

CITY OF SHORELINE

SHORELINE PLANNING COMMISSION SUMMARY MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING

January 3, 2008
7:00 P.M.

Shoreline Conference Center
Mt. Rainier Room

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT

Chair Piro
Commissioner Pyle
Commissioner Broili
Commissioner Phisuthikul
Commissioner McClelland
Commissioner Harris
Commissioner Hall

STAFF PRESENT

Joe Tovar, Director, Planning & Development Services
Steve Cohn, Senior Planner, Planning & Development Services
Steve Szafran, Associate Planner, Planning & Development Services
Flannary Collins, Assistant City Attorney
Tom Boydell, Economic Development Director
Jessica Simulcik Smith, Planning Commission Clerk
Ryan Wilke, Intern, Planning & Development Services

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT

Vice Chair Kuboi
Commissioner Wagner

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Piro called the regular meeting of the Shoreline Planning Commission to order at 7:01 p.m. He reported that the Commission just completed an informal dinner meeting to review their work program for 2008. He also noted that Council Member McGlashan and Council Member Elect Scott were in the audience.

ROLL CALL

Upon roll call by the Commission Clerk, the following Commissioners were present: Chair Piro and Commissioners Pyle, Broili, Phisuthikul, McClelland, Harris and Hall. Vice Chair Kuboi and Commissioner Wagner were excused.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chair Piro advised that the Director's Report would be provided in two segments to enable the Commission to get to the public hearing as quickly as possible. The Commission approved the remainder of the agenda as submitted.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Tovar pointed out that five of the nine Planning Commissioners' terms expire at the end of March. He advised that after the public hearing he would spend some time reviewing the process for appointing Commissioners. In addition, he would provide an update on the Point Wells process.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of November 29, 2007 minutes were approved as corrected. The minutes of December 6, 2007 were approved as submitted.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

Les Nelson referred to the Commission's 2008 Work Plan and questioned the process that would be used to create the five subarea plans. He expressed his belief that rather than separate plans, the subarea plans should fit into the entire City plan. He cautioned against putting aside the Comprehensive Plan in order to create the subarea plans. He said it seems that most of the discussion has focused on how much development would be allowed rather than a comprehensive approach that also protects views, trees, greenbelts, etc.

Commissioner Pyle asked if Mr. Nelson is suggesting the Commission take the approach of integrating the general elements of the Comprehensive Plan into the subareas. Mr. Nelson answered affirmatively. He reminded the Commission that the subarea plans must be adopted as Comprehensive Plan amendments, which means that public participation would be required as part of the process. He questioned the City's process for disseminating information to the public regarding the proposed subarea plans. Commissioner Pyle agreed that proper outreach is difficult, but the Commission has been trying to work closely with the Council of Neighborhoods in an effort to insert themselves more into the community. Chair Piro emphasized that the subarea plans must be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

PUBLIC HEARING – RIDGECREST COMMERCIAL ZONING DELIBERATIONS

Chair Piro announced that Council Member Ryu and Council Member Elect Egan were present in the audience.

Chair Piro asked that during the continued hearing comments be focused on the latest changes and newest information related to the proposal. He advised that the Commission would forward a recommendation to the City Council, and the City Council would make the final decision. He reviewed the rules and procedures for the continued public hearing and then reopened the hearing.

Presentation of Staff Recommended Changes to Earlier Draft

Mr. Tovar reviewed that the proposal for Planned Area 2 (Ridgecrest Commercial Area) has evolved over the course of two Planning Commission study sessions and three meetings for the public hearing. He provided PowerPoint slides from the final report that was prepared by students from the University of Washington after working with the neighborhood and the City. He briefly reviewed the report and outlined the conclusions staff gathered from the process and addressed in the proposed regulations. He

displayed an aerial photograph of the subject property and noted that the student's defined study area did not include include the northwest quadrant of the intersection of 165th and 5th or even the south side of 165th.

Mr. Tovar recalled that the students held two different public meetings. He provided pictures that were taken during the public design charette where they invited the neighborhood to express their hopes, desires and concerns about future development of the Ridgecrest Commercial District. He further recalled that at the design charette the students provided a significant amount of information related to the subject properties such as the rights-of-way, property lines, current land uses, existing zoning, etc.

Mr. Tovar emphasized that the student's goal was not to come up with one recommendation or plan for development of the area. Instead, their goal was to brainstorm numerous alternatives such as building forms, building heights, etc. They also considered possible options for pedestrian access on the arterials and at the intersection as well as ways to deal with Green Streets, drainage swales, green walls, etc. Their goal was to identify ways to move the commercial district towards an economically and environmentally sustainable business district.

Mr. Tovar said staff presented the students' report to the City Council in April of 2007, and the City Council directed staff to draft development regulations that create an incentive for the private sector to make investments in the district and build a development that responds to the vision for the neighborhood. As a result of the City Council's directive, he said staff identified the following three key community objectives the proposed regulations should achieve:

- Create an environmentally sustainable building and site development pattern in the area.
- Provide for more housing choices, including moderate income housing.
- Create a third place for neighborhood life, with public spaces and other amenities.

Mr. Tovar emphasized that the proposed regulations represent only zoning amendments to implement these goals. The proposal is not a Comprehensive Plan amendment, neighborhood plan or capital plan. In addition to a recommendation on the zoning proposal, staff suggests it would be appropriate for the Commission to offer a recommendation to the City Council that they consider other ways to forward the community objectives and vision for the Ridgecrest Commercial Area. For example, to further the notion of creating a third place, they could explore the possibility of relocating the police storefront from its current location to a new building. Another possibility would be to pioneer some Green Street improvements, perhaps along 163rd.

