

# CITY OF SHORELINE

## SHORELINE PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING

January 16, 2014  
7:00 P.M.

Shoreline City Hall  
Council Chamber

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### Commissioners Present

Chair Moss  
Vice Chair Esselman  
Commissioner Craft  
Commissioner Maul  
Commissioner Montero  
Commissioner Scully  
Commissioner Wagner

### Staff Present

Rachael Markle, Director, Planning and Community Development  
Steve Szafran, Senior Planner, Planning and Community Development  
Lisa Basher, Planning Commission Clerk

### CALL TO ORDER

Planning Commission Chair, Donna Moss, called the regular meeting of the Shoreline Planning Commission to order at 7:00 p.m.

### ROLL CALL

Upon roll call by the Commission Clerk the following Commissioners were present: Chair Moss, Vice Chair Esselman, and Commissioners Craft, Maul, Montero, Scully and Wagner.

### APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was accepted as presented.

### APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of December 19, 2013 were adopted as amended.

### GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair Moss reviewed the rules and procedures for public comments. No one in the audience indicated a desire to address the Commission during this portion of the meeting.

## **STUDY ITEM: DRAFT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENT DOCKET**

### **Staff Presentation**

Mr. Szafran explained that the State Growth Management Act (GMA) limits review of proposed Comprehensive Plan Amendments to no more than once a year. To assure that the public can view the proposals in a citywide context, the GMA directs cities to create a docket that lists the amendments to be considered. He advised that there are two amendments on the 2014 docket: one city-initiated amendment and one privately-initiated amendment that was submitted by two separate property owners.

Mr. Szafran said the city-initiated amendment is a carryover from the 2013 docket. He reminded the Commission that the 2013 Comprehensive Plan Amendment Docket included amendments to the Point Wells Subarea Plan based on the outcome of the Richmond Beach Traffic Corridor Study. The Council was unable to complete the 2013 docket item due to delays in Snohomish County's environmental review process, and the amendment was added to the 2014 docket.

Mr. Szafran said the privately-initiated amendment would change the Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map designation for the area shown on the map from Low-Density Residential (LDR) to High-Density Residential (HDR). He said staff recommends not adding this amendment to the 2014 docket. He explained that the City spent the better part of 2012 updating the Comprehensive Plan, identifying areas where density is appropriate and planning for growth within those areas. Staff is also working on the Light Rail Station Subarea Plans, which will provide more density in those areas. He also noted the budget implications of including the amendment on the docket in terms of environmental review, traffic analysis, State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) review, etc.

The meeting was recessed for a five minutes to allow Commissioners to review the items that were provided in their desk packet (emails and letters that were submitted after the Staff Report was prepared).

Commissioner Wagner asked if the proposed Community Renewal Area (CRA) would be limited to the commercial properties (Sears site) or if surrounding properties would also be included. Mr. Szafran answered that only the commercial properties are included within the CRA boundaries.

### **Public Comment**

Chair Moss clarified that this is a study session and not an official legislative public hearing. However, the comments provided (both written and oral) will be forwarded to the City Council along with the Commission's recommendation.

**Gary Alston, Edmonds**, read an excerpt from the December 27, 2013 Puget Sound Business Journal in which Steve Lerch, Chief Economist and Executive Director for the State of Washington Economic and Review Forecast Council, commented that while rising home prices and mortgage rates may be good for the economy; mortgage payments, as a fraction of household income, jumped 22% in the past year. Mr. Alston said this article supports his belief that the only way to make housing in Shoreline more affordable is to raise densities. He provided pictures to illustrate how his property could be developed if

the amendment is approved. The buildings would be similar to single-family homes, but with a higher density. There would also be a 20-foot setback from adjoining properties. He provided pictures to illustrate how his two properties are currently developed. He noted that while there are new single-family homes on larger lots to the south of his two properties, Shoreline has a lot of single people, and the only way to make housing more affordable to these individuals is to have a higher density. Although surrounding property owners have indicated concern about trees, traffic, etc., he believes the impacts would be very small and his proposed project would provide affordable housing in Shoreline.

