

CITY OF SHORELINE

SHORELINE PLANNING COMMISSION SUMMARY MINUTES OF DINNER MEETING

November 5, 2009
6:00 – 7:00 P.M.

Shoreline Conference Center
Mt. Rainier Room

Commissioners Present

Chair Hall
Vice Chair Wagner
Commissioner Behrens
Commissioner Broili
Commissioner Kaje
Commissioner Perkowski
Commissioner Piro
Commissioner Pyle

Staff Present

Joe Tovar, Director, Planning & Development Services
Steve Cohn, Senior Planner, Planning & Development Services
Jessica Simulcik Smith, Planning Commission Clerk

Commissioners Absent

Commissioner Kuboi

Chair Hall called the dinner meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

Chair Hall raised the question of getting the Commission together for a holiday party in place of the second regularly scheduled meeting in December. The Commission concurred.

Chair Hall reminded the Commission that this dinner meeting had been called to debrief on the Town Center Open House they attended last week and to discuss Planning Commission Protocols in regards to Communication with the City Council. He also informed the Commission that he would be recusing himself from participating in the study session on Point Wells scheduled for later in the evening. Point Wells is under the jurisdiction of Snohomish County and because he is an employee of Snohomish County he wants to avoid any appearance of fairness issues, even though he has not been involved with Snohomish County's evaluation or recommendation on the Point Wells site.

Town Center Open House

Mr. Tovar announced that between thirty-five to forty residents, seven Commissioners, eight staff members, two Councilmembers, and two City Council Candidates attended the Town Center Open House last week. He discussed the room set-up, meeting logistics and process, shared the next steps for Town Center, and talked about ideas for public outreach. He asked the Commission for feedback on what they thought worked well as well as what could be improved upon. He then passed out the pulse pad survey results.

Commissioner Kaje expressed that a couple of the questions in the pulse pad survey were confusing and needed to be reworded or have more explanation. He suggested staff not read too much into the survey responses as some respondents were clearly confused by some of the meanings of the questions. He also suggested that staff could have stated certain questions in a more positive light. For example, when discussing Town Center's impacts to adjacent neighborhoods, instead of asking "how do we mitigate

impacts”, the question could have been phrased “how do we *link* surrounding neighborhoods to Town Center”.

Commissioner Hall reminded the Commission that they were given an opportunity to help shape the questionnaire when staff sent the questions over email and asked for feedback.

Mr. Tovar commented that staff could have used more imagery with the survey to illustrate concepts.

Commissioner Behrens said he thought the survey questions were good for engaging the public and getting them thinking but the actual results of the survey might not be useful as a representative sample.

Commissioner Broili expressed that he would like the Planning Commission to take such surveys.

Commissioner Piro reported that he liked the atmosphere and flow of the meeting. He thought it was a relaxed environment for people to work in. There was a lot of conversation between attendees and staff and Planning Commission. He said he believes the Open House was valuable for sharing information with the public and increasing knowledge.

Vice Chair Wagner recalled that she heard people asking questions about how to find information on the City’s website. She said it seemed they were still trying to understand the process and were not at the point of sharing ideas. She suggested that a visual preference survey might be helpful for getting more focused and specific information back.

Commissioner Pyle noted that people seemed to show up late. They arrived during the survey and didn’t have a chance to go around the room to each station, read the boards and ask questions prior to participating in the pulse pad survey. Mr. Tovar reported that staff noticed this as well and believes staff should rethink using the term “Open House” for a meeting of this format because it implies you can arrive at anytime and not miss anything.

Commissioner Perkowski suggested the survey be posted on the City’s website with a couple of enhancements. He noted that people like to see what others are thinking and suggested the survey results pop-up after a person submits their answers. He also recommended a field be added for people to write in a response after each question.

Commissioner Broili reminded the Commission of how important it is to keep the historical perspective in mind during this process. He recalled his conversation at the Open House with a man who has a deep knowledge of the history of Shoreline. He pointed out that being it touch with our history establishes a sense of community and place. Bringing this discussion to the table will spark interest and connect people to the community.

Chair Hall requested that the Commission email staff with any additional ideas of how to do things better.

Commission Protocols

Chair Hall briefed the Commission on a letter he recently wrote, as an individual citizen, to the City Council about his ideas for the new Mixed Use Zone (MUZ) regulations. He said that because his ideas were not inline with the Planning Commission's recommendation, a fellow Commissioner had raised the issue of whether this communication weakened the Planning Commission's position. He announced that if Commissioners hadn't already watched the Council meeting online, that they do so to see how he presented the Commission recommendation.

Commissioner Kaje said he was the Commissioner who brought this up because he thinks there could be a perception problem when an individual Commissioner expresses a personal opinion to the City Council after the Planning Commission has forwarded a recommendation. He said he believes issues should be brought up and talked over when the Commission deliberates and not after the fact. He asked if Commissioners would share their thoughts on the subject.

Commissioner Broili pointed out that there is an opportunity for a Commissioner to share their personal opinion as part of the record. He shared his belief that a Planning Commissioner has even more opportunity to offer an opinion than an individual does. He thought it would be too confusing if all the Commissioners acted as individuals after the Commission has forwarded a recommendation to the City Council. Further more, the personal opinion of a Chair carries more weight than that of others, and it is difficult to separate the identity between a presiding officer of a body and the individual outside of that capacity.

Commissioner Behrens expressed his belief that everyone has a right to offer their opinion in whatever format they are comfortable. He doesn't think it is inappropriate to offer views that differ from the majority as long as their dissent was part of the record. He pointed out that Chair Hall's opposition was already on the record. He said he believes if a Commissioner wishes to contact the City Council after a recommendation has been formulated, that Commissioner should inform the entire Commission of their intent at that meeting.

Vice Chair Wagner commented that she went to the City Council meeting with Chair Hall to present the Planning Commission recommendation on the MUZ Regulations. At that meeting, she heard comments from citizens that she wishes the Planning Commission would have had the opportunity to hear during the public hearing. It may have influenced the recommendation.

Commissioner Pyle said he believes a Commissioner acting as an individual should be able to pass information or personal opinion on to the City Council after the Planning Commission has made a recommendation on a matter prior to its adoption.

Commissioner Piro recalled that in this case it was new information after the public hearing that caused the dilemma. He stated his belief that after the Planning Commission recommendation has been forwarded, it is appropriate for a Commissioner to point out new information but not to raise new issues.

The Commission agreed to continue this discussion at a later time.

Adjournment

The dinner meeting was adjourned at 7:04 P.M.

Will Hall
Chair, Planning Commission

Jessica Simulcik Smith
Clerk, Planning Commission