Mr. Szafran displayed a SketchUp drawing depicting the townhouse development that would be likely, based on the current NB zoning. He reviewed the most recent draft of the staff recommendation which addresses the issues raised previously by the public and/or Planning Commission related to height, transition from single-family, sustainability requirements and parking requirements. He reviewed each of the issues as follows:

- ***Issue: Concerns that a 65-foot height limit would result in development that is "too high" for the neighborhood.*** Mr. Szafran explained that if a mixed-use development were constructed on the site, the current zoning would allow a height of up to 50 feet. The proposed zoning regulations would

allow development up to 65 feet. As a tradeoff for the additional 15 feet, the community would gain public amenities, public plazas, affordable housing, Built Green construction, and greater setbacks than are currently required in the NB zone. He summarized that staff believes these tradeoffs more than offset the additional 15 feet of height.

- **Issue: Transition from single-family homes.** Mr. Szafran provided a SketchUp drawing showing how buildings would appear from various locations surrounding the property. He explained that the proposed language would revise the setback and stepback requirements to be more restrictive. The current proposal would allow a 5-foot setback at the property line, but would require that buildings adjacent to R-6 be setback 20 feet by the time the building is 35 feet high. Anything above 35 feet would be required to meet a 1:1 setback ratio until the building achieves the maximum 65 feet in height. By the time a building reaches 65 feet, it would be setback 50 feet from the west property line. In comparison, the current NB zone would allow up to a 50-foot building that is only setback 20 feet from the property line. Mr. Szafran pointed out that the proposed floor area ratio requirement would be limited to 4.75, so it would not be possible to construct a 6-story building across the entire site. He further explained that building would be allowed to go up 35 feet at the 163rd property line, with a 1:1 setback ratio above the 35-foot line. In addition, he advised that staff is proposing Green Street/sustainability features on properties that are located across the street from single-family homes and are developed with non-single family development. Green Street features include rain gardens, natural swales, maintaining existing vegetation, etc.

Commissioner McClelland said that in earlier hearings, staff described images that suggested something a little softer and little more residential in character than what is shown in staff's drawings. Mr. Szafran emphasized that the drawings only identify the skin of the building. Commissioner McClelland cautioned that it is important to understand that the drawings were intended to illustrate bulk not design. Mr. Tovar agreed and clarified that no project has been designed for the subject property. The SketchUp drawings were intended to show the scale of potential development based on the proposed regulations. He cautioned that the proposed regulations would require developments in Planned Area 2 to go through the design review process, which would allow opportunity for the public to comment.

- **Issue: Sustainability for New Development.** Mr. Szafran recalled that the public and the Commissioners expressed concern that the proposed regulations did not go far enough to ensure that new development within the planned area would meet sustainability goals. To address this concern, staff now proposes that new development within Planned Area 2 that is more than four stories must include sustainability features of the King County Built Green Verification Process and obtain at least a 3-star rating or a LEED rating of silver.
- **Issue: Parking Requirements.** Mr. Szafran recalled there was considerable comment related to the proposed parking requirements, particularly the provisions for car-sharing. He explained that the proposed code would require that a car-sharing program be in place with a car and car-sharing-only parking spaces.

With inclusion of the proposed amendments to address the issues raised by the public and Commission, Mr. Szafran said staff recommends approval of the proposed Planned Area 2 code and zoning changes.

Questions by the Commission to Staff

Commissioner Hall inquired regarding the design review process. Mr. Cohn referred to Section 20.91.040.B (Page 64 of Staff Report), which requires the applicant to demonstrate that plans satisfy the design review criteria in SMC 20.90.050. The Director is responsible for determining whether or not an application meets the standards. Any departure from these standards must be approved by the Department Director consistent with the intent of each subsection. The Director's decision could be appealed to the Hearing Examiner.

Commissioner Pyle pointed out that design review would be a new and long overdue process in the City's code. He suggested it would be appropriate to require a Staff Report outlining the findings of how the project is or is not consistent with the design review criteria in the code. Mr. Tovar explained that a staff report would be prepared and made available for comment by the public. The staff report and any public comment would then be presented to the decision maker. Once a decision is rendered, copies would be made available to all those who commented. Appeals would be heard by the Hearing Examiner. Commissioner Pyle said it is important to understand that the intent of the design review process is for staff to work with applicants and architects, using the tools found in the code, to get a quality development for the community. Mr. Tovar added that even before a development permit application is submitted, the developer would be required to meet with the neighborhood.

Public Testimony or Comment on Recommended Changes

Chair Piro briefly reviewed the staff's proposed changes to address the four key issues and asked that the public limit their testimony to the proposed changes only.

Jim Potter, Seattle, Chair of Kauri Investments Limited, indicated his company is the proposed developer for the subject property. He explained that in order for car sharing to be successful, there must be adequate density. One reason that Flexcars are not provided in Shoreline is there is not enough density to support them. If they build the project and find they need more car sharing, they would be happy to provide it.

Secondly, Mr. Potter suggested the SketchUp drawings provided by staff are misleading in regards to bulk and scale. He noted the development would be broken into numerous buildings in order to provide sufficient light and air to accommodate residential units. In addition, the form would be more residential in nature. They hope to provide more pitched roofs, dormers, bay windows, etc. so the development would be compatible with residential construction and fit in better with the community.

