



## RENTON PLANNING COMMISSION

### Meeting Minutes

June 21, 2006  
6:00 p.m.

City Municipal Building  
Council Chambers

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Planning Commissioners Present: Robert Bonner, Jimmy Cho, Ray Giometti, Nancy Osborn, and Greg Taylor

Planning Commissioners Absent: Jerrilynn Hadley and Joshua Shearer

City Staff Present: Jennifer Davis Hayes, Community Development Project Manager; Elizabeth Higgins, Senior Planner; Judith Subia, Recording Secretary

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1. CALL TO ORDER: Commissioner Giometti opened the meeting at 6:00 p.m.
2. ROLL CALL: Commissioner Osborn called roll; Commissioner Shearer was absent and excused and Commission Hadley was absent and unexcused.
3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: The Minutes of April 05, 2006, and June 07, 2006, were approved as written.
4. CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED: Letter from Hearing Examiner regarding appeal filed by Highlands Community Association about the issuance of a Determination of Non-Significance for the Highlands Subarea Rezone; Hearing Examiner Minutes of a May 2, 2006 meeting, regarding the Defoor Short Plat Appeal; Hearing Examiner Minutes of a May 9, 2006 meeting, regarding an approval for a 9-lot 2-tract subdivision of a 1.8-site intended for the development of single-family detached residences; Hearing Examiner Minutes of an April 18, 2006 meeting, regarding applicants seeking three variances: reduce 25-foot setback from water's edge to 10-feet; to exceed two-story height limit by one story; and reduce front yard setback from 20 feet to five feet; Letter from City Clerk regarding appeal filed by Michael Lloyd, Representative of Barbee Mill of the Hearing Examiner's decision about the Lake Washington/May Creek Dredging permit application.
5. AUDIENCE COMMENTS: Inez Petersen, 3306 Lake Washington Blvd N #3, Renton, WA 98056: Ms. Petersen wanted clarification about how zoning fits in with the Comprehensive Plan Amendments that are before the Commission. She gave an example of the Highlands proposed zoning that was put to vote by the Commission. With the pending legal appeals, she asked if it made sense to adopt Comprehensive Plan Amendments that adopts zoning that are being questioned with the appeal.

Commissioner Giometti said that the Comprehensive Plan Amendments is a broader picture of where the City wants to go. Discussing the Comprehensive Plan does not necessary imply that any of the zoning changes will be approved.

Ms. Petersen said that the Highlands Community Association will do an analysis of existing versus proposed Comprehensive Plan and its Amendments to see the differences and bring it back to the Commission.

Elizabeth added that the zoning revisions that were approved by the Commission are already consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. The amendments that the Commission will look at tonight have nothing to do with any zoning in the City. They are primarily housekeeping changes. Staff is proposing the potential rezones in two phases for the Highlands area. The first is the rezone that is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan which had a thorough SEPA review. The second set of rezones, which addresses the area north of NE 16<sup>th</sup> St, is now R-10 will rezone to CV-R. This rezone is not consistent with the current Comprehensive Plan policies and would require a change to the Comprehensive Plan and an environmental review.

6. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS: Commissioner Bonner commented on the Hearing Examiner Minutes regarding applicants requesting three variances and asked if the Planning Commission approves these requests. Commissioner Giometti explained that the Minutes provided are for the Commission's information only.

Commissioner Taylor said that he attended a Housing Issues Briefing by the Seattle King County Association of Realtors and was provided information that he thought would be useful to the Commissioners as it relates to the GMA, actual and forecasted population and growth, density issues, and affordability. It was suggested that Sam Pace, Housing Specialist for the Association of Realtors, come to share a presentation for the Commission to provide additional background information. Commissioner Giometti said that the presentation will be scheduled for a future meeting.

#### 7. POLICY/CODE STUDY SESSION: **Visual Preference Survey**

Elizabeth introduced Jim Nicholls from the University of Washington Storefront Studio. Last spring, Storefront Studio was in Downtown Renton and had an open house showcasing different ideas that students had envisioned for Downtown. Jim has been working with Jennifer Davis Hayes, Community Development Project Manager, and has been focusing on Downtown Renton.

Jennifer explained that many of the signage and ideas that the students came up with would not have met the current Downtown sign code. Jennifer has looked at the sign code and what the City would like to see Downtown. The Planning Commission is the first audience to participate in the Visual Preference Survey.

