



RENTON PLANNING COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes

March 1, 2006
6:00 PM

City Municipal Building
Council Chambers

Planning Commissioners Present: Robert Bonner, Jimmy Cho, Ray Giometti, Jerrilynn Hadley, Nancy Osborn, Joshua Shearer, Greg Taylor

Planning Commissioners Absent: None

City Staff Present: Rebecca Lind, Planning Manager; Erika Conkling, Associate Planner; Judith Subia, Recording Secretary

1. CALL TO ORDER: Commissioner Giometti opened the meeting at 6:00 PM
2. ROLL CALL: Commissioner Osborn called roll; all Commissioners present
3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: There were no Minutes available for approval.
4. CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED: Hearing Examiner Minutes of a February 14, 2006 meeting, regarding approval for a 7-lot subdivision of a 1.139-acre site intended for the development of detached single-family homes.
5. AUDIENCE COMMENTS: None
6. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS: None
7. POLICY/CODE STUDY SESSION:

Highlands Zoning Briefing

STAFF PRESENTATION

Rebecca showed a presentation explaining the change in direction and the status of work to date. Different analyses of proposed land uses have been presented to the Commission. At the last meeting, Concept C2 was presented. This map has been revised and Rebecca shared with the Commission a new approach. The land use concepts discussed previously have been based entirely on the existing Comprehensive Plan for the study area: Center Village, Medium Density Residential, and Single Family Residential.

The Center Village adopted policy provides for 10 to 80 dwelling units per net acre and redevelopment of low density suburban land use patterns. It creates higher densities and allows a range of commercial goods and services. It also provides for compact urban developments, which are transit and pedestrian oriented, with structured parking, and alley access. It has policies called for a higher standard of design and allows clustering of commercial and community uses.

The Medium Density Residential adopted policy provides for 7 to 18 dwelling units per net acre. Two zones can be used, R-10 and R-14. Only the R-10 zone exists in the study area. The plan allows a wide

range of housing types. These range from small lot single family, zero lot line detached, cottages, and townhouses. The area designated as Medium Density in the study area is currently 4.4 dwelling units per net acre.

Since the last meeting, based on additional information from the public and the Administration, it was determined that the densities proposed in Concept C2 may be insufficient to achieve the overall objectives for redevelopment. The organization of land use by housing type might be too rigid. There needs to be a way to work with property owners to bring about a redevelopment effort.

A decision was made to revise the schedule and not make the attempt to have a subarea plan drafted by the end of the moratorium on May 14. There is insufficient time for adequate review of draft policies and refinements needed for land use and density issues.

Rebecca provided background information about the relationship between the Subarea Plan and the Comprehensive Plan. As Staff was moving forward with the subarea plan, everything that was done has been a refinement of existing Comprehensive Plan policies. However, they are not different as they must be consistent. The Comprehensive Plan is updated annually. It may be approved outside of the annual review cycle if it is necessary to amend the adopted Comprehensive Plan policies to accomplish needed policy changes for the Highlands Subarea. Staff recommends looking at density levels, mapping of the Center Village designation, and to evaluate the range of uses.

The City needs additional time to develop policies and new development standards, to continue the public outreach program, and to gain property owner, business owner and resident input and support for the plan. The Subarea Plan review schedule has been extended to the end of July. The Administration has made a decision to combine the Plan with the 2006 Comprehensive Plan Amendments. This allows review of underlying Comprehensive Plan designations: Center Village, Medium Density Residential, and Single Family. This also gives the Planning Commission and Public more time to review the Plan draft.

The moratorium ends on May 14 and City Council does not support further extension. The current zoning does not allow the higher densities needed to simulate a larger redevelopment effort. Some existing lots are large enough to subdivide at lower densities. Lower density perpetuates a land use pattern inconsistent with the adopted City goals and visions for the Center Village and Medium Density Residential land use designations.

The Administration has decided to enact interim zoning by the end of the moratorium. The zoning will be consistent with the existing Comprehensive Plan. Zoning issues to address before May 14th 1) include density needed to stimulate redevelopment, 2) elimination of the ability to plat at lower densities, and 3) provision for affordable housing bonus and design guidelines.

The shift in work program addresses the zoning text amendment as the first priority. Staff will present a refinement of the existing Comprehensive Plan policies, mapping of designations, and density concepts as part of the Subarea Plan. Staff will combine the Subarea Plan and the 2006 Comprehensive Plan Amendments and a refinement to zoning after review of both Plans.

Issues to be addressed in larger Comprehensive Plan review include needing higher density in some areas to achieve affordable housing objectives. The current Comprehensive Plan maximum of 80 dwelling units per net acre may not work for some forms of multi-family and mixed-use development. Issues also include evaluating additional density and re-designating areas outside the core development area for inclusion or exclusion from the Center Village Comprehensive Plan designation.

Erika talked about the zoning concept and said that three zones in the subarea need to be reevaluated: Center Village (CV), Residential 10 (R-10), and Residential 14 (R-14). The proposal includes replacing the R-10 zone with the R-14 zone within the Medium Density Residential designation. Also, to develop three distinct Center Village areas: Center Village - Core (CV-C), Center Village - Residential (CV-R), and Center Village - Flex (CV-X) and retain some of the RMF properties in certain areas, but rezone to CV in other areas.

Erika explained that the Center Village - Core is located along Sunset Blvd. The land uses proposed are commercial, mixed use, and multi-family. This is the heart of the Center Village that would include transit hub, commercial center, employment, neighborhood services, open space, and recreation. This is the highest density area. The highest density would only be allowed with the provision of affordable units. All three zones have affordable housing incentives built in.