Mr. Potter emphasized that their proposed project is very complicated, and it is unusual for a developer to come before city representatives to talk about zoning codes. They normally work with the zoning codes that are already in place. He noted that they met with the community before the zoning proposal was put forward to find out what the neighbors were interested in, and they intend to work more with the community if the proposed zoning change is approved.

Commissioner Phisuthikul asked Mr. Potter to share his opinion about the proposed requirements related to sustainability features. Mr. Potter responded that LEED standards are typically related to commercial development and tend to be very expensive to apply. Built Green is a program approved by King County and several cities in the County. They have constructed three-star buildings before, and they feel comfortable they can construct at least a three-star building in this case. He noted the Built Green Standards are currently being revised to include more locational criteria.

Commissioner McClelland asked Mr. Potter to comment on the statement made at the last public hearing that there may or may not be a market for retail uses and the possibility that the City would not require retail uses on the ground floor. She emphasized that the whole idea of the proposal is to create a streetscape that includes some residential uses and opportunities for the entire community to gather. She questioned how they could create a “third place” without some retail components. Mr. Potter explained that while it is their intent to provide retail uses on the ground floor, it is important to recognize that successful retail uses require people to support them. Commissioner McClelland clarified that her question was related particularly to retail uses and not necessarily other types of commercial uses. Mr. Potter said he hopes to be able to provide retail space on the ground floor, but it is important to work with the community to find the type of retail uses that would be supported by the residents living in the area. He emphasized that he cannot guarantee the entire ground floor of the development would be utilized as retail space.

Lucile Flanigan, Shoreline, said she was present to speak regarding the area on 165th that is developed as small retail, as well as the neighborhood as a whole. She expressed her concern over the parking proposal, and that allowing an additional 40 or 50 more cars to park on the street would create a significant impact. In addition, the retail spaces would not be successful if there is not adequate parking for the customers.

Lisa Kennan-Meyer, West Seattle, Principal of Kennan-Meyer Architecture, said she is hoping to be the architect for the project on the subject property, and she feels comfortable with the changes made by staff since the last public hearing. They are confident they can meet the Built Green requirements, which provide good standards for measuring sustainability. She said parking is always one of the first issues they address when designing projects. She thanked Mr. Wilke for all the work he did to create the SketchUp models. While the models look blocky and institutional, they show what the building limitations would be. She assured the Commission and public that is not what the buildings would look like. She said transition between commercial and residential uses is a big concern to the designers, and staff has worked hard to come up with ideas for addressing this concern using architecture, landscaping, etc. They would work hard to provide a gentle transition.

Mont Francisco, Shoreline, explained that for nine of the past ten years he has lived near the property in question. He said that as a resident of the neighborhood he is incredibly amused by the phrase of “Ridgecrest Commercial District” and the notion that it needs a viable, economic, commercial entity there. He expressed his belief that Ridgecrest is not an area that demands or needs economic redevelopment. It needs development in the area that is appropriate to the scale and lifestyle of the existing residents, and the current proposal would not accomplish that goal. Instead, the proposal would result in a development that is grossly oversized for an area of primarily single-family homes. He said he doesn’t begrudge the apartments in the area, and he lives in one of them. However, the project must

be of an appropriate scale. He said it is interesting to note that they are talking about a 65-foot height limit plus an additional 15 feet for elevator apparatus housing and dormers, etc.

Commissioner Pyle referred to Page 70 of the Staff Report, which provides language related to mechanical equipment that would be incorporated into the building design criteria. Mr. Francisco emphasized that the additional 15 feet of mechanical equipment, etc. was absent from any of the SketchUp drawings provided by staff earlier in the meeting. He said the drawings also did not provide a view down 164th on the west side of the development. All of the drawings conveniently showed the skyline from the east and south sides of the hill, but from the west side of the hill sloping down towards the freeway on 164th, the development would look substantial.

Mr. Francisco said he attended the first visioning meeting where they talked about the notion of sustainability for the neighborhood and a sense of third place. However, it was never mentioned they would have to sacrifice or compromise the livability and character of the neighborhood to achieve those goals. He expressed his belief that a 4,000 square foot gathering place does not provide enough benefit to the community. He concluded his remarks by stating there is not room for more cars to park in the neighborhood. He said he would love to invite his family to visit his home without having to move his car to the street so they can park in his space.

Commissioner Broili asked if Mr. Francisco would be happier with a development of 62, 50-foot high town homes, which is what the current zoning would allow. Mr. Francisco said based on the slides provided by staff, he would be opposed to the type of development that would be allowed if the area were rezoned.

Tom Poitras, Shoreline, said he is against the proposed zoning change, which does not appear to protect the interests of the Ridgcrest citizens. Instead, the City launched a public relations campaign to convince the citizens that the project would be a great addition to the community. They did this by hiring college students to give citizens an impression the project would create a “Carmel, California” atmosphere with wonderful public spaces and boutiques. However, the probability is that the retail spaces would be occupied by uses such as insurance agencies and dry cleaners. The developer and the City are going to make a lot of money on the project, but the benefits to the citizens would be very small compared to the grief it would cause them.

