



## **MINUTES**

(Approved on 10-21-2020)

**TIME:** Wednesday, October 7, 2020, 5:00 p.m.

**PRESENT (virtually):** Anna Petersen (Chair), Jeff McInnis (Vice-Chair), Carolyn Edmonds, Ryan Givens, David Horne, Christopher Karnes, Brett Santhuff, Alyssa Torrez

**ABSENT:** Andrew Strobel

### **A. CALL TO ORDER AND QUORUM CALL**

Chair Petersen called the meeting to order at 5:03 p.m. A quorum was declared.

### **B. APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES**

The agenda for the meeting was approved. The minutes for the September 2, 2020, meeting were approved as submitted.

### **C. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Public comments were not accepted at the meeting. No written comments regarding Discussion Item D1 – Urban Design Studio had been submitted as directed in the agenda notice.

Written comments received on the subject of the Public Hearing would be reviewed in the appropriate portion of the meeting.

### **D. DISCUSSION ITEMS**

#### **1. Urban Design Studio**

Mesa Sherriff, Planning Services Division, provided an update on the progress of the project, highlighting the development of Phases I and II. He reviewed the project deliverables, which had been presented to the Commission at previous meetings. Regarding the Design Review as one of the deliverables, Mr. Sherriff explained what was covered and what was not under the Design Review. Also presented were the communication timeline of the project and the subjects of discussion at each milestone. Moving forward, Mr. Sherriff informed the Commission that they would partake in a workshop during their meeting on November 4, 2020, to finalize the Design Guidelines and Standards and complete Phase II of the project. Following the workshop would be the Commission's process for public review of the materials and public hearing.

The Commission's discussion began with Commissioner Karnes's question regarding the square footage classifications in respect to their review process. Mr. Sherriff stated that the criteria were determined based on the consultants and staff's experience and analysis. Also discussed were the role of the Neighborhood Councils in the development of the program, the review process for projects under 5,000 square feet, and the process in which neighbors and community members could provide input. There was also a request from Commission Santhuff for the November 4<sup>th</sup> workshop materials to be distributed well in advance, as well as items of discussion that he would like included.

The meeting was recessed at 5:31 p.m. and resumed at 5:35 p.m.

## 2. Public Hearing – 2020 Annual Amendment Package

Chair Petersen called the public hearing to order at 5:35 p.m., and went over the procedures of the hearing. Larry Harala, Planning Services Division, reviewed the amendment process along with the schedule of the next steps, and provided an overview of the three (3) applications in the amendment package. Lastly, he briefed the Commission on the public comments that had been submitted in regards to the applications.

Chair Petersen called for testimony. The following citizens testified:

### I. HEIDELBERG-DAVIS SITE LAND USE DESIGNATION CHANGE

- a. **Luis Alonzo** – Back in 2016, the City of Tacoma's Planning department initiated an Institutional Campus Zoning Review, which to my knowledge was never completed and the website indicates it may be resumed at a later time. According to the website for this particular project, the Institutional Campus Zoning Review will assess zoning changes, special use restrictions, additional development standards or new administrative procedures, to ensure that the new or any expansion of existing major campus institution successfully implemented the goals and policy of the One Tacoma Plan. The One Tacoma Plan is the City's Comprehensive Plan that guides our community development over the long term and describes how our community's vision for the future is to be achieved. Today, we find ourselves living through a particularly difficult time, not only financially for institutions such as the City of Tacoma and Metro Parks, which are key for this project to succeed, but also socially as our community has upended the way we live and interact with private and public spaces. This pre-COVID proposal seeks to re-designate Parks and Open Spaces, which has served as a nice "reprieve" from our sheltered socially distant environment we are adopting to stay safe and healthy. The alternative Major Institutional Campus (MIC), specifically a stadium, is the opposite of what we as a community is striving for as we reimagine our lives after this pandemic. In addition, assuming this proposal resumes unchanged and no community agreed upon the definition of MIC is achieved, my biggest fear is that this stadium project fails and a different project, which vaguely aligns with the definition of MIC, doesn't further align with the community's interest. I believe at this point, it would be beneficial for the Commission to pause this application and direct the Planning department to revisit its Institutional Campus zoning review to gather more community input into this designation's definition, in this new time, before allowing any project such as this one to move forward.
- b. **Charles Mann** – Parks should be preserved as park spaces. The citizens of Central Neighborhood Council gathered together and decided that the title of the parcel actually has a statement that says for baseball only. I haven't seen the title but I'd like to look at it, and I'd like the Planning Commission, Metro Parks and the Planning department to review the parcel title and hopefully that will help preserve the Heidelberg-Davis site just for parks and baseball.
- c. **Clarity Dickinson** – My concern is the fact I don't see anything mentioned about the skate park on this property. It seems to me like community space is being turned over to professional space, which is not going to benefit our direct community and our daily life. I would like to know what the plan is, in the future, for more community space to be used for residence. Is there a plan to build a new skate park? Because that's something my family use on a regular basis, as well as the baseball field. I've played there multiple times. So to turn that from community use to professional use is damaging to the community.
- d. **Karen** – I'm also concerned about the skate park as well. I skate at Kandle Park and Puyallup a lot. I wasn't aware of the skate park, but having gone to both those skate parks which are very busy and well used, I would not be surprised if that had the same amount of use. I think these spaces are really important. I see so many kids learning new skills here, exercising. It creates a really great community for you to get to know the people you live around. I think we really need to consider keeping these spaces. And I agree that we need to keep these baseball fields and other community spaces that people use. If we allocate this land, we need to have a plan to make sure that we keep some of these spaces and we stay connected through these physical locations.

