

CITY OF SHORELINE

SHORELINE PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING

January 17, 2019
7:00 P.M.

Shoreline City Hall
Council Chamber

Commissioners Present

Chair Montero
Vice Chair Mork
Commissioner Davis
Commissioner Lin
Commissioner Maul
Commissioner Malek

Staff Present

Rachael Markle, Director, Planning and Community Development
Miranda Redinger, Senior Planner, Planning and Community Development
Steve Szafran, Senior Planner, Planning and Community Development
Kate Skone, Associate Planner, Planning and Community Development
Julie Ainsworth-Taylor, Assistant City Attorney
Carla Hoekzema, Planning Commission Clerk

Commissioners Absent

Commissioner Craft

CALL TO ORDER

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

ROLL CALL

Upon roll call by Ms. Hoekzema the following Commissioners were present: Chair Montero, Vice Chair Mork, and Commissioners Davis, Lin, Maul and Malek. Commissioner Craft was absent.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was amended to add a discussion about the Commission's letter to the City Council under "New Business." The remainder of the agenda was accepted as presented.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of January 3, 2019 were approved as submitted.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no general public comments.

STUDY ITEM: SHORELINE MASTER PROGRAM REVIEW – PART I

Ms. Redinger reviewed that the City adopted its first Shoreline Master Program (SMP) in August of 2013, and the Commission discussed the purpose and process for the current Periodic Review on December 6, 2018. She reminded them that the update will be based on State requirements or City recommendations. She briefly reviewed the State required changes as follows:

- **Chapter 20.210.010 – Definitions.** The cost threshold for substantial development would be revised to cite the appropriate State legislation so the City’s SMP will not become outdated every time the State changes the number.
- **Chapter 20.210.010 – Definitions.** This amendment will change the definition of “Development” to clarify that it does not include projects that involve only dismantling or removing structures without any associated development.
- **Chapter 20.220.015 – Exceptions to Local Review.** This is a new section listing the special exceptions called out in the Washington Administrative Code (WAC) regarding the applicability of local SMPs.
- **Chapter 20.220.080(D) – Permit Filing Procedures.** This amendment will clarify the permit filing procedures that are outlined in the Revised Code of Washington (RCW).
- **Chapter 20.200.080 – Scope and Process for Periodic Reviews.** This amendment adds references to the appropriate RCW and WAC provisions and includes the potential for a joint State/City review period.
- **Chapter 20.200.090 – Optional SMP Amendment Process.** This amendment adds references to the appropriate RCW and WAC provisions
- **Chapter 20.220.030 – Shoreline Exemptions.** This amendment would cite the RCW and WAC exceptions rather than list them in the SMP. The intent of this amendment is that the provisions do not become outdated as soon as the State changes its lists.
- **Chapter 20.230.030(C) – Wetlands Critical Areas Guidance.** This amendment would repeal Chapter 20.230.030(C) and replace it with new guidance in Chapter 20.240.
- **Chapter 20.220.080 – 90-Day Target for Local Review for Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) projects.** This amendment would include a provision regarding target time for local review and reference RCW 90.58.

Ms. Redinger also reviewed the City-recommended amendments as follows:

- **Chapter 20.200 – Shoreline Master Plan.** The amendments would remove references to the 2006 Critical Areas Ordinance (CAO). Minor amendments are also proposed for housekeeping and clarification.
- **Chapter 20.210 – Definitions and Chapter 20.220 – Administrative Procedures.** These amendments will be minor for housekeeping and clarification.

Ms. Redinger advised that on February 7th, staff will present the following City-recommended amendments:

- **Chapter 20.230 – General Policies and Regulations.** The amendments to this chapter will include removing references to environmentally sensitive areas that will be addressed in Chapter 20.240 and clarifying that existing, previously permitted stabilization measures (bulkheads) are considered engineered and abated hazards, not geological hazard areas. This amendment will particularly impact residents on Apple Tree Lane and will make it easier for them to replace bulkheads. Staff has had conversations with these residents to make sure they understand the proposed changes and why. So far, the discussions have gone well.
- **Chapter 20.240 – SMP Critical Areas Regulations.** The amendment will integrate the City’s 2015 CAO, removing any regulations that conflict with the Shoreline Management Act (reasonable use exceptions, administrative exceptions and waivers).
- **Chapter 13.12 – Floodplain Management.** This amendment will change the Floodplain Administrator from the Public Works Director to the Planning Director to consolidate administrative authority under one department.
- **Chapter 20.80 – Critical Areas.** The amendment will reference the new SMP Critical Areas Regulations in Chapter 20.240.

Ms. Redinger explained that the Commission will discuss Part II of the SMP Review on February 7th and conduct a public hearing on both Part I and Part II on March 21st. The public hearing will also fulfill the joint Department of Ecology (DOE) review/comment period and will include a community open house prior to the hearing. She noted that the hearing date was pushed back so staff can work with a consultant to perform some environmental analysis and update the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) Checklist. Staff’s intent is to present the proposed amendments to the City Council on April 15th for a study session, with a public hearing and final adoption of Ordinance No. 856 on May 6th. This will meet the DOE’s deadline of June 30, 2019.