Mr. Poitras expressed concern that the City has not made an effort to resolve the parking problems created by the project. The City seems to want this so badly that they would consider letting the developer provide only 70% of the originally suggested number of parking spaces per unit, and they don't even have to be on site. No concrete, specific, realistic parking plan has ever been presented. The neighborhood has been left with a “just trust us” kind of situation. If Shoreline was protecting their citizens, they would suggest zoning that would potentially relieve the existing theater parking problems, while still allowing the property to be developed in an economically feasible manner. Instead, the suggested zoning would create additional parking demand while it removes the parking lot the theater is currently using. The City has taken the attitude of letting the citizens fend for themselves. The apparent hope that tenants would sell their cars and use either Flexcars or buses is totally unrealistic. He concluded that if the high rise project goes through, it would change the identity of the entire

neighborhood. More developers would want to expand the zoning, and the City would likely accommodate them. The residential neighborhood would then be destroyed.

Chair Piro asked if Mr. Poitras would support the proposal if it were to require more parking spaces and parking restrictions on adjacent streets. Mr. Poitras responded that all he has heard in the way of relief is the suggestion that the City may create some restricted parking zones. That may make the bad situation a little better, but he is sure members of the Commission would not want their homes to be within such a system. He questioned who would police the zones. He said he presumes that homeowners would need a parking permit to park in front of their own homes, further complicating their lives. He expressed his belief that all of the parking needed for the proposed development should be provided on site. He recalled that at a previous meeting, he asked where off-site parking would be provided within 1,000 feet of the building, and the staff could not answer his question. He expressed concern that more and more speculators would purchase properties along 5th Avenue and then approach the City with a request to change the zoning to increase density. The street could turn into another Greenwood Avenue, which he would be opposed to.

Carolyn Mayer, Shoreline, said she lives about one block from the subject property. She noted that she is a senior planner for a local consulting firm, as well as president of the Sustainable Development Task Force in Snohomish County. She said she supports the proposed zoning changes, which would allow the City to move out ahead to increase density in order to be in compliance with the Growth Management Act. She noted that in order for a community to be sustainable, they must reduce the overall footprint of buildings. Using a higher density set of buildings is one way to accomplish this goal. She said she believes the proposed design standards, including the façade articulation and vertical differentiation, would help ensure the building does not look like the drawings that were shown earlier. The buildings would be more attractive and blend with the community better.

Ms. Mayer said she was glad to see that staff included a requirement that the development must meet the green building standards, which would be in line with the City's goals to have a sustainable community. However, she said she would even support a minimum requirement of four-star Built Green Certification, since it is getting easier to meet the three-star rating. She said she supports strong sustainability language, including more language about green infrastructure on the property and in the right-of-way such as rain gardens, pervious materials in the parking lot, etc.

Les Nelson, Shoreline, said they are seeing a number of developments in the City that utilize the concept of unlimited density and a 65-foot height limit. He expressed concern that this holds a carrot out to developers when the concept has not even been addressed adequately in the City's Comprehensive Plan. He expressed his belief that they can't just rely on the new residential units to support the retail businesses. They must also provide adequate parking for customers who visit the shops from throughout the community. He suggested the standards should be changed to ensure that adequate parking would be provided for both the retail and residential uses. He pointed out that the City has already exceeded their Growth Management Act Growth Requirement of 120 new units per year, so the City should not use that as an excuse for building large residential developments. He questioned where the public plazas would be located on the subject property.

Commissioner McClelland asked Mr. Nelson to point out where other developments of this type are being done in the City. Mr. Nelson recalled that the City Council recently modified the moratorium to allow a development called Market Square at 200th and Aurora Avenue. However, it is important to note the development is not actually a market, but is strictly housing. Again, he emphasized that unless there is adequate parking, there would not be sufficient customers to support retail uses. He noted that the retail spaces on the ground floor of the senior housing development at 130th and Aurora Avenue are empty because there is inadequate parking.

Chair Piro announced that Council Member Way was present in the audience.

Liz Poitras, Shoreline, said she has lived in the Ridgecrest Neighborhood for more than 30 years. She referred to the new parking requirement language, which states that a majority of the parking shall be located on site or within 1,000 feet of the site. She interprets this to mean that the City would allow the rest of the parking to be located anywhere. She suggested that is not the intent of the change. Ms. Poitras said she attended all but the last of the visioning meetings, where she got the impression the residents didn't want anything higher than a four-story building. She referred to the drawings provided by staff which illustrate the massive building that would be allowed compared to most of the one-story single-family homes in the area. She asked the Commission not to allow a height of more than four stories.

Chair Piro pointed out that current zoning would allow a four-story development of up to 62 town homes. He asked if Ms. Poitras would prefer this type of development over what the proposed new zoning would allow. Ms. Poitras answered that she is not familiar with what the current zoning would allow, but she would rather have a four-story building that would be less massive in appearance and require fewer parking spaces.

Sharon Duncan, Shoreline, said she owns the business across the street from the subject property. She expressed her belief that one reason her coffee shop has been successful is that she has enough parking for people who visit her shop without infringing upon the neighborhood parking spaces. She summarized that if the City wants to encourage successful retail uses on the ground floor of the new development, they must provide adequate on-site parking. At the visioning meetings, she said she envisioned a building that would be setback on all sides, with adequate parking available on site for the residents and retail uses. The proposed language would likely result in failed retail businesses. Ms. Duncan said that as a resident of the community, she enjoys having the ability to walk to the local businesses. She would like the new development to include retail uses that would be desirable for pedestrians from the surrounding neighborhoods. If the businesses are not sustainable because of inadequate parking, there would be no benefit to the community, either. She said she would prefer a development that is set back from the street.

Commissioner Pyle asked Mr. Boydell if he received any feedback from business owners in North City about how the viability of their businesses changed when the new apartment building became available for tenant occupancy. Mr. Boydell advised that no formal study has been done to date because the apartment complex has only been open for about six months. However, it has been reported that there has been some increased shopping activity locally.

