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CITY OF SHORELINE

SHORELINE CITY COUNCIL
SUMMARY MINUTES OF WORKSHOP DINNER MEETING WITH
THE SHORELINE PLANNING COMMISSION

Monday, October 8, 2007   Shoreline Conference Center
6:00 p.m.   Highlander Room

PRESENT: Mayor Ransom, Deputy Mayor Fimia, and Councilmembers Gustafson, Hansen, McGlashan, Ryu, and Way

ABSENT: none

STAFF: Bob Olander, City Manager; Joe Tovar, Planning and Development Services Director; Steve Cohn, Senior Planner; Steve Szafran, Associate Planner; Scott Passey, City Clerk

GUESTS: Shoreline Planning Commissioners: Sid Kuboi, Vice Chair; David Harris; Robin McClelland; Michael Broili; Will Hall, David Pyle

Mayor Ransom called the meeting to order at 6:22 p.m. There were introductions around the table.

Bob Olander, City Manager, welcomed the Planning Commission to tonight's workshop meeting to discuss the Planning Commission 2010 Work Program and related items.

Mr. Tovar provided a brief presentation on two regulatory tools that are intended to better enable the City to achieve its community-building objectives – Form-based Codes, and Planned Area (PLA) zones. He commented that Shoreline's development code retains parts of the old King County code, and staff feels more flexibility is needed in the development standards. He advocated for writing our own conditions into the text of the Development Code by creating Planned Area Zones rather than placing conditions on development proposals such as rezones. He used Shoreline Community College as an example where the Council imposed a condition that "no more permits will be issued until it has a completed master plan." He said a PLA zone would be a more appropriate way to impose conditions because it focuses on a specific zone rather than discrete permits.

Mr. Tovar noted that nearly one-third of Kirkland's available land is in a PLA zone of some sort. He said he is not suggesting that this is a "magical" zone, but noted that PLA zones provide more flexibility, precision, and certainty for developers and the public. In essence, the City can make the rules about what is permitted in each zone.

DRAFT

Continuing, Mr. Tovar said the key concept of a Form-based Code is to focus more attention on the building form and design details of both the building(s) and the site, and less on the specific uses within the building envelope. He pointed to the Ridgecrest Visioning Process as an example that focused on form-based characteristics such as shape, setbacks, building heights, massing, texture, buffers, access, and adjacencies. He noted that in such developments, the form, parking, and floor-area ratio determines the number of units. Mr. Tovar said staff proposes to regulate density in the Ridgecrest neighborhood using form-based codes.

Mr. Olander pointed out that Dan Burden and other experts of the "Shoreline 2010 Speaker Series" advocated for form-based codes. He noted that Mr. Burden's work illustrates the fact that if designed correctly, people actually prefer the developments with higher densities.

Deputy Mayor Fimia commented on Mr. Tovar's experience in Kirkland with PLA zones. She asked if they first amended their Comprehensive Plan through a public process, or whether they started with PLA zones.

Mr. Tovar responded that they did them simultaneously, and in some cases did sub-area plans. Mr. Tovar continued by saying that staff intends to focus on the Council's goals when considering how to regulate PLA zones, since Goal #5, #6, #7, and #8 all can be addressed in Planned Areas.

Deputy Mayor Fimia asked if there was a sense that the changes were consistent with the community vision in Kirkland. Mr. Tovar responded that all the changes were the result of legislative processes, and Kirkland's land use issues were very similar to Shoreline's.

Commissioner McClelland noted that form-based codes and PLA zones are simply tools; however, perhaps more focus should be on identifying the objectives. She said if the intent is to make the Ridgecrest area more urban, then the question is whether these tools provide more predictability and consistency with the character of the neighborhood.

Mr. Tovar said it's trying to balance predictability with flexibility by tailoring these areas to fit the specific neighborhoods.

Mr. Olander added that these tools give the public more control over what happens in their neighborhoods. He said a general vision should be established, but a "one size fits all" approach doesn't always work.

Councilmember Way asked how the City of Kirkland established its boundaries for PLA zones, and if a PLA zone would fit in to the Fircrest campus.

Mr. Tovar said the boundaries depended on a number of factors, including existing development, zoning, parcel sizes, and property ownership. Regarding Fircrest, he said a

DRAFT

PLA zone could be established where all the conditions are spelled out so the zoning fits what the Council is trying to achieve.

Mr. Tovar affirmed for Councilmember Ryu that if some neighborhoods wanted to go in a particular direction, they could do so using these tools (a legislative code change adopted by Council).

Councilmember McGlashan asked how these tools would impact building height restrictions, to which Mr. Tovar replied that each zone can be created with its own standards.

Responding to Commissioner McClelland, Mr. Tovar said although there are a few things he would have done differently in Kirkland, he doesn't regret implementing Planned Areas.