## II. VIEW SENSITIVE OVERLAY DISTRICT – HEIGHT LIMIT CHANGE

- a. **Beth Johnson** – I am a property owner in one of the impacted areas of the proposed height limit change in View Sensitive Overlay Districts. I am opposed to this proposal. There's no demonstrated need to change the code. There's no reason to change something that's been in place since 1989 and governs the use purposes of properties during that time. It's an unnecessary application of new restrictions on private land. The proposal and application started in the Narrowmoor neighborhood and expanded. If the Narrowmoor neighborhood would request it and would like it, that would be fine. But other neighborhoods should not be impacted. It's an overreach of the authority and should not be approved. The City has other land use needs to attend to, and I would appreciate seeing this not approved.
- b. **Duncan McAlpine** – I live in Browns Point. According to staff, this map was created based off of the 1989 View Sensitive area. Where I live was built after 1989, and so looking at this map and Node 5, based off of these color coordinates, I have no worries about these heights. In the purple, properties are subject to the Declaration of Covenants, Conditions, and Restrictions (CC&Rs) and some height limitations; so are in the green. But I'm in the orange, and mine was built in 1990-1991 and I have Browns Point Blvd (orange) and Green Hills Dr. (green). The neighbor in front of me has trees over 40-50ft tall. So you can have this limitation for 25ft in these zones but you have no limitation for any vegetation. I could plant 5 new cypresses, which could get up to 40ft tall in about 10 years and totally block a view. I'm paying close to \$10,000 in taxes, my view is getting blocked and I can't see anything out there. Ten years ago, it was a great view, seeing the water and everything. It is going away. The proposal is focusing on buildings and structures, but nothing about vegetation. Anyone could turn around and plant something unless prohibited by the CC&Rs. I have CC&Rs but Browns Point Blvd and Green Hills Dr. do not. And they are planting humongous trees and I can't do anything about it. I'm stuck. I'm going to be paying higher taxes every year but not going to have a view anymore. So I suggest you reconsider vegetation as part of your ground rule, instead of just structures only. To me, it's irrelevant. Why limit buildings when you can plant a tree and a tree can block your view?
- c. **Erik Becker** – I live on Hawthorn Dr. The gentleman before already addressed the point that I wanted to make, but I want to make a recommendation that the inclusion of any plants, shrubs, trees can not exceed whatever the basic height limit is that you wind up setting as per the VSD height standard in place. I agree with him, there's no functional difference between a structure that somebody can build and a row of shrubs, like I have in front of my house right now that have been wildly untended for years and are now growing above the height of my house, which is on a slope above the gentleman in front of me. There's no functional difference in the view-blocking and he's perfectly allowed to do that but not similarly build a shed or a fence that high. So perhaps, include that restriction to conform to the same standard of height as the house upon which the property sits or within that property.
- d. **Tonya Elliott** – First, about the Narrowmoor, it feels almost like a Homeowner's Association (HOA) ruling where they're trying to come up with bylaws to control view sheds, but they're applying this to wider slots of the entire city. There are certain areas, even in my neighborhood, that have HOA with building height restrictions. The second thing is vegetation, which will have an impact on the City's tax revenues eventually because parcels are no longer being taxed as view designation. Third, about the criteria on how they selected the individual parcels, I happen to be in Node 4, where there are 36 parcels that have been selected. In my block, the average age is 72 years old, and these are people that are not technology savvy, so I'm actually reaching out to them to help advocate for their message. There's one parcel that's currently vacant, which I do feel could be under that restriction because it's on a slope that could prohibit other people's view. The rest of the properties are pretty flat. And the fourth, about the criteria, I don't know how the specs were collected using LIDAR data because there's publicly available data for 12ft LIDAR DEMs, and I can follow up with Mr. Harala later on. The main thing is I'm opposed to this. I have a drone that I've actually flown 25ft over the houses that are in my Node. I looked at the report and the studies where you did the view, I also did a view shed using LIDAR data and using 3D modeling, and along with

the drone, I've been able to show that there are only 2 parcels that would impact anybody's view and should be in consideration. So I think the criteria that you used for the slope and the actual view and so forth are not representative of what people have – utilities being blocked, utilities blocking view, vegetation blocking view. Also maybe we should shift to push for underground utilities.

