and above zoning
- The door has been opened to allow cottages... can it be closed?
- Cottage Housing developments are about developers making money. Developers are making a higher profit building Cottage communities than they are building two single-family homes. Allowing cottage housing is allowing developers to make more money at the expense of surrounding neighbors.
- Main problems with cottage housing: loss of quality of life in neighborhood, increased traffic and higher density
- Questions surrounding Cottage Housing setbacks
- Question about the one-lane road down 183rd - Ashworth Cottages; increased traffic, sidewalk/curb
- Traffic is a major problem around Cottage Housing developments

- Current development code doesn't force Cottage Housing to provide enough parking spaces which creates overflow on streets
- Concern over not being able to go back in time – after Cottages exist, you can't take them down
- Require an area/neighborhood radius traffic study, not only a site-specific traffic study
- Worry about absentee landlords and rental units
- Concerned over deterioration of property, becoming a 'slum' like property
- Neighboring homes property value decrease - cottages are too close to single family homes property line, too many people squeezed into one lot and the traffic increases
- Harry Obedin, Cottage House Developer: as a developer he has the choice of building 3 mega houses or 4 Cottage Homes. He questioned the group what is better?
- Would not care if Cottage Housing was located in multi-family neighborhoods
- Hold Community meetings to plan, analyze and evaluate Cottage Housing – hold a community meeting two years from now to see if we are succeeding
- Hopper Cottages are an example of wrong way to build Cottage Homes; Cottage Housing should match the character and density of the neighborhood they are going into.
- Cottages should be as high as they are wide.

Cottage Housing Refinement Group led by Paul Cohen

- Support for the parking amendment. Would like to encourage parking on semi pervious surfaces such as grasscrete.
- Parking should be 50% covered with a pitched roof.
- Like amendments – cottages have a valid place.
- Cottages have been an experiment/trial. Experiments/trials require periodic evaluation to make adjustments. The city should monitor the next set of changes – Plan ahead.
- There are trade offs if you increase the footprint and decrease the upper floor. The trade offs are increased impervious surface and reduced open space.
- A problem was noted with the concept of limiting the total number of units to 8, especially in combination with geographic restrictions i.e. allowing only one cottage housing development per 1000 foot radius. The number of cottages should be limited by the site. A foreseeable problem is that a developer will select a site and only be able to put in for example 5 cottages on the site that he/she selected. Three cottages would then be lost and further restricted by the 1000 foot radius rule. This will force the price of cottages to increase.
- Cottages are affordable in comparison to single family housing costs in Richmond Beach.
- Suggestion: Create a Design Review Board like in Redmond – maybe incorporate into the neighborhood meeting process)
- Cottages should not exceed a story and a half. Two stories is not a cottage.
- Cottages should be low with a pitched roof.

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- There was some disagreement in the group regarding limiting the height of cottages.
- The bulk of a cottage should be controlled. Suggestion: to create a less bulky story and a half cottage, the side exterior walls should not exceed 12 feet plus a pitched roof could work well.
- Gables and dormers look good on cottages.
- Story and a half concept with livable space in the ½ story.
- Two stories plus a pitched roof is too tall.
- Idea: using ratios to regulate the size of upper and lower floors.

The meeting adjourned at 10:00 p.m.

Rachael Markle, Assistant Director of Planning and Development Services