Commissioner Broili asked staff to respond to Ms. Poitras' comment related to the parking requirement language. Mr. Tovar said the intent was to require the majority of the parking to be located on site, with some within 1,000 feet. They did not intend that the majority of the parking could be located off site within 1,000 feet. He suggested they drop the last phrase "or within 1,000 feet." Mr. Cohn said another option would be to say "the majority shall be located on site, and the rest within 1,000 feet of the site." This would make it clear that 1,000 feet is the furthest away the parking could be located.

Commissioner McClelland expressed concern about requiring all off-site parking to be located on private property. She suggested that if the majority of the parking were located on site, some of the overflow parking could be located on the street and some could be provided through a type of shared-parking arrangement. Mr. Cohn said the intent is that a developer would be required to provide a certain number of parking spaces, and this number would not include spaces that are available on the street. However, it is true that some people visiting the retail uses would park on the street. It is staff's intention that the residential parking spaces that are not utilized by tenants during the day would be utilized by the retail businesses. He said staff is very aware of the parking issue, and that is why the language identifies a minimum number of parking spaces that must be provided. Again, he emphasized that on-street parking spaces could not be used to meet the parking requirement.

Commissioner McClelland clarified that by allowing the applicant to meet a portion of the parking requirement by utilizing off-site, privately-owned property, there is an assumption that the owner of the property would secure private property off site specifically for parking. Mr. Cohn agreed but emphasized that this parking could not be located on properties that are zoned single-family residential. If all of the required parking would be accounted for either on-site or within 1,000 feet, Commissioner McClelland questioned how much spill-over parking the community would need to be concerned about.

Mr. Cohn said staff's intent is to require the applicant to account for the development's parking needs. The language suggests one stall for every studio and one-bedroom unit and 1½ stalls for every two-bedroom unit. Staff believes this requirement would come very close to what the actual parking demand would be. Commissioner McClelland pointed out that even if the parking demand for the type of development that is being considered is primarily met, there would also be some spill over parking. Mr. Cohn agreed that some people would likely park on the street instead of in an assigned stall. However, if no parking is available on the street, people wanting to visit the retail uses would park on site.

Commissioner Harris said he appreciates the changes staff made to the proposed language to address concerns raised at previous meetings. He expressed his concern about the transition between single-family and mixed-use developments. He asked staff to explain why only a 5-foot setback would be required on the west property line where the parking garage would be located. Mr. Tovar explained that the dimensions on the subject property are such that in order to make more parking work in the structure, the base would have to come within five feet of the west property line. Again, he emphasized it would be structured and not open parking. Commissioner Harris expressed concern that a 5-foot setback would leave very little space for a buffer. He questioned the fairness of requiring a single-family home to provide a 15-foot rear yard setback, while a commercial structure can have only a 5-foot setback.

Commissioner Pyle pointed out that staff did add a requirement in the design standards that the concrete base be of an architectural grade concrete that is stamped and sculptured. Even though the structure would be moved closer to the west property line, the design requirements would attempt to mitigate the impact. Mr. Tovar agreed that a concrete finish would be one option to soften the wall, and another option would be to add plant material to make it a green wall.

Commissioner Harris recalled that when reviewing a previous application, the Commission agreed to require a town house façade on the building side facing single-family residential development. Mr. Szafran noted that a townhouse façade design would be required for the upper portion of the structure on the west side, but not for the base of the building. The intent is to buffer that part of the building with vegetation or stamped concrete, etc. Mr. Tovar noted that the existing building on the site identified as Planned Area 2a is taller than the base that is being proposed for the proposed parking structure, and it does not include any buffering elements. The proposed change would improve the situation.

Mr. Tovar recalled a question raised by a member of the audience about whether or not the benefits to the community would be worth the tradeoffs. The Commission must fundamentally decide whether or not the proposed benefits (20% of the units as moderate housing, provisions for third place features on the ground floor, Green Street on 163rd and Built Green 3 Star requirement for new construction) represent an adequate tradeoff for the additional 15 feet in height. He emphasized that a property owner could apply for a development permit to build a 50-foot high, 4-story building based on the current zoning. Therefore, it is important to keep in mind that they must not only compare the building envelope described by staff to the existing low-rise building that is setback from the street, but also to what the current code would allow.

Mr. Tovar recalled that members of the audience requested the City do more to address the parking concerns. He explained that apart from addressing parking needs via the zoning requirements, the City could eventually decide to actively manage on-street parking through a permit program. The City could also consider opportunities for increasing on-street parking within the public rights-of-way by restriping the spaces to provide angle parking. He emphasized that these two items have not been identified as capital projects, but the City could consider them at some point in the future. He reminded the Commission that the goal is to create a pedestrian walkable precinct. This does not mean no cars, but cars should be in their proper place in structures or on streets as part of an overall streetscape design.

Mr. Cohn advised that Patty Hale was unable to attend the meeting, but staff did show her the same drawings that were provided during the hearing. She indicated she now supports the proposal because she thinks the 45% angle setback provision would work as a sufficient transition. She has previously stated that she supports the concept of mixed-use development for the subject property. He referred the Commission to the written comments she provided prior to the meeting.

Mr. Boydell pointed out that retail space in mixed-use buildings in a neighborhood such as Ridgecrest is likely to be successful. However, he asked for the neighborhood to be patient since it would take some time to make it work and find the right mixture of retail uses. He said he believes the developer has the experience and patience to do what is right and make the best effort in that direction.