**Guy Olivera, Shoreline**, said he and his wife live in a home that is immediately adjacent to a parcel (15220 Dayton Avenue North) that is proposed for increased density. He suggested that profit is the only reason that anyone would seriously apply for an amendment that would triple the density on a property that is located in the middle of a single-family neighborhood. He disagreed that the impact of the proposed amendment would be minimal. He expressed his belief that adding two homes on 15208 and 15204 and an additional home on 15220 would be profitable and in keeping with the character of the neighborhood. However, there is no justification for making such a drastic and disastrous change in the middle of an R6 zone. Changes to higher density are more appropriate near where the new transit stations will be located.

**Howdy King, Shoreline**, said he lives close to the properties that are proposed for change, and he agrees with the comments provided by Mr. Olivera. It would be a tragedy to chop up a residential district by increasing the density. They moved to the neighborhood 25 years ago because it was beautiful, had great schools and traffic was reasonable. Overcrowding the neighborhood would be a disaster.

**Jan Christophersen, Shoreline**, expressed concern that increasing the density on the subject parcels would set a precedence to change other lots in the neighborhood. She noted that changes have already been made to some properties in the neighborhood to allow a greater density. She expressed concern that if the amendment is approved, the properties on either side of her could also request a change, resulting in seven new homes on each side of her property.

**Ken Christophersen, Shoreline**, said he grew up in Seattle where he was able to play in the streets and vacant lots. That is no longer the case, and he was unable to even park in front of his house. He does not want the same thing to occur in his neighborhood. He understands that property owners need to redevelop and make money, but tripling the density would be over the top.

**Eric Liljegreen, Shoreline**, said he lives on Greenwood Avenue and drives by the properties that have been cleared but remain undeveloped. Although this was allowed by the zoning code, it was painful to watch numerous significant trees be removed from the site. The proposed amendment would triple the density, and he does not see any justification for the change. The change would be radically inconsistent with the neighborhood and with the zoning. He is opposed to the amendment and supports the staff's recommendation to leave it off the docket.

**Neil Borkowski, Shoreline**, said he chose to purchase a home in his neighborhood because of the trees and low-density housing. He said he can't see why they need to triple the density in a single-family neighborhood given that there are vacancies in the Shoreline area and places where low-income people

can live. Houses similar to those proposed by Mr. Alstron have been constructed on Greenwood, and they have become the scourge of Seattle. About 1/3 of the units are rentals with six to eight residents, and there is no garage or extra parking. The units basically become apartments, and they are not maintained properly. This type of development does not belong in the City's single-family residential neighborhoods.

**Steven Beatty, Shoreline**, said he is a construction contractor, and he understands that the real way to make money in real estate is to divide land and build more units. He said he lived in Fremont for about a decade. When he moved there, it was a single-family zone, but by the time he left it had been rezoned to allow roughly equivalent to what Mr. Alston is proposing. Six years ago, he moved to a neighborhood in Shoreline to raise his children. He expressed concern that, typically, the type of development allowed by the proposed amendment would house two professionals who do not have children and do not participate in the City. They generally work in Seattle and move up. He said the people he interacts with at his daughter's school emphatically want to live in a single-family style neighborhood in Shoreline. They are not looking for an urban or high-density space. He referred to a 2013 homicide map for the City of Seattle and noted that the bulk of the north end homicides happen on Greenwood. He suggested this is directly tied to high-density housing, and he anticipates the same would be true for the proposed change because it would result in less neighborhood interaction.

