

PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES



HYBRID/REMOTE AND IN PERSON AT THE MILL

October 2, 2024

CALL TO ORDER: 6:04 PM by Chair Connor Davis

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair Connor Davis, Vice-Chair Janice Huxford, Commissioner Michael Duerr, Commissioner Jennifer Davis, Council Liaison Ryan Donoghue (via Zoom)

MEMBERS ABSENT: Commissioner Bruce Morton

STAFF PRESENT: Community Development Director Russ Wright, Senior Planner David Levitan, Planning Manager Christi Schmidt, Assistant Planner Jill Needham, Administrative Assistant Dawn Erickson

OTHERS PRESENT: Approximately 50 participants in the audience, with 23 on Zoom

Chair Davis called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call: After Vice-Chair Huxford moved and Commissioner Duerr seconded, Commissioner Morton was unanimously excused from tonight's meeting; all others were present.

Guest business: No guest business, other than the public hearing items, were noted by audience members.

Approval of Minutes: The minutes of September 18, 2024, were approved as written. Commissioner Davis made the motion, and Vice-Chair Huxford seconded (the motion carried unanimously).

Discussion Items:

Senior Planner Levitan presented a high-level overview of the Comprehensive Plan, briefly discussing the legislation that drives its development and what the city has done in response to the most recent legislation, which requires cities to address growth projections and the need for additional affordable housing. The Plan will go before the City Council on October 22, 2024. He then offered to answer any procedural questions from the Commission and turned over the meeting to the Commissioners.

Chair Davis expressed his appreciation for the audience's engagement and welcomed comments/questions from audience members. He asked speakers not to repeat the same questions if someone had addressed them already and limited time to three minutes per speaker so the Commission could address as many questions/comments as possible.

Nile Arkush commented on tax assessment, the pace of growth, the potential use of eminent domain, and transportation and sidewalks.

David Otis asked about long-term effects on specific neighborhoods

Jonathan Dalley discussed leaving single-family homes (SFHs) in small neighborhoods intact in the city.

Rene Bond addressed plans for non-buildable land and recreational and environmental concerns.

Susan Quigley discussed perceived sewer/septic map errors and wetland designation.

Kevin Quigley discussed how shifting zoning changes might affect property owners' purchasing decisions.

Lee Dyer also discussed leaving single-family homes (SFHs) in small neighborhoods intact and providing sidewalks and infrastructure to support population growth.

Gina Dyer quality of life, lane capacity and sidewalks, the trestle, and parking capacity where the building is taking place. She requested that the city consider sustainability and minimize the impact on communities.

Joyce Towns stated that the postcards mailed out did not use plain language, which made confusing.

Sally Jo Sebring disagrees with plans to build more near the trestle. She stated the Capital Facilities plan doesn't have any sidewalk improvements in the six-year plan.

Liz Davies requested due process and transparency during city processes.

Randy Dicken highlighted the need for sidewalks in conjunction with the building of multi-family homes (MFHs) from a safety perspective.

Balaji Kundake asked about the effects on water and sewer line provision that zoning changes will have.

Shelly Johnson expressed concerns about traffic, drugs and cleanliness, as well as parking and sidewalks not keeping pace.

Nile Arkush expressed concern about roundabouts and drug use in high-density areas.

Debbie Sewell asked the city to focus on safety while growing quickly.

Steve Arbaugh stated that the city should disclose a list of builders and developers who participated in developing this plan.

Randy Foreman reiterated how shifting zoning changes might affect property owners' purchasing decisions.

David Otis expressed concern about being displaced.

Online public comments

Bill Walles, Pastor at Hope Church 20th St & Hwy, asked how the zoning changes might affect the property where the church is located.

Unnamed commenter - What about our schools that are maxed out?

Unnamed commenter - Everything is falling on deaf ears; they don't care about the community and who is in it!

Unnamed commenter – Truth!

The Commissioners expressed appreciation for all comments and questions and wanted to let the audience members know that they share many of the concerns expressed. Vice-Chair Huxford pointed out that there are some things the cities can control and others that are out of their control.

Commissioner Packard asked Planning to explain more about the postcards' message. Director Wright explained that the city must use a specific format and language in its outreach; developing a map tool helps break it down more into layman's terms. He also emphasized that the city is the regulatory agency that ensures code compliance rather than an entity that builds housing. He stated that the city bases were to suggest higher-density buildings on nearby available services, such as shopping and bus lines

An unnamed audience member asked how many times the city can rezone. Director Wright said he would be happy to have a one-on-one conversation. He turned the meeting over to the Commissioners for deliberation.

Commissioner Packard said his understanding of many of the concerns expressed at this meeting centers around the fear of the loss of single-family housing due to the rezoning.

Director Wright explained that the rezoning doesn't obligate anyone to build up to that capacity.

Planner Levitan noted that on the east side of Frontier Heights Park, currently mixed-use zoned, it is proposed to change to RA-12 (primarily intended for small lot single residential that allows for middle-housing, but not large apartment buildings or other types of multi-family uses beyond four-plexes), recognizing the need for unsubsidized, more affordable housing.