Continued Commission Deliberation

Chair Piro reminded the Commissioners to focus on the new and revised points, in particular. He said he appreciates staff's attention to the issues and points that were raised by the public and the Commission on previous occasions. He also thanked the public for raising very good issues about parking, etc.

Chair Piro suggested they consider the height and transition issues together. He said he would only support an additional 15 feet in height if the City could ensure a better job of transitioning any development on the site with the adjacent neighborhoods. When considering what the existing zone would allow and the transition that would be provided based on the proposed language, he said he believes the amended language would be better than the current zoning.

Chair Piro expressed his support of the language proposed by staff to address the issue of sustainability. He recalled that the previous language was ambiguous and merely encouraged the developer to incorporate sustainable features. The new language would require the developer to make a much stronger commitment.

Chair Piro suggested that, ultimately, the City must address the parking concerns by developing a district wide parking management plan for the area. He emphasized that this particular project could not be expected to resolve all of the parking problems. While staff has done a good job of mitigating as many of the parking issues as possible, the entire area should be subject to a rigorous parking management plan in order to address all of the concerns. He said he would prefer to see the district wide plan dealt with and resolved prior to considering a project of this type. However, that sequencing option was not made available to the Commission.

COMMISSIONER BROILI MOVED TO CLOSE THE PUBLIC HEARING. COMMISSIONER PYLE SECONDED THE MOTION.

Chair Piro pointed out that if the public hearing were closed at this point, the Commission would not be able to pose additional questions to staff. Commissioner Phisuthikul indicated he had one more question to ask of staff.

THE MOTION WAS WITHDRAWN.

Commissioner Phisuthikul recalled that staff's proposed change to address sustainability features included two options: the King County Built Green Verification Process or the LEED Rating System. However, the draft language in Section 20.91.060.C.5 does not include LEED. Mr. Szafran said staff recommends that developers be required to meet the three-star Built Green Program standards, without offering the LEED Program as an option. Mr. Cohn added that the language would also enable the Planning Director to allow a developer to attain other sustainability standards that meet the intent of the King County Built Green Program.

Commissioner McClelland referred to Section 20.91.040.B (Standards for Approval) and suggested the language be changed to clearly state that administrative design review would be required for all

development within this zone. She further suggested it is extremely important that everyone understands the requirements and process for design review and how the public could be involved. To further clarify this issue, Commissioner Hall suggested that Section 20.91.040.B be changed to read, “When design review is required, the applicant shall demonstrate . . .”

Commissioner Hall referred to Section 20.91.060.B.2 and Section 20.91.060.B.3, and noted that the language makes reference to six items in Section 20.91.060.C when there are actually only five.

Closure of Public Hearing

COMMISSIONER PHISUTHIKUL MOVED TO CLOSE THE PUBLIC HEARING. COMMISSIONER BROILI SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Vote by Commission to Recommend Approval or Denial or Modifications

COMMISSIONER HALL MOVED TO APPROVE STAFF’S RECOMMENDATION FOR THE RIDGECREST COMMERCIAL AREA ZONING WITH COMMISSION AMENDMENTS. COMMISSIONER PHISUTHIKUL SECONDED THE MOTION.

Commissioner Hall recalled Mr. Tovar’s remark that, fundamentally, the proposal’s intent is to offer incentives to encourage design elements the City Council has already adopted as goals for the City such as creating sustainable development. He recalled that Commissioner Broili suggested on numerous occasions that the City require low-impact development and sustainable features, and the City is moving in that direction. However, at this time, the City does not require developers to incorporate either of these elements.

Commissioner Hall advised that another City Council goal is to provide more affordable housing opportunities in the City. At this time, the City does not have any regulations to implement this goal, either. He said he would rather see a much more ambitious citywide program to provide incentives for affordable housing, aiming particularly at the population that’s below 80% of the area medium income. However, the proposal currently before the Commission offers a step forward. He noted that in the staff report Mr. Tovar reminded the Commission of some of the items the Comprehensive Housing Strategy Committee included in their draft report, which have caused him to shift his position. He noted that the committee recommends the City test changes in the Comprehensive Plan and/or development regulations designed to encourage housing choice through pilot projects in select and limited sites or on a broader scale as a result of a defined neighborhood subarea planning and design process. He said he understands the concern of the Ridgcrest Neighborhood, but he recognizes they must take a step forward to address affordable housing opportunities. Perhaps starting with a smaller area makes sense.

Commissioner Hall agreed that parking is already a problem in the neighborhood and would continue to be a problem in the future. However, he is not convinced the parking would be worse if the rezone were approved. He expressed his belief that if Shoreline doesn’t begin to shift more towards a community where people could walk to the retail services they need, they would never move beyond the concept of wanting multiple cars per family. While transit could be part of the parking solution, he recognizes that

not everyone would give up their car. He said he is willing to accept the proposed parking requirements as a tradeoff for providing more affordable housing, sustainability and public space.

COMMISSIONER PHISUTHIKUL MOVED THAT SECTION 20.91.060.C.5 BE CHANGED BY REPLACING “THREE-STAR STANDARD” WITH “FOUR-STAR STANDARD.” THE MOTION DIED FOR LACK OF A SECOND.