**Tom Jamieson, Shoreline**, expressed his belief that property that is purchased as R6 should be developed as R6. He said he purchased property in a single-family residential neighborhood on Richmond Beach Drive six years ago, and he thought the zoning would stay R6. However, the proposed development at Point Wells is expected to increase traffic from 214 cars per day to 14,000 cars per day over the next 25 years. He referred to Land Use Goal LU-5, which calls for enhancing the character, quality and function of existing residential neighborhoods while accommodating anticipated growth. While this sounds noble, the City has done nothing to support this goal in the case of Point Wells. In agreeing to limit its negotiation to the developer of Point Wells to traffic, annexation and utilities, the City has categorically sold out the neighborhood of Richmond Beach. Not once has the City characterized the planned development at Point Wells as desirable, nor claimed that it would enhance the character, quality or function of any neighborhoods in Shoreline. He suggested that LU-5 is an empty goal, and using it to reject this planned development seems absurd when there is a much greater violation going on elsewhere in Shoreline.

He expressed concern that neither the Staff Report nor the PowerPoint presentation mentioned that the City Council already took action on September 9, 2013 to move the Traffic Corridor Study for Richmond Beach Road from 2013 to 2014. If this is still an outstanding item, he questioned why the public was not notified. He noted no one was present in the audience to speak regarding Point Wells, yet last night's pre-scoping meeting was packed with people who were concerned about Point Wells.

**Krista Tenney, Shoreline**, said she lives on Greenwood and moved from Seattle to Shoreline for many of the same reasons as her neighbors. She has a large lot that she enjoys tremendously, and watching the devastation that happened farther south on Greenwood has been difficult. She noted that the street in front of the properties where increased density is proposed is very busy. To assume that people will walk on that street to get to school or the new Aurora Square is unreasonable. Changing the density will result in more traffic, more pollution, fewer trees, and more noise. She expressed her belief that

increased density would be an improper use of the property. She appreciates the property owner wanting to make money, but not in this location or in this way.

**Twink Turner, Shoreline**, said she lives one block back from the properties that are proposed for increased density. She said she used to live in Ballard in a lovely home with wide streets and yards for kids to play in. Properties in the area were redeveloped into skinny houses right at the sidewalk with no driveways. Because there was no off-street parking, her street became a nightmare and she moved. The proposed amendment would result in a similar situation. People will leave the area and property values will decrease. She said she moved to the area to retire, and she urged the City to protect the single-family neighborhoods.

**Brett Skartvedt, Shoreline**, said he has been a resident of Shoreline since 1963 and has seen a lot of changes. However, he felt going from R6 to R18 would be too drastic of a change. He referred to property on Greenwood near the golf course that was clear cut and redeveloped with higher densities. He expressed his opinion that "cottage homes" do not offer a lot for the money. He realizes that development will happen and developers need to make money, but those who purchase R6 properties expect the zoning to remain intact. Shoreline has never been a low-income area and was never meant to be a high-density area.

**Paul Poulin, Shoreline**, said he lives in the neighborhood where increased density has been proposed. He moved there from Boston three years ago for the same reasons stated by previous speakers. He doesn't want to have to sell his home because the neighborhood gets too crowded.

**COMMISSIONER SCULLY MOVED THAT THE COMMISSION ADOPT THE STAFF'S RECOMMENDATION TO NOT INCLUDE THE AMENDMENT TO THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN LAND USE MAP IN THE 2014 DOCKET. COMMISSIONER MONTERO SECONDED THE MOTION.**

Commissioner Scully explained that because spot zoning is not allowed, the applicants are asking to change the Comprehensive Plan designation for the subject parcels. Because the Comprehensive Plan designation cannot be changed for just three parcels, the proposed amendment would change the entire area outlined in red on the map from LDR to HDR. That means the Comprehensive Plan amendment would be the start of future rezones. Rather than addressing the wisdom of the particular proposal on the three parcels, the Commission must consider the probability that many and possibly all of the parcels would be rezoned to HDR. He noted comments in the Staff Report that question the City's ability to provide services to accommodate the increased density in that location. When planning significant density increases, the City takes a hard look at bus service, utilities, roadways, etc., and he does not see that these issues can be adequately addressed. Although he agrees with Mr. Alston's general comments on density, he felt the proposed amendment was ill advised given its scope.