Jennifer and Jim presented the Commission with several different photos of signs and were asked their preference. Different signs relating to different topics were also presented.

The meeting recessed at 6:59 p.m. and reconvened at 7:05 p.m.

#### **2006 Comprehensive Plan Amendments Briefing #2006-T-3: Text Amendment to update the Land Use and Community Design Elements with housekeeping changes STAFF PRESENTATION**

Elizabeth presented to the Commission proposed revisions to two elements of the Comprehensive Plan: Land Use and Community Design. These are primarily housekeeping corrections. Some policies have been added to addresses issues that have come up primarily with interpretation of other policies and regulations.

Elizabeth asked the Commission to review the text amendments and share with Staff any comments they have.

#### **Community Design Element**

There was a heading change in Sections Three and Four to clarify that certain policies are applicable to commercial districts and new residential subdivisions than they would be to established neighborhoods. Section Three is focused primarily towards existing neighborhoods and Section Four is focused on new residential and commercial.

Commissioner Giometti asked if the North Renton neighborhood is considered an established neighborhood because of the commercial that's also in that neighborhood. Elizabeth said this is an established neighborhood and added that the summary states "modifications to existing residential and commercial structures."

Commissioner Osborn asked about Policy CD-68 and the removal and replacement of street trees. The change says that trees should be replaced with equivalent size and type, as opposed to variety. She asked what the difference was. Elizabeth explained that a certain variety may have a disease so an equivalent type, such as deciduous, would be preferred. Commissioner Osborn asked for clarification of what types they would be replaced with. Elizabeth said that if a tree is removed, it should be replaced with one that is close to the same size and type. She also added that this policy is preferable, not a regulation and will look at the policy again.

#### **Land Use Element**

Commissioner Giometti talked about #8 of the Land Use Element's Goals and said Renton being a nice place to live should be added to this section. In that section, letter b, Commissioner Giometti would like the word "shop" not be mentioned first. Elizabeth said that this describes the pedestrian orientation in the commercial areas. Commissioner Giometti also commented that homeowners should be represented as much as developers are.

Commissioner Osborn asked for clarification about #3 where annexations would be actively pursued. She asked if this was a shift in City policy because of all the annexations coming along and that the City does not pursue annexations. It is up to the community to annex into the City. Elizabeth said that no revisions have been made to the goals and will be looked at.

Commissioner Osborn also asked about #7 where the City's agricultural and mining resources should be maintained and questioned the Blueberry Farm and its potential rezoning. Commissioner Taylor asked how old these goals were. Elizabeth said that these goals were made, with changes throughout the years, when the Comprehensive Plan was adopted to adhere to the Growth Management Act in 1993.

Elizabeth informed the Commission that there will be another briefing on additional Comprehensive Plan Amendments and the changes discussed today will be brought back to the Commission at that time.

Commissioner Giometti asked who sets the targets as stated in LU-4. Elizabeth said that the targets are negotiated with the Puget Sound Regional Council, King County, and adjacent cities.

Commissioner Bonner gave an example of the City of Bellevue where their parks are connected by trails. He mentioned that it would be nice for Renton to have sidewalks that are color-coded or signage to show which parks are connected. Commissioner Bonner also talked about a visible path to the Parking Garage.

Commissioner Giometti questioned LU-8 where the goal is to exceed targets by 20 percent and asked if the target should be changed instead. Elizabeth said that this anticipates development to 80 percent capacity instead of 100 percent.

Commissioner Taylor asked what the thought process is in increasing the capacity and asked about the anticipation to have capacity for future growth. Elizabeth said the City is obligated to take a certain amount of growth. Commissioner Osborn added that this is a 20-year plan, as stated in LU-C.

Commissioner Giometti asked about non-conforming uses as it pertains to LU-27 where it states that implementing code will be put in place within three years of the adoption date. Elizabeth said that this policy focuses on new residential use and will make the text clearer. This is not intended to affect existing structures.

Commissioner Giometti brought up LU-J and wants to see the order changed to show that "live" is listed first. Recommended order: live, play, work, and shop.

Commissioner Osborn said that the goal in Section Four states a change to "maintain the City's natural history" to "cultural history" and said that Policies LU-62 and 64, the original language still appears. Commissioner Cho said that the policies are not necessarily inconsistent with the goal because the goal talks about history and the policies talk about resources. Elizabeth suggested changing the wording of the goals to include recognizing "archaeological and/or significantly natural sites."