COMMISSIONER HALL MOVED TO CHANGE THE LANGUAGE IN SECTION 20.91.070.I TO READ: “A MAJORITY OF THE PARKING SHALL BE LOCATED ON SITE. THE REMAINING PARKING SHALL BE ON SITE OR WITHIN 1,000 FEET OF THE SITE ON PRIVATE PROPERTY NOT USED AS SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL.” COMMISSIONER BROILI SECONDED THE MOTION.

Commissioner Hall explained that the proposed change would clarify the staff’s intent for this section. He emphasized the importance of making sure most of the parking is provided for on site.

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Commissioner Hall reminded the Commission that Section 20.91.060.B.2 and Section 20.91.060.B.3 must be changed to make it clear there are only five height incentive requirements listed in Section 20.91.060.C. The Commission agreed to make that correction.

COMMISSIONER HALL MOVED TO CHANGE THE LANGUAGE IN SECTION 20.91.040.A TO READ: “ADMINISTRATIVE DESIGN REVIEW SHALL ~~ONLY APPLY~~ BE REQUIRED FOR DEVELOPMENTS IN RIDGECREST COMMERCIAL PLANNED AREA 2 THAT ARE 1.5 ACRES OR MORE AND THAT MEET ONE OF THE THRESHOLDS IN SMC 20.50.125.” HE FURTHER MOVED THAT SECTION 21.91.040.B BE CHANGED TO READ “THE APPLICANT FOR ANY WHEN DESIGN REVIEW IS REQUIRED, THE APPLICANT SHALL DEMONSTRATE THAT PLANS SATISFY THE CRITERIA IN SMC 20.91.050 UNLESS APPROVED AS A DESIGN DEPARTURE BY THE DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR CONSISTENT WITH THE INTENT OF EACH SUBSECTION.” COMMISSIONER PHISUTHIKUL SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Commissioner McClelland requested clarification of the height incentive requirements found in Section 20.91.040.C. Commissioner Hall clarified that the height incentives are incremental and in the order presented in the proposed language. He reviewed that building height could increase to four stories if the structure is developed with non-residential uses and/or live/work uses. The building height could increase to five stories if the structure is developed with non-residential uses and/or live/work uses and meets all of the height incentive requirements identified in Section 20.91.060.C. A building height of six stories would only be allowed if the structure provides ground floor non-residential space, meets all five of the height incentives and if at least 20% of the residential units are affordable. He summarized that before a developer would be allowed a six-story structure, he would have to provide significant benefits to the community.

Commissioner McClelland suggested that rather than treating the proposal as an experiment, it should be considered an innovative opportunity to obtain the kinds of amenities people would like to see when commercial property in the City is redeveloped. She recalled the poor developments that have occurred during her tenure on the Commission. The proposed language is intended to result in better development that is workable not only for the neighborhood, but the entire City. She expressed her belief that the proposal fits in with what the Comprehensive Housing Strategy Committee imagined during their discussions. She said she is counting on staff being attentive to every word in the proposed language and the developer and architect to work with the community and go beyond what is required to provide the best product possible.

Commissioner Hall agreed with Commissioner McClelland's comments. He emphasized that if approved by the City Council, it is important that the City follow through with all of the conditions identified in the proposal.

Chair Piro observed that one clear message and/or theme amongst the Commission is that this proposal be done right. They can't just use the Ridgecrest Neighborhood as an experiment. He said it is important to understand they are only dealing with a rezone proposal and not a planned unit development that would allow them to consider and resolve all of the various design features. He said he is comfortable that the City has a very responsible staff and an engaged City Council, and the mechanisms are available to make sure the project is done right as it moves from rezone to reality. He complimented staff for their excellent work as the proposal has evolved.

Commissioner Harris explained that throughout the public hearing process he has tried to ascertain the desires of the Ridgecrest Neighborhood. He noted that Dick Nicholson, the Ridgecrest Neighborhood Association spokesperson, has spoken in favor of the proposal. Patty Hale, another outspoken leader of the neighborhood, has also indicated her support. He said he has been most concerned about the homeowners directly to the west, but none of them have voiced a significant concern. Based on this feedback, he said he would support the proposal.

Commissioner Pyle said he and his wife have recently walked throughout various areas of the City and North Seattle that are similar to the Ridgecrest Commercial Area to see how they are managed and what has occurred over the years. He noted that many parking regulations have been in place and many different types of retail uses has been developed on the bottom floor of the buildings. All of them are attractive developments, and he likes being able to walk to the commercial areas. He said that while he understands the neighborhood concerns, it is important to remember that the proposal is completely in line with the goals of the City's Comprehensive Plan. The first goal in the land use component of the Comprehensive Plan states, "Ensure that the land use pattern of the City encourages needed diverse and creative development, protects existing uses, safeguards the environment, reduces sprawl, promotes efficient use of land, encourages alternative modes of transportation, and helps to maintain Shoreline's sense of community. He said this is a strong statement, and the proposal is directly in line with it. He said he identified the various goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan that directly support the proposal, and staff has done a good job of hearing and addressing all of the concerns to come up with viable alternatives. He said he would support the proposal.

Commissioner Broili agreed with his fellow Commissioners. He said he was initially skeptical about the proposal, but most of his concerns have been addressed. He complimented staff for doing everything possible to address the issues raised by the community and the Commission. He said he has a fairly strong feeling of security that the proposal is a move in the right direction and that the end product would be desirable. He emphasized that the potential development that could take place on the property based on the current zoning would likely be far less desirable than development based on the proposed rezone language that offers controls to address the various issues. He said he is still concerned that the proposal cuts the parking requirement very fine in an area that already has many parking issues. However, because the proposal includes strong language to help address this issue via the parking plan requirement, he would be comfortable recommending approval.