Commissioner Montero agreed. The Commission spent a lot of time discussing how this area should be designated as part of the Comprehensive Plan update, and there is no real reason to make a change at this time.

Commissioner Wagner said that although one side of the issue has been made abundantly clear, it is important for the Commission to consider other aspects of the proposed amendment, as well. She pointed out that single-family homes are one of the most environmentally unsustainable structures you can build. People have expressed concern about tree removal, but cutting down trees to accommodate a higher density is more sustainable than cutting the same number of trees to accommodate single-family homes. She acknowledged the importance of tree retention, and recalled that the Commission has worked hard to craft regulations that limit and respect larger trees. However, it is important to understand that one of the main reasons for higher densities in cities is so people are not pushed out into natural lands. Although many citizens spoke about their desire for single-family neighborhoods with nice yards, she participated on the Community Housing Council seven years ago where there was strong community support for a variety of housing. Although this concept was not well represented by the public comments, it is important to consider.

Vice Chair Esselman said that while she agrees with Commissioner Wagner's observations, land use for the entire City was reviewed as part of the Comprehensive Plan update and areas where higher densities are appropriate were identified. The subject parcels were not identified as HDR, and it would be inappropriate to change the land use at this time. Commissioner Wagner agreed but felt it was important to consider all aspects of the proposal.

#### **THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Director Markle clarified that the amendment to the Point Wells Subarea Plan was rescheduled by Council on September 9<sup>th</sup>. It is already included on the 2014 Comprehensive Plan Amendment Docket, and no further Commission or Council action is needed. At this time, the Commission is only being asked to forward a recommendation to Council regarding the privately-initiated amendment for a land use change.

Mr. Szafran announced that the Council is scheduled to conduct a study session on the 2014 Comprehensive Plan Amendment Docket on February 24<sup>th</sup>.

#### **DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

##### **Pre-Scoping Meeting for Point Wells Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)**

Director Markle provided a brief overview of the information that was shared at the January 15<sup>th</sup> Pre-Scoping Meeting for the Point Wells Development. She advised that Snohomish County has not yet issued a scoping notice for the project. They are currently reviewing the development permits and will issue a SEPA Determination of Significance (DS), which means that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will have to be prepared. She explained that the scoping notice provides notice to the public that Snohomish County will be making decisions on the permit. The scoping meetings will provide an opportunity to identify potential adverse impacts to the environment and ask that they be studied. They will also provide an opportunity to identify alternatives to the proposed development that would be equivalent and talk about additional studies that might be needed. She said she expects Snohomish County will issue the scoping notice the first week in February. Two scoping meetings will be held on Tuesday, February 18<sup>th</sup>: one at the Shoreline Center and another at the Snohomish County

Administrative Offices. The meetings will include an open house, followed by a brief presentation about the project and scoping in general. Both written and oral comments will be solicited, but no questions are expected to be answered. The scoping period will last the maximum 30 days.

Director Markle emphasized that State law does not require the County to respond to comments that are made during the scoping period. However, the comments will be taken under advisement by the agency making the decision. Following the scoping process, the County will determine which elements of the environment they will include in the study, and it is hoped they will include the City's local suggestions. She said SEPA encourages comments on all elements of the environment, but the County would not be required to cover all elements in the EIS. The idea is only to cover those elements of the environment where significant adverse impacts are likely to occur.

Director Markle advised that after the scoping period is done, Snohomish County will prepare a draft EIS, which will be the next opportunity for the City and citizens to comment on the environmental studies and the alternatives that were analyzed. The County is required to respond to comments on the draft EIS, but no public comment would be taken on the final EIS.