Commissioner Duerr requested a very high-level overview of the legislation affecting the city's obligation to plan for growth. Director Wright stated the legislature significantly changed the Growth Management Act (GMA) and the Permit Review Act. GMA changes compelled cities to plan for growth by adding more middle housing, which includes anything from duplexes to six-plexes. These changes allow for duplexes on every city family lot and allow for two ADUs on all residential city lots. The city does its best to include these requirements in the Comprehensive Plan.

Commissioner Duerr asked if there was an option for a city to say it doesn't want MFH units in certain areas; Director Wright confirmed that is not an option.

Commissioner Packard asked for confirmation that the new code doesn't mean a property owner *is required to build up to the capacity allowed by the zoning, but they have the option to do so.* Commissioner Davis confirmed nothing changes for a homeowner unless they want it to.

Chair Davis asked if anyone who hadn't already spoken wished to comment. Bryce Seek was not in favor of zoning changes affecting property in his neighborhood.

An unnamed audience member asked where the public could go for additional information or to follow the process. Chair Davis said the public comment process is open through October 9, 2024. Correspondence can be e-mailed to the city; Director Wright encouraged people to communicate with Planner Levitan or visit the city website for updates.

Director Wright asked if there was any additional guidance for the Planning Department. Chair Davis said the issues vocalized seemed to boil down to a lack of clarity (as opposed to transparency) and the potential use of eminent domain.

An unnamed audience member asked what developer(s) or builder(s) have participated in this process. Chair Davis assured him that there is no such participation.

Next steps—Director Wright stated a second PC hearing would be held, followed by a recommendation to the City Council. Then, (if approved), a city ordinance would be passed, which would become effective six days after being approved. A new ordinance can be expected in October or early November.

Debbie Sewell – Requested the city make available information about what would happen, in terms of assistance, if people were ever to be displaced.

Vice-Chair Huxford made a motion, which Chair Davis seconded, to hold over public comment until 6pm October 9, 2024; the motion was passed unanimously.

Commissioner Report:

No Commissioner Reports

Director Report:

No Director Report

Adjourn: Motion to adjourn today by Commissioner Duerr, seconded by Vice-Chair Huxford, at 8:00 PM. The motion carried unanimously. The meeting will be continued in none week on October 9, 2024 at 6pm.

The Public Hearing meeting was re-convened (same time and location) on October 9, 2024.

CALL TO ORDER: 6:00 PM by Vice-Chair Janice Huxford

MEMBERS PRESENT: All members present, other than Chair Connor Davis, who will be joining later

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Community Development Senior Planner David Levitan, Planning Manager Christi Schmidt, Assistant Planner Jill Needham, Administrative Assistant Dawn Erickson

OTHERS PRESENT: Approximately 20 participants in the audience, with 10 on Zoom

Vice-Chair Huxford called the meeting to order at 6:00p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call: After Commissioner Morton moved and Commissioner Davis seconded, Chair Davis was not excused with the understanding he would be joining later tonight. The motion was unanimously approved.

Guest business: No guest business, other than the public hearing items, were noted by audience members.

Approval of Minutes: There were no minutes to approve, as this meeting is a continuation of the Public Hearing meeting held October 2, 2024.

Discussion Items:

There were no discussion items other than the Comprehensive Plan update were brought up.

Senior Planner Levitan briefly explained the purpose of the Comprehensive Plan and gave an overview of the process to date.

Commissioner Morton discussed proposed changes from multi-use to multi-family residential.

Vice-Chair Huxford requested that audience members not bring up comments raised at last week's meeting but instead refer to the FAQs provided.

Tom Dodd wanted to know what happened to the maintenance people. (Vice-Chair Huxford later clarified that this comment was directed toward his building's maintenance staff instead of Public Works.)

Mark Somers commended city staff and the Commissioners for all their work.

Bryce Seek expressed concerns about rezoning in the Cavalero area

Rene Bond reiterated concerns expressed last week.

Dina Williams talked about rezoning near Hartford

Sally Jo Sebring raised concerns about an area near 99th & 20th St SE

John Corter suggested higher-density zoning on a property at 91st & 20th St SE

Vice-Chair Huxford made a last call for public comments online or in the audience. After none were posed, Commissioner Duerr moved to close public comment, and Commissioner Packard seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

After a discussion about

- application of the Critical Areas ordinance overriding any zoning designations,
- the flexibility of the Capital Improvement Plan,
- the potential for zoning exceptions for specific properties (must go through various processes, depending on whether a land use map amendment is needed),
- leaving MUN zones unchanged (instead of changing them to MFR),
- the Department of Ecology/EPA overrides local zoning

Commissioner Morton moved that the parcels proposed to change from MUN to MFR remain MUN. Commissioner Davis seconded. No one opposed; all other Commissioners approved, except for Commissioner Packard, who abstained.

Planning Manager Schmidt stated that the Commissioners could make a recommendation directing city staff to provide additional analysis between now and the Council Public Hearing on October 22, 2024 to see if any additional capacity exists, which can be reflected in the staff report to City Council. Commissioner Davis moved that the Planning Commission approve the Comprehensive Plan as written, with an amendment to keep an MUN-zoned area at the corner of Cavalero Rd and 20th St SE zoned as such, and directing city staff to further analyze potential alternative locations for accommodating needed multifamily residential housing capacity. The motion was passed unanimously.

A motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Packard and seconded by Commissioner Duerr; the motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 7:54pm.

Respectfully,

Dawn Erickson, Planning Administrative Assistant