

PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

June 20, 2007

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 7:06 p.m. by Chair Stead. Commissioners present were George Stead, Henry James, Jim Wilmer, Robert Allen, and Kevin Fiske. Jennifer Ange and Tom Whitson had excused absences. Planner Bill Trimm, Public Works Director Terry Bryant and Deputy Clerk Jill Massa were also present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

The minutes of May 9, 2007 were approved as written.

DISCUSSION: Undergrounding Utilities

Don Holdridge, Underground Utility Manager, Snohomish County PUD, reviewed pros and cons of undergrounding utilities, clarifying outages would continue to occur with undergrounded utilities particularly during large storms because the electrical grid was overhead and it was too costly to underground the entire system. He commented although some tree issues associated with outages were eliminated via undergrounding, trees and vegetation would need to be removed and an easement provided on a 10-foot strip of private property adjacent to the right-of-way to underground PUD, phone, cable, fiber, etc. Another requirement for undergrounding was the requirement for access via 3x3x4 above-ground vaults. Maintenance costs for an overhead system were less expensive and restoration was faster due to ease in identifying the problem. He noted there were also landscape restoration issues associated with restoring underground utilities. The life span of an underground system was approximately 20-30 years before repairs were needed. He concluded cost was the main issue associated with undergrounding. Acknowledging that each circumstance was different, he provided an example of a recent undergrounding of approximately 300 linear feet that cost the resident \$110,000.

Mr. Holdridge explained the Town could consider a local project such as ten customers in a neighborhood. This would require a commitment by the residents to remove trees and vegetation, provide easements to the utility, and pay costs associated with wiring homes to accept underground service, excavation from the street to the residence, and engineering and design fees. He advised if a small area was identified, PUD would develop an approximate cost estimate and then request the residents pay engineering costs upfront to develop final costs. For a larger scale project such as Town-wide, payment of engineering fees would be required for PUD to develop any cost estimates.

Discussion followed regarding the differences in cost to underground a main feeder versus a resident's service, potential to bore trenches for underground utilities, separation of utilities in trenches, tree trimming efforts to reduce the frequency and duration of outages, areas of the Town with underground utilities that experienced power outages this winter, PUD's ability to switch power feeds to accommodate small outages that was not possible during extensive outages, PUD's inability to staff for large scale power outages, the cost of a generator versus the cost of undergrounding, the 10-foot easement required on private property adjacent to the

right-of-way to underground utilities, above-ground vaults for access, and concern with the impact to trees/vegetation and the cost of undergrounding. Based on information provided by Snohomish County PUD with regard to cost, tree removal, easements, etc. it was the consensus of the Planning Commission to recommend the Town not underground utilities.

ACTION: *Commissioner Fiske* moved that the Planning Commission not recommend a full-scale undergrounding of utilities at this time. He further moved to direct Planner Bill Trimm to write a letter to the Mayor that could be distributed to Town residents describing the Planning Commission's findings with regard to undergrounding utilities. *Commissioner Allen* seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

OVERVIEW: Six Year Street Plan

Public Works Director Terry Bryant reviewed the 2008-2013 Six Year Street Plan. He described two new projects, #6 (Woodway Park Road/Deer Creek bridge north and south bridge aprons) and #7 (Eagle Lane).

Discussion followed regarding concern with the width of the south bridge approach and staff's plans to identify a contractor to repair cracks on the sidewalk on the bridge. Mr. Bryant recommended postponing overlay of Eagle Lane due to low traffic counts and staff's efforts to get King County to repave it due to their undergrounding of utilities associated with Brightwater.

PUBLIC HEARING: Six Year Street Plan 2008-2013

Chair Stead opened the public hearing at 8:05 p.m. There were no members of the public present who wished to provide testimony and Chair Stead closed the public hearing at 8:06 p.m.

ACTION: *Commissioner Fiske* moved that the Planning Commission recommend approval of the 2008-2013 Six Year Street Plan to the Town Council as presented. *Commissioner Wilmer* seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

MISCELLANEOUS: Mr. Bryan reported the Town had use of the vehicle counter/speed tubes for 30 days at no charge. He planned to move them to various locations in the Town.

Chair Stead advised the Town's Comprehensive Plan needed to be revised to change the designation of the upper bluff from Urban Residential to Low Density Residential. A brief discussion followed. Mr. Trimm offered to research this issue for discussion at the next meeting.

The July meeting was rescheduled to July 18.

Deputy Clerk Jill Massa announced this was her last Planning Commission meeting as she had resigned effective July 5. She advised Clerk Treasurer Cindy Thomas had also resigned.

AUDIENCE COMMENTS: None

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 8:37 p.m.

Heidi K. Swenson
Secretary to the Planning Commission

APPROVED BY THE PLANNING COMMISSION

George Stead, Chairman

(These minutes accurately reflect what was said at the Planning Commission Meeting. Publication does not vouch for the veracity of these statements.)