Director Markle said that, at the pre-scoping meeting, staff provided instruction about how to draft helpful comments. The Richmond Beach Community Association will also hold its own meeting to talk to its members about how to draft helpful comments. She advised that the City will recommend that Snohomish County study the following elements of the built and natural environment:

- **Geology and soil**
- **Shorelines**
- **Wetlands and streams**
- **Floodplains**
- **Wildlife, fish and vegetation**
- **Air quality**
- **Transportation (all modes)**
- **Public service and utilities**
- **Economics**
- **Recreation**
- **Land use**
- **Neighborhoods**
- **Visual quality**
- **Cultural Resources**
- **Hazardous Waste**
- **Noise**

Director Markle advised that staff will prepare a draft scoping letter, which would be reviewed by the City Council on February 3<sup>rd</sup>. A copy of the final scoping letter will be sent to all those who attended the pre-scoping meeting. She reviewed the schedule for the Transportation Corridor Study, which will include six community workshops. All of the information collected at the workshops will be included in the City's comments to Snohomish County on the draft EIS.

Vice Chair Esselman asked about the timing for the draft EIS. Director Markle answered that Snohomish County has agreed to not publish the draft EIS until Shoreline has completed the Transportation Corridor Study. She anticipates the process will take at least six months.

## **REPORTS OF COMMITTEES AND COMMISSIONERS/ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **Light Rail Station Area Planning Committee** (Commissioners Scully, Craft and Maul)

Commissioner Craft announced that the second dialogue workshop for the 185<sup>th</sup> Street Station Subarea Plan will be on February 20<sup>th</sup> from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. in the City Hall Council Chambers. The 185<sup>th</sup> Station Citizens Committee (185SCC) is passing out flyers to property owners, and notices will be mailed out to households in the area. The meeting will also be publicized in *CURRENTS*. He advised that computer modeling will be presented at the workshop to illustrate the suggestions and comments received at previous meetings, and those in attendance will be invited to provide additional comments, as well. Mr. Szafran added that three zoning alternatives and their associated impacts will be presented, and the workshop will serve as a scoping meeting for the Planned Action EIS. He noted that the February 20<sup>th</sup> workshop will be noticed on the City's website as a Planning Commission Meeting.

Commissioner Montero said he attended the pre-scoping meeting for Point Wells, and he commended Director Markle for doing an incredible job outlining the entire EIS process and being very specific about how the public could be involved.

Chair Moss announced that the City is in the process of soliciting applications for the Commissioner vacancies that will occur at the beginning of April. She noted that Commissioner Wagner has served two full terms, and would not be eligible to serve an additional term. She suggested Commissioners encourage qualified people to apply for the position. Mr. Szafran advised that applications are due by January 31<sup>st</sup>, and the Council would form a subcommittee at their February 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting to review the applications. Interviews will take place in February and appointments will be made on March 2<sup>nd</sup>.

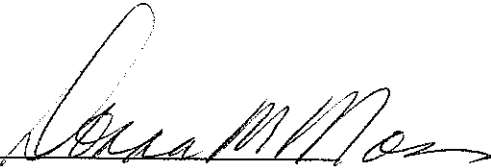
## **AGENDA FOR NEXT MEETING**

Mr. Szafran said there may be a public hearing on the chronic nuisance ordinance on February 6<sup>th</sup>. Chair Moss noted that only four Commissioners were present for the study session on this item. She encouraged those who did not attend to listen to the study session recording. Questions and concerns could be forwarded to Director Markle. She suggested that if the public hearing does not go forward on February 6<sup>th</sup>, the Commission may want to have another study session on the item instead.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:26 p.m.





Donna Moss  
Chair, Planning Commission



Lisa Basher  
Clerk, Planning Commission

**TIME STAMP**  
**January 16, 2014**

**CALL TO ORDER:**

**ROLL CALL:**

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA:**

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

**GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT: 2:25**

**STUDY ITEM: DRAFT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENT DOCKET**

**Staff Presentation: 5:01**

**Public Comment: 17:15**

**Commission Action: 51:30**

**DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

**Pre-Scoping Meeting for Point Wells Environmental Impact Statement (EIS): 1:02:07**

**REPORTS OF COMMITTEES AND COMMISSIONERS/ANNOUNCEMENTS: 1:15:30**

**AGENDA FOR NEXT MEETING: 1:22:54**

**ADJOURNMENT:**