DIRECTOR’S REPORT

Director Markle provided an update on the Substantial Permits that are currently under review, specifically highlighting the following:

- A permit for the Alexan Shoreline Project has been issued. The permit application was initially submitted in 2014. The applicant is eager to get started, and they are planning a ground-breaking event to celebrate being the first project in Shoreline Place.
- The TP Home LLC Project is a 15-unit apartment complex.
- There are a number of applications for townhome development.
- Caron Architecture’s project on 15th Avenue NE will be a 5-story, multi-family development with 122 units plus 2 stories of parking (107 stalls).
- The City is close to issuing a permit for the project at 19022 Aurora Avenue North, which will be a 7-story mixed use development with 241 residential units as well as commercial space. Staff is currently working with the applicant on a parking management plan.
- The Shoreline School District submitted an application for its final project, which will be a new middle school. The ball is now in the City’s court to complete the 8-week turnaround for permit issuance. All deadlines have been met for school projects so far.

Director Markle also reviewed the pre-application meeting requests for larger projects and subdivisions, noting that December was not a very busy month because of the holiday. The projects include some short plats and townhome development and the City's partnership project with Bazan Architects for a new mixed-use building (100 units of low-income housing) at 19806 Aurora Avenue North. In addition, Studio Meng Strazza Architects met with staff in a preapplication meeting for the Fireside Homes Project at 18110 Midvale Avenue North. This 5-story project will include 209 residential units over 2-stories of parking.

Director Markle reported that staff has begun working with a consultant on the Townhome Design Project, which is the department's new long-range project. They are currently working out a public participation plan and seeking input from developers. The project involves writing regulations specific to townhomes, and they will look at both site and design standards. Quite a few projects have either been built or are under construction. Before they get too far with this product, they want to review what is being built with the regulations in place and make adjustments. For example, they know they need to work out some details related to utility placement and connections and perhaps different design standards for projects that do not front on major streets. The intent is to make sure that townhomes are designed in a way that everyone will be proud of them for years to come. Staff's intent is to present the initial proposal to the Commission this summer, with a public open house prior to the Commission's workshop discussion. Staff will discuss the project with the Council of Neighborhoods and some online tools will be used to solicit public feedback. The goal is to have adopted regulations in place by the end of the year.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was no unfinished business

NEW BUSINESS – LETTER FROM COMMISSION TO CITY COUNCIL

Vice Chair Mork recalled that several Commission meetings were cancelled in 2018 because agenda items were not ready for Commission review and discussion. She suggested it would be appropriate to have a list of other items the Commission could discuss to fill their agendas each month. Walkability is a topic she is particularly interested in. It would be helpful to learn what can be done to make the City more walkable. For example, the Commission could review the Development Code, looking for potential changes to encourage walkability.

Commissioner Davis said she is also interested in thinking about how the topic of "walkability" relates to the City's neighborhoods. The City has a series of unique neighborhoods. As the station areas continue to develop with a variety of new housing, there will be a lot of interest in developing a sense of place. It would be interesting to look at what the City is already doing to encourage neighborhood development. She suggested the Commission should identify areas that are most likely to be impacted by development in the near future and consider how neighborhood design guidelines could be used to preserve the desirable aspects of each one. The community should be invited to provide feedback as to what they would like to see in their neighborhoods.

Commissioner Malek recalled that several years ago when he was active in the Richmond Beach Community Association, George Braswell and several others presented a plan to establish a 3 to 4-mile

walking trail. Unfortunately, the plan was cut short because some of the property involved in the proposal was private rather than public land. He commented that some of the best and most attractive communities have popular features such as walking paths. He said he supports a Commission discussion and community involvement regarding walkability, particularly identifying pockets in existing neighborhoods that lend to this type of activity. Commissioner Lin suggested that the discussion also include the need to promote unique neighborhood character.

The Commissioners agreed to add the following topics under “New Items to Consider:” A review of walkability within the City, how development affects neighborhood design, and how to promote and preserve neighborhood character.

Commissioner Malek requested a status report on Ordinance 833, which would have removed the tree retention and replacement requirements in the MUR-70’ zone. Director Markle summarized that the Commission recommended approval. The City Council edited the Commission’s recommendation before final approval, but the MUR-70’ zone was still exempt from the tree retention and replacement requirements, with the exception of critical areas and their buffers.

Commissioner Malek said he would like to add a review of the tree retention and replacement requirements in the MUR-45’ zone to the Commission’s 2019 agenda under “Looking Forward to Continued Work with Staff.” Commissioner Malek expressed his opinion that the tree retention and replacement requirements are inappropriate for both the MUR-45’ and MUR-70’ zones. He felt the requirements are more appropriate for the MUR-35’ zone, which is intended to provide a buffer between the MUR-45’ and single-family residential zones. Director Markle suggested that the topic could be added to the letter or included in the Staff Report that is prepared for the dinner meeting. Even if it does not end up on the work plan, including it in the letter and/or Staff Report would provide “food for thought” for a future work plan item. Commissioner Maul noted that including it would also allow the Commission to discuss the topic at their joint meeting. The Commissioners agreed.