THE MAIN MOTION TO APPROVE STAFF'S RECOMMENDATION FOR THE RIDGECREST COMMERCIAL AREA ZONING WITH COMMISSION AMENDMENTS PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Commissioner Hall referenced the statement on Page 56 of the Staff Report that zoning regulations are just one of the tools for addressing development in areas such as the Ridgcrest Neighborhood. The Staff Report identifies a variety of other tools the City could implement to address the community's concerns.

At the request of the Commission, Mr. Tovar explained that a police precinct is a potential magnet for pedestrian activity and a feeling of community ownership. It may be that meeting space could also be provided in this type of a facility, and the specific dimensions and rental structure would be subject to negotiation between the City and the land owner. He emphasized that having police presence on site is a huge marketing advantage to any property owner who is trying to sell or rent units. Commissioner Phisuthikul referred to a development in Lake Forest Park, which provides for a "third place" atmosphere by also including libraries, colleges, etc. He summarized that the more activities they encourage in a complex, the more people would gather.

COMMISSIONER HALL MOVED THAT STAFF LOOK AT OTHER NON REGULATORY TOOLS THAT COULD BE USED TO ADDRESS SOME OF THE ISSUES IN RIDGECREST THAT MIGHT NOT BE FULLY ADDRESSED IN THE REGULATIONS. COMMISSIONER BROILI SECONDED THE MOTION.

Commissioner Hall recalled that parking is the one issue related to the proposal that all Commissioners felt uneasy about. One of the ideas described in the staff report is to work with Metro to provide more transit service. He suggested more work could be done in this regard. If they really want quality, sustainable communities, they must go beyond regulations. Chair Piro recalled previous discussions about possible ways for the City to address the parking problem in the Ridgcrest Commercial Neighborhood.

THE MOTION WAS UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES AND COMMISSIONERS

Commissioner Phisuthikul reported on his attendance at the Comprehensive Housing Strategy Committee meeting on January 2nd. He advised that nine members of the 16-member committee were present, and the majority approved the recommendation and letter of transmittal to the City Council. They anticipate presenting their recommendation to the City Council on February 19, 2008. Mr. Cohn advised that copies of the committee's report could be obtained from the City's website in about a week. The draft copy, which is very similar to the final copy, is already available on the website.

CONTINUED DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Planning Commission Recruitment Process

Mr. Tovar announced that five Commissioner's terms expire at the end of March. Staff intends to publish a notice in *CURRENTS*, the City's website, the Council of Neighborhoods, etc. to make the public aware that there would be at least two vacancies on the Planning Commission. Applications and information could be obtained from the Planning Department Office. However, he emphasized that the City Council has not yet identified the process they would use to review the applications and interview applicants.

Commissioner Hall left the meeting at 9:30 p.m.

Point Wells Property

Mr. Tovar announced that the Richmond Beach Neighborhood Association would conduct a public meeting on January 15, 2008 at the Congregational Church. One of the subjects on the agenda would be the Point Wells property, and a panel of at least four people have been invited to share what they know about the site. He reviewed that Point Wells is part of unincorporated Snohomish County, and the only road access to the property comes through the City of Shoreline. Snohomish County is in the process of writing an environmental document related to a Comprehensive Plan Amendment that would place an urban center at Point Wells. This development would likely include multi-family, office and retail uses. He summarized that the City has forwarded a letter to Snohomish County expressing their concerns and asking that they be involved in the review process.

Mr. Tovar said that Craig Ladiser, Snohomish County Planning Director, would be present at the public meeting to explain the proposal and the review process. He said he and the City Manager plan to attend the meeting, as do some of the City's elected officials. Staff would meet with the City Council prior to the meeting to review the City's adopted policy for the subject property, as well as the City's desired level of involvement in the process. He suggested the Planning Commission may be involved in the review process at some point in the future.

Commissioner Phisuthikul asked if staff anticipates more public meetings regarding the issue in addition to the meeting on January 15th. Mr. Tovar said staff would discuss the issue with the City Council at some point in the future to solicit input from them on how they want staff to respond to the proposal. He summarized there is a range of possibilities for how this issue could proceed.

Commissioner McClelland recalled that the Town of Woodway took ownership of a small piece of property that sits between the Point Wells site and the City of Shoreline. She suggested it would be appropriate for the City staff to carefully review a map to clearly identify this transaction.

Commissioner McClelland inquired if this property could be considered a super fund site. Mr. Tovar answered that according to some of the environmental information that was submitted by the property owner to Snohomish County, some clean up would have to take place and a fair amount of earth would have to be moved.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

No unfinished business was scheduled on the agenda.

NEW BUSINESS

No new business was scheduled on the agenda.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chair Piro reported that he had the honor of accepting a formal proclamation from the Mayor of Shoreline on behalf of the Commission. The City Council named the month of October "Community Planning Month." He said he is delighted to be part of a city that recognizes the value of planning and takes the time to note the community planning efforts at all levels (citizen participation, Planning Commission, Planning Department Staff, and City Council). He presented the certificate to staff to display at the Planning Department Office.

AGENDA FOR NEXT MEETING

Chair Piro announced that the next meeting was scheduled for January 17, 2008 and would begin with a dinner meeting at 6:00 p.m. The regular meeting would start at 7:00 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:43 P.M.

Rocky Piro
Chair, Planning Commission

Jessica Simulcik Smith
Clerk, Planning Commission