



PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES APRIL 18, 2018

CALL TO ORDER:

The Planning Commission was called to order by Chair Daniel Hubbell at 6:05 PM in the Council Chambers at 9611 SE 36th Street, Mercer Island, Washington.

ROLL CALL:

Chair Daniel Hubbell, Vice Chair Tiffin Goodman, Commissioners Ted Weinberg, Lucia Pirzio-Biroli, Bryan Cairns, and Carolyn Boatsman were present. Commissioner Jennifer Mechem arrived at 6:15

City staff was represented by Evan Maxim, Planning Manager, Andrea Larson, Administrative Assistant, Bio Park, Assistant City Attorney, Nicole Gaudette, Senior Planner, Robin Proebsting, Senior Planner, Andrew Leon, Planner,

Commissioner Boatsman moved to approve the April 4, 2018 minutes, Commissioner Weinberg seconded the motion. The minutes were approved as amended 6-0-0.

APPEARANCES:

There were no public appearances.

PUBLIC HEARING:

Agenda Item #1: ZTR18-001 – Procedural Code Amendment

The Commission opened the public hearing to consider proposed code amendments to the procedural regulations. The public hearing will be continued to May 16, 2018.

Dan Grausz, 3215 74th PI SE, Mercer Island, WA 98040. Mr. Grausz spoke regarding the purposed changes to long plats and subdivisions and removing the authority from City Council on final approval. Mr. Grausz indicated that it is key for City Council to remained involved in these decisions as subdivisions are subjective about advancing City goals, it is key for residents to know that City Council is supporting them and that it is more appropriate for City Council to make the hard decisions. Mr. Grausz also spoke regarding the difficulty in reading the purposed amendments to the code. Mr. Grausz encouraged the Planning Commission to ask staff to provide a chart that would show how different permit types would be affected by the purposed change.

George Steirer, 7233 Douglas Ave SE, Snoqualmie, WA 98065. Mr. Steirer provided the Commission with printed copies of his written comments. Mr. Steirer provided the Commission with an overview of his written comments.

Chair Hubbell tabled the public hearing until May 16, 2018.

Commissioner Pirzio-Biroli asked for clarification regarding the Design Commission Review. Commissioner Boatsman asked if there were any changes to the approval criteria and requested a table that summarized the current procedural requirements and the proposed procedural requirements. Staff responded to Commissioner questions. Staff agreed to provide the requested table at the May 16, 2018 meeting and a clean copy (not legislative line in / line out) of the proposed amendments to MICC 19.15.

Agenda Item #2: ZTR18-002 – Code Cleanup Code Amendment

The Commission opened the public hearing to consider proposed code amendments to clarify existing development standards. The public hearing will be continued to May 16, 2018

Dan Grausz, 3215 74th PI SE, Mercer Island, WA 98040. Mr. Grausz provided the Commission with an overview of his submitted written comments.

Chair Hubbell tabled the public hearing until May 16, 2018.

REGULAR BUSINESS:

Agenda Item #3: ZTR18-002 – Critical Areas Code Amendment

Robin Proebsting gave a staff presentation on a study session with the Planning Commission.

The Commission held a study session on the code amendment. The Commission reviewed the definitions, foundational concepts and terms and discussed a decision-making framework for the Critical Areas code amendment.

The commission discussed the code amendment and definitions provided by the staff. Commissioner Cairns asked to have the definitions of yard and landslide hazard area clarified. Vice Chair Goodman asked for clarification on when and how City Council determines what are wildlife habitat conservation areas. Chair Hubbell asked for clarification regarding stormwater swales versus a watercourse. Chair Hubbell asked if man-made watercourses and swales can be included in the definition of watercourse.

Commissioner Mechem left at 7:20pm.

Commissioner Pirzio-Biroli indicated that text about wildlife should be added to the Comprehensive plan.

The Commission began to discuss policy aspects that should be considered in their decision-making process. Commissioner Weinberg stated that individual rights, public rights and environmental sustainability all need to be considered. Commissioner Weinberg noted that there needs to be the ability to make allowances for certain circumstances. Chair Hubbell stated that there are three competing interests, economic, social and environmental.

Commissioner Pirzio-Biroli indicated that the definition of sustainability is preserving the environment for future generations, providing stewardship. Commissioner Pirzio-Biroli indicated that this needs to be considered in the context of the greater region, not just Mercer Island; don't consider what the values are just for our community, but to consider what it is for the region. Commissioner Pirzio-Biroli also expressed that the Commission needs to contemplate growth in the region and how do we maintain critical areas with growth that cannot be deny.

Commissioner Cairns indicated that there is value in placing priorities based on what is on Mercer Island. Commissioner Cairns stated that safety in geologically hazard areas needs to be considered. Vice Chair Goodman indicated that there need to be mechanisms in place to ensure safety for building on slopes.

Commissioner Pirzio-Biroli stated that staff and the Commission should look at Bainbridge Island to see if they have regulations that they have instituted that could be applied to Mercer Island. Chair Hubbell stated the effects on social interaction and outdoor recreation should be considered.

Commissioner Weinberg expressed that there needs to be a way to weight the criteria for making the determination and that there may be "strong" or "weak" effects in each policy category.

The Commission indicated that they do not want any large negative effects in the critical areas that are defined. The Commission also expressed a desire for a simple or "elegant" critical areas code.

The Commission recessed at 8:30pm

The Commission reconvened at 8:39pm

Agenda Item #4: CPA18-001 Comprehensive Plan Amendment

Evan Maxim gave a staff presentation on the second meeting regarding Comprehensive Plan Amendments Nos. 10 and 14.

The commission discussed Comprehensive Plan Amendment No. 10.

The commission provided clarification on the wording of goal 2 under the housing element.

“Provide a variety of housing types and densities to address the current and future needs to all Mercer Island residents, support the creation of a variety of housing types that will support different family living needs and aging in place.”

Commissioner Mechem added additional items for amendment No. 10, including items to the housing element, for the land use element, and capital facilities element.

Chair Hubbell stated it should be considered to replace the term special needs with accessible housing in policy 2.3.

Chair suggests that we look at the title “special needs” and have Commissioner Mechem, Chair Hubbell and Evan Maxim meet to determine the best term to be used.

Commission stated that they would like to proceed with the edits provided by Commissioner Mechem.

The commission discussed Comprehensive Plan amendment No. 14.

The Commission provided feedback on suggested changes to the amendment.

Vice Chair Goodman suggested that the amendment be tabled and brought back with examples on what other communities were able to achieve with this type of goal.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Evan Maxim provided a Planning Manger report regarding the user group meeting that was held on April 16, 2018 and resulted in a docket of proposed code amendments for further consideration.

PLANNED ABSENCES

Commissioner Boatsman will be absent on May 2, 2018.

NEXT MEETING:

The next regularly scheduled Planning Commission meeting will be May 2, 2018 at 6:00PM at Mercer Island City Hall.

ADJOURNMENT:

Chair Daniel Hubbell adjourned the meeting at 10:05pm