The Center Village - Residential is located around the Core. This provides a residential base to support the Core. The land use includes cottages and townhouses. The base density would be in the medium range and have a bonus density for the provision of affordable housing. The residential district will have pedestrian connections to the Core.

The Center Village - Flex is not mapped initially. Properties over a defined size could rezone into CV-X upon development. Processing of the rezone would be concurrent with the processing of a master plan. This zone allows a wider range of densities and flexible development standards. This flexibility allows the plan to be easily adapted to market changes and forces. Anyone rezoning into CV-X would need to provide affordable housing.

Commissioner Giometti asked how spot zoning would be avoided. Rebecca explained that these three standards will be suffixes under the Center Village zone.

Continuing, Erika talked about the areas in the existing Residential Multi-Family zone. The Ferndale area will have no change because of its location. This area will be evaluated to remove it from the Center Village designation as part of the 2006 Comprehensive Plan Amendments. Several multi-family areas along Sunset are prime areas to rezone into Center Village - Core and Center Village -Residential.

Other use changes include an increase for single family in this area in response to public requests for more single family. These single family areas are in the outskirts of the study area that were previously Phase II. This provides a transition to surrounding neighborhoods. It would not be the focus of redevelopment efforts. However, as properties are redeveloped, they would be subject to the design and character of the subarea.

Commissioner Bonner asked if the Highlands Library would be redeveloped. Rebecca said that there is no plan yet, but change is anticipated. The expectation is that the Highlands Library and North Highlands Community Center will be evaluated for their current effectiveness.

Rebecca explained the park space and said that the assumption of park space is built into the matrix. As development occurs, park space will be required. Staff will work with Park Staff to determine where the parks will be.

Commissioner Hadley asked if the acreage of parkland needs to be in the subarea or if existing parks could be enlarged. Rebecca said that the Parks department has different categories of need for different types of parks. Staff has not gone into any detail with the Parks department yet, but a park acreage allocation has been identified to avoid assigning residential use on all available land.

Commissioner Taylor asked if there was a formula or standard used to determine how much park space is needed. Rebecca said that the formula is in the Parks and Capital Facilities Elements of the Comprehensive Plan. These are citywide standards for different types of parks that are based on acreage per population thresholds.

Commissioner Shearer asked about the Center Village - Flex zoning and its association with a master plan. Erika explained that a master plan is a process that a property owner/developer goes through and sets out what types of uses are going to occur on the site and how they are going to occur. It's a binding agreement between the City and the applicant. The Center Village - Flex zoning is intended as a negotiation tool used to create high quality and high standards.

Commissioner Taylor asked if there were provisions for churches. Erika explained that religious institutions are protected by the Federal Constitution and is allowed in all zones. Rebecca added that

there are Hearing Examiner conditional uses in all zones. A religious institution would be given the same zoning as its surroundings. However, they would be subject to the development standards, such as height and setbacks, of that zone.

Commissioner Osborn asked about the effect of the moratorium's expiration date and the timeline process. Rebecca said that the moratorium expires on May 14. There is a process for creating zoning text amendments. There is also a process to rezone properties into those zones. The Commission is delegated responsibility for areawide rezones that are not site specific. In order to have zoning before the Council to be adopted prior to the expiration of the moratorium, Staff needs to work with the Commission and be done in late March or early April. A public hearing will also need to be held. A full schedule will be available at the next meeting.

The meeting recessed at 7:34 PM and reconvened at 7:41 PM.

AUDIENCE COMMENT

Inez Petersen, 3306 Lake Washington Blvd N #3, Renton, WA 98056: Ms. Petersen informed the Commission that the Highlands Community Association held a meeting with the community last week and said that no one at that meeting wants to sell their property. She feels that the missing link in the redevelopment plans is community input. Ms. Petersen shared with the Commission an email that she sent to the City Council after listening to the Mayor's State of the City speech.

Terry Persson, 2821 NE 8th Pl, Renton, WA 98056: Mr. Persson feels that there is no way for this redevelopment to work without having to take properties from homeowners through eminent domain. He would like to see a reevaluation of how to put this plan together where more people that live in the community are involved. Mr. Persson would like to see the area redevelop, but does not want to see a drastic change.

Sandel DeMastus, 1137 Harrington Ave NE, Renton, WA 98056: Ms. DeMastus lives in the subarea where the first of the redevelopment would take place. She has spoken with others in the community who are upset with the City for trying to take away their homes. She feels that if the City takes homes, property owners will not be able to purchase homes elsewhere. Ms. DeMastus feels that a lot of people will be displaced with nowhere to go.

8. DELIBERATION/RECOMMENDATION: None

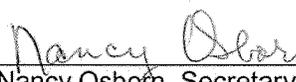
9. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS: Commissioner Bonner asked why Staff is continuing their efforts where it is not wanted. He suggested putting redevelopment efforts towards the heart of the City and that growth would radiate from that. The efforts to the Downtown area are a great example of what could happen to the Renton area. If people see the potential in the heart of the City, they will be open-minded to see what can happen in their neighborhood. Renton works on one area, and then another, but should concentrate on one area. People will see the potential and gain. Commissioner Bonner feels that the property values in the Highlands will increase. The Renton area has potential and doesn't want to see growth be prohibited or stopped.

The next Planning Commission meeting will be on March 15, 2006.

10. ADJOURNMENT: The Meeting was adjourned at 7:55 PM



Ray Giometti, Chair



Nancy Osborn, Secretary