Commissioner Giometti asked about LU-69 and wanted to know how this fits in with the Highlands and changing the character of the neighborhood. Commissioner Osborn said that the goal states the transition of non-conforming uses and structures to encourage more conforming uses and development patterns. Elizabeth used the Highlands as an example and said that there are currently uses in the R-10 zone that are non-conforming. It is being proposed to replace them with something that conforms to the zoning.

Commissioner Giometti looked at LU-70 #8 and asked if a sports stadium would be allowed in all neighborhoods because it generates high revenue. Elizabeth explained that a non-conforming use is a structure that already exists and not a new use. A sports stadium would not be allowed if it does not conform to its surrounding uses.

Commissioner Giometti wanted LU-91 to state that the downtown library is the "main library facility" for the City.

Commissioner Cho looked at LU-99 and asked if closure should be the only condition. Elizabeth said that this section focuses on public facilities. This policy addresses interdepartmental decisions and gave an example of a fire station's closure. This building could be used as a maintenance facility.

Commissioner Bonner would like to see another policy that states the City should be aware of historical sites or sizeable properties to be used for potential public spaces or additional streets.

Commissioner Osborn said that the policies under this objective focus on school facilities and that "school facilities" should be added to LU-99 for clarification.

Commissioner Osborn looked at LU-146 #2 and asked why "evergreen" has been stricken. Elizabeth said that this was deleted because deciduous plant materials can also be used. This allows the option of using evergreen or deciduous plant materials.

Commissioner Bonner looked at LU-151 with the maximum height of structures not to exceed two stories. He has seen developments where homes have view lookouts and go beyond the third story and would like to see this in Renton. Elizabeth said that this would be a significant policy change and a method of view protection would need to be implemented. Changing the maximum height would create a problem for residents losing their views from high structures. Commissioner Bonner said that view corridors are being wasted, would like to see that third stories can be allowed if it does not obstruct the view of another building, and wanted to know how this could be done. Elizabeth explained that this issue would need to be added to the Planning Department's work program.

Commissioner Bonner looked at LU-169 #4 and asked why an identifiable entrance would be preferred to courtyards. Elizabeth said this policy will need to be reviewed.

Commissioner Bonner looked at LU-276 and wanted to know if the word "Blvd" should be added to Lake Washington. Elizabeth said that this policy's intent is to have Park Ave extended to Lake Washington, not Lake Washington Blvd.

Commissioner Bonner looked at LU-344 and would like to see the maximum height increased to 20 or 30 stories. Elizabeth explained that this would create a problem with the planes that come into the airport. Commissioner Bonner said that he would like to also see this height increase along the waterfront where the Boeing plants are. Elizabeth said that in the EIS, the maximum build out scenario that was used was less than 15 stories. This entire area is in the airport influence area.

Looking at previous policies that were discussed tonight with the goals and jobs for the next 20 years, Commissioner Osborn said that in some point in the future, more height on buildings might make sense, but doesn't see a need for that now. Commissioner Bonner said that the airport is an important asset that most other cities do not have and believes that any city that sees a big city can become that city. Commissioner Cho agreed with Commissioner Bonner and said that cities are quickly developing. Elizabeth said that she would propose removing the bonus and maximum height limit, have it based on proximity to the airport influence area, and make the public benefits in LU-345 required, not optional. Commissioner Osborn said that she would like to see the revisions before the Commission is expected to vote on this amendment.

Commissioner Cho wanted clarification on LU-306. Elizabeth said that in the Urban Center-North, when the Boeing property was rezoned, it was required that if surface parking was the only financially feasible way of doing it, it needed to be configured so that it could be redeveloped at a later time. She gave an example of what was happening at Redmond Town Center where structures are being built on the parking lots. Commissioner Osborn said that it may be reasonable for the word "financially" to be removed to meet the intent.

Commissioner Bonner talked about the Rainier Avenue Corridor saying that there are two lanes going towards Seattle, which creates a clog point and wanted to know if it is addressed in the new plan. He requested to see the Transportation Plan. Elizabeth would forward the plan to him.

8. DELIBERATION/RECOMMENDATION: None
9. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS: The next Planning Commission meeting will be on July 5, 2006.
10. ADJOURNMENT: The Meeting was adjourned at 8:56 p.m.

  
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Ray Giometti, Chair

  
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Nancy Osborn, Secretary