Commissioner Malek said he would like staff to provide a report to the Commission to track the status and outcome of their recommendations. He commented that it is sometimes difficult for him to track issues as they move through the public process. Director Markle agreed that is a great idea.

Commissioner Malek reported that he recently attended a lecture about “opportunity zones,” which offer tax-based incentives for big investor money but can include smaller investors, too. The concept allows people to invest money into projects in 8,700 opportunity zones that have been declared by governors all across the country. Investors receive tax abatement from 2019 to 2026. He suggested that the Commission consider opportunities to use a similar concept in Shoreline to encourage redevelopment. He noted that the MUR-35’, MUR-45’ and MUR-70’ zones are in some of the most difficult areas to develop from a feasibility standpoint. It would behoove the City to think through these obstacles in advance.

Commissioner Maul recalled that the City did implement tax abatement incentives as part of the station area rezones. He said it would be helpful for the Commission to meet with the new Economic Development Manager to share ideas and collaborate on ways to encourage redevelopment. The remainder of the Commission concurred.

Vice Chair Mork asked if the City would be eligible for any of the funding that Microsoft has pledged for affordable housing. Commissioner Davis said the details have not been fully released yet. Commissioner Malek said there will likely be specific criteria for qualification, but until the criteria comes out, it will be difficult to know if Shoreline will qualify for any of the funds. Director Markle said she would advise the new Economic Development Manager that the Commission is interested in learning more about opportunity zones and opportunities to collaborate on economic development.

Commissioner Maul recalled that a pedestrian multi-modal design concept was included as part of the station area subarea plans. He asked how much was funded with the sidewalk plan that was passed last fall. Vice Chair Mork answered that the sidewalks that were selected for funding were areas where there were accidents and/or safety issues. None of the improvements identified in the pedestrian design concepts for the station areas were included. Commissioner Maul summarized that a lot of work has already been done to identify bicycle lanes and sidewalks that connect the station areas to the neighborhoods. Vice Chair Mork said her thought was to focus beyond the station areas to include other neighborhoods in the City. Rather than focusing on a sidewalk plan, which is outside of the Commission's purview, a first step could be to review the Development Code and identify adjustments to encourage walkability.

Commissioner Maul observed that Shoreline is nearly all developed and the neighborhoods have already been established. During the station area subarea planning process, the Development Code was amended to encourage the multimodal aspects of the station areas as much as possible. He said he would like to see better connections for both bicyclists and pedestrians, but the challenge will be encouraging improved connections in existing neighborhoods.

Vice Chair Mork said her vision is for the Commission to become educated about what the Planning Commission can do to improve walkability. She sees this as a long-term project that citizens are particularly interested in. Sidewalks are just one aspect of a walkable community. Even if there are adequate sidewalks, people need to feel safe using them. Many of the safety issues can be addressed via the Development Code. She agreed that a lot was done to address walkability within the station subareas, but she was looking to address the issue from a broader standpoint, starting first with education and then looking at potential Development Code amendments.

Assistant City Attorney Ainsworth-Taylor clarified that sidewalk control is primarily under the auspice of the Public Works Department because sidewalks are part of the transportation network. The Public Works Department controls the pedestrian plan, and sidewalk prioritization will be addressed again when the Transportation Master Program is updated in a few years. She noted that the City Council has been fully briefed on everything the City can do to finance and develop sidewalks where needed.

Vice Chair Mork said she is not necessarily advocating for a discussion about sidewalks per se. Although sidewalks are outside of the Commission's purview, there are other things the Commission could consider that are zoning code related to improve the situation. Commissioner Davis agreed that addressing pedestrian safety is also an aspect of neighborhood design. Aside from physical sidewalks, there are things that could be discussed from a design guideline standpoint that would make neighborhoods feel more walkable. Again, Vice Chair Mork said it would be helpful for staff to brief the Commission on what things they can and cannot do in this regard.

Director Markle summarized that there are a few topics the Commission is interested in learning more about when their agenda is light. While there may not be funding to pursue the topics in great detail in 2019, knowing what topics the Commission is interested in will help inform the 2020 budget. It might be appropriate to conduct speaker series events, inviting experts to discuss walkability, opportunity zones, etc. This would allow the information to reach a broader audience than just the Commission.

Chair Montero said it would be helpful for staff to present an update regarding the pedestrian plan and what changes might be proposed going forward.

Chair Montero summarized that the letter to the City Council would be updated to include a review of walkability within the City, how development affects neighborhood design, and promote and preserve neighborhood character. It would also be updated to include a discussion about reducing significant tree retention requirements in the MUR-45' zone.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES AND COMMISSIONERS/ANNOUNCEMENTS


Vice Chair Mork announced that the Commission By-laws Committee will meet on January 30th. Commissioner Malek reported that an appeal on the Point Wells Project is currently pending.

AGENDA FOR NEXT MEETING

Chair Montero announced that the February 7th will include Part II of the SMP Periodic Review. Mr. Szafran said staff will also present the list of Comprehensive Plan amendments for 2019.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:48 p.m.



William Montero
Chair, Planning Commission



Carla Hoekzema
Clerk, Planning Commission