Commissioner Pyle asked if the Comprehensive Plan is flexible enough to allow for Planned Areas now. Mr. Tovar responded that PLAs could be implemented in some areas, but others would require a Comprehensive Plan amendment. He noted that some sections are specific and other sections are vague.

Commissioner Hall wondered if it might be difficult for new businesses to locate in Shoreline if there's such a difference in zoning throughout the City. He asked if there is a way to manage it so the zoning is predictable, yet the flexibility doesn't become a disadvantage.

Mr. Tovar responded that a "happy medium is needed," although most developers are so focused on the zoning map that they want to know how many units and square feet are allowed in the subject zone.

Pointing out that parking is one controlling element of a Planned Area, Councilmember Way asked if it would be appropriate to designate sidewalks and pathways as controlling elements in such zones.

Mr. Tovar noted that other sections of the Development Code would control that, not PLAs.

Councilmember McGlashan wondered about the best way to approach the public with these tools. He stated that some people could interpret these changes as "lightening the code to benefit developers."

Mr. Tovar commented that everyone is better served by having more precise development regulations. He then asked Steve Cohn, Senior Planner, to comment on the Planning Commission's Work Plan.

DRAFT

Mr. Cohn highlighted elements of the Work Plan, including the Comprehensive Housing Strategy, Environmentally Sustainable Community Strategy, and Town Center. He then outlined the public outreach effort for the first Town Center meeting.

Mr. Tovar noted that in addition to all the regular avenues for land use announcements, staff proposes dedicating a regular column in *Currents* for this purpose. He said this proposal would have budget implications since it would increase the page-length of the publication.

Commissioner McClelland felt that dedicated space for land use announcements in the new City Hall would help improve the public notification effort.

Commissioner Broili pointed out that the City of Seattle has a DVD document that helps citizens inform themselves on land use proposals. He felt the additional pages in *Currents* would make sense since surveys show that most people get their City information from this source.

Vice Chair Kuboi concurred. He noted that the City received several applications for the Citizen Advisory Committee shortly after the *Currents* article was distributed.

Councilmember Ryu wondered if advertising in other areas could be reduced in order to cover the increased publication costs.

Deputy Mayor Fimia emphasized the need to get direction from the public, the Council, and the Commission. She stressed that the Council gives direction to the Commission; then the issue should go to the public again before the Commission provides a recommendation. She said that the Communications Plan Goal should be clear that it is direction from the community, not the other way around. She felt that there was a communication disconnect with the community regarding form-based codes and the South Aurora Triangle.

Mr. Tovar noted that the South Aurora Triangle has been relegated to a lower priority. He said Ridgecrest is a more appropriate opportunity to look at form-based codes. He briefly discussed ways to also use the web site more effectively.

Deputy Mayor Fimia agreed with the suggestion to increase the page count in *Currents*, making it more of a news source. She suggested that *Currents* also describe the problems and challenges in addition to the successes. She added that while subarea plans can be effective, the community needs to talk about the overall vision.

Mr. Tovar outlined Planning Commission work items, including the SE Shoreline Subarea Planning Process. He said the Commission requests that the Council consider a one-time allocation of funds to PDS to support the development of this Subarea Plan.

Deputy Mayor Fimia suggested holding a symposium with developers to solicit their input.

DRAFT

Councilmember Way noted that King County Councilmember Bob Ferguson is sponsoring an Economic Development Summit for north end cities.

Deputy Mayor Fimia left the meeting at 7:20 p.m.

Commissioner McClelland noted her belief that the South Aurora Triangle had to do with the breakdown of communication; namely, gossip. She said each of us has a responsibility to be well-informed and to squelch rumors and misinformation. She said we owe it to the community to never "fuel the fire."

Mr. Tovar briefly outlined the details of the SE Shoreline Subarea Planning Process, noting that the Plan will dictate whether zoning changes are needed. He said this item should come back through the process in late 2008.

Mr. Olander noted that the fear of increasing densities is shard by many in the community, whether these fears are justified or not. He recommended that tools such as Planned Areas be implemented first. That way, it will give the public examples of what is possible, and it will allay the fears people have about density. He suggested that rather than always reacting, we take a more proactive approach.

Councilmember Ryu agreed, noting that if the Ridgecrest example is successful, then perhaps other areas will be open to these changes.

Councilmember Way said although a proactive approach is good, it is not only about increasing density but also about protecting the residential zone.

Mr. Olander agreed that the key to proceeding successfully is to lead with the concept of preserving the residential character of the City.

Mr. Tovar then outlined the suggested procedure for the joint public hearing later on this evening. He recommended dividing the public hearing according to the two different Development Code amendments in order to clarify the issues.

Mayor Ransom declared the meeting adjourned at 7:33 p.m.

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Scott Passey, City Clerk

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