- e. **Brady Albers** – I'm moving into the biggest area that's been impacted – Node 2. The average homeowners in this area, I imagine many of the others, are older, while I'm 36, younger family, and I know there are some other younger families moving into this area as well. It's an absolute detractor for us. We're remodeling our house of 1,500 square feet by adding a second story, which would basically match the next house to us at 24-25ft within the code right now. So we're very much opposed. And I think it's going to be a hindrance for the City when it comes to discouragement for growth, tax revenue, construction revenue, business, and things of that nature. Our property is also unique in that Jackson is the street behind us and those houses sit higher than possibly some of the other areas. As you go street by street into the neighborhood closer to the water, the property owner behind us owns 2 lots, so our house is staggered in between 2 houses that are behind us. So we wouldn't be blocking. Reducing 25 to 20ft is substantial. It's difficult to build a 2-story home with 20ft. If it was reduced to 23ft, that extra 2-3ft makes all the difference when it comes to being able to fit a 2-story structure within that height restriction. 25 to 20ft is pretty dramatic and going to be a hindrance to anybody looking to add some living space for their family.
- f. **Lori Grassi** – I've live on Hawthorn Dr. for about 8 years. When I moved here, I had a full view – not only straight out to the west, but to the north and to the south. The City has washed their hands of helping residents who pay a lot of money for view properties when it comes to trees and vegetation blocking. The City gives out coupons to property owners for free trees. They like tree canopy and that's lovely. But you provide zero guidance to property owners as to the appropriate trees and the appropriate property. The hedge in front of me is a tree hedge that should never have been allowed to be planted. It's important for the City to start taking some leadership in supporting this. The City has an obligation to assist property owners in view areas where you collect taxes for view properties. My view is 2/3 less than what it was when I moved in 8 years ago, and my taxes have not modeled that same trend. The City washing their hands of this issue is creating a lot of anger between neighborhoods and neighbors, instead of facilitating better working relations with maintaining views and view properties. Because what we have here is special, and allowing it to erode is inappropriate.
- g. **Mike Fleming** – I've live in the Fairview Dr. neighborhood for a number of years. In the area, there are predominantly 2-story homes, but they're daylight basement homes with one story above the ground level. What's happened is when people come in and decide to add another level – essentially a 3<sup>rd</sup> story on their home, that's caused a lot of consternation about loss of views. I would like to point out that in these areas, we have fairly large lots that enable folks to build horizontally as opposed to building vertically to gain the living space they feel appropriate for their family. I'd also like to point out that the City has done a really good job on outreach. I know Mr. Harala's overview just mentioned that they sent out 9,000 notices. I know that we've got initial notices, we've had community meetings such as the one held at Geiger School in our neighborhood, and we've received another mailing from the City informing us of the results of the meetings and of the nodes that the consultants recommended be included. Lastly, I hope most of the comments that you've received are in favor as I am.

### III. MINOR PLAN AND CODE AMENDMENTS

No comments.

Chair Petersen reiterated that written comments would be accepted until 5:00 p.m., Friday, October 9, 2020, and thanked those who testified for their feedback. She closed the public hearing at 6:16 p.m.

## E. TOPICS OF THE UPCOMING MEETING

- 1) Agenda for October 21, 2020 meeting includes:
  - Environmental Action Plan Update
  - 2020 Annual Amendment (Debriefing of Public Hearing)

## F. COMMUNICATION ITEMS

- 1) Sound Transit's Tacoma Dome Link Extension Project Online Open House, September 29 through October 28, 2020 – visit <https://tdlink.participate.online/>
  - Lihuang Wung, Planning Services Division, encouraged Commissioners and members of the public to participate in the open house to provide feedback, emphasizing the importance as Sound Transit prepared to move into the Environmental Impact Statement phase of the project.
- 2) Status Reports by Commissioners
  - TOD Advisory Group – Commissioner Karnes provided a report on the discussion topics that the TOD Advisory Group had at their last meeting, covering parking issues in the Tacoma Dome District, Puyallup Avenue Design Project, Anti-racism and social equity (Resolution No. 40622), and enhanced collaboration with the Transportation Commission.
  - Housing Equity Taskforce – The taskforce had discussed the timeline to finish the housing action plan and selected their Co-Chairs (Commissioner Karnes from the Planning Commission and Commissioner Julie Tran from the Human Rights Commission). At their meeting on October 8, 2020, they would discuss benchmarking against other jurisdictions and engagement strategies.
- 3) The Infrastructure, Planning, and Sustainability (IPS) Committee Meetings
  - In addition to the meeting on October 14, 2020, listed on the agenda, Brian Boudet, Planning Division Manager, informed the Commission that the IPS Committee would conduct interviews for the two (2) Planning Commission positions of District 1 and Development Community (terms expired in June 2020) at their meeting on October 28, 2020. The Planning Commission's Work Plan would also be presented at the same meeting.
- 4) Additionally, Mr. Boudet reported to the Commission of the following:
  - The City Council conducted the public hearing for the Tideflats Interim Regulations renewal on September 29, 2020. The debrief and first reading were on the schedule for October 13, 2020.
  - The City Council's public hearing for the Infill Pilot Program 2.0 was conducted on October 6, 2020. The first reading was scheduled for October 13, 2020. Comments were generally in support of the project.

## G. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:28 p.m.

*\*These minutes are not a direct transcription of the meeting, but rather a brief capture. For full-length audio recording of the meeting, please visit:*

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