

PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

June 4, 2008

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 7:07 p.m. by Chair George Stead. Commissioners present were George Stead, Jim Wilmer, Jennifer Ange, Jan Ostlund and Tom Howard. Robert Allen and Tom Whitson had excused absences. Planner Bill Trimm and Clerk-Treasurer Joyce Bielefeld were also present.

MINUTES: May 7, 2008

The following amendment was made to the May 7, 2008 minutes: Page 2, first paragraph, revise the first sentence to read, "During her review, Ms. Clancy responded to questions and discussion ensued regarding the assessment of sensitive areas at the time development was proposed, enforcing limits on marine bluff vegetation clearing, replacing nonconforming structures, reasonable use..." The minutes of May 7, 2008 were approved as amended.

AUDIENCE COMMENTS: None

UPDATE ON PT. WELLS

Planner Bill Trimm advised Snohomish County has scheduled a public hearing on June 9 to take testimony on proposed amendments to the Comprehensive Plan including the request by Paramount to change the Comprehensive Plan designation for the Pt. Wells property from Industrial to Urban Center. The Town will have a representative at the public hearing and any testimony they provide will be consistent with the letter the Town submitted to Snohomish County.

ESA UPDATE

Mr. Trimm identified sections the Commission had reviewed at the May 7 meeting, advising Ms. Clancy would begin with the section regarding alteration of fish and wildlife habitat areas. as well as review, revisions to performance standards for critical areas and contingency plans, monitoring and definitions.

Margaret Clancy, ESA Adolfson, continued her audit of the existing Woodway code critical area, including alteration of fish and wildlife habitat areas, mitigation standards, monitoring, contingency plan standards and definitions. She described the degree of consistency with Best Available Science (BAS), reasons for consistency/lack of consistency, described suggested changes and provided rationale/basis for code provisions. Commissioners provided feedback on her suggested changes.

During her review, Ms. Clancy and Mr. Trimm responded to Commissioner's questions regarding staff's interpretation of some terms such as substantially and availability of peer review of an interpretation if necessary, habitat protections for Bald Eagles, clustering, requiring sewer hookup in a geologically hazardous area at the time of redevelopment, and aquifer recharge areas in Woodway.

Mr. Trimm advised the next step will be for him to make the revisions to the code as suggested by Ms. Clancy and provide a mark-up version to the Planning Commission for review. Following the Commission's review, a public hearing will be scheduled on the amendments.

Ms. Clancy responded to the Commission's request for information at the previous meeting regarding buffer widths in surrounding jurisdictions and how other cities defined high, moderate and low intensity uses. She outlined a proposed amendment to the recommended buffer widths in Woodway's code based on Edmonds, Mukilteo, Seattle, Everett and Pierce County's regulations, recommending a standard buffer width of 200 feet for a category 1 wetland, 150 feet for a category 2 wetland, 90 feet for category 3 wetland and 50 feet for category 4 wetland and allowing for a greater buffer width for a wetland with a high habitat quality as determined based on points scored on the wetland rating form.

Mr. Trimm explained these buffers differed from the existing regulations which had a standard and minimum width for each type of wetland; certain characteristics were used to reduce the buffer to the minimum width. The proposed buffers were based on the State rating system that was used most jurisdictions. Ms. Clancy also reviewed Edmonds, Mukilteo, Seattle, Everett and Pierce County's regulations with regard to geologically hazardous buffers.

In response to the Commission's request at last month's meeting to estimate the distance of existing structures from the edge of the bluff, Ms. Clancy circulated photographs available on GoogleEarth of properties/homes on the bluff. She noted many of the homes were located a fair distance from the top of the bluff. She questioned whether the Town wanted to establish a specific standard, defer to a geotechnical report and make determinations on a case-by-case basis or a combination approach. Discussion followed regarding the existing 50 foot rear yard setback, slopes on the Pt. Edwards site, and maintaining consistency with State regulations via updating the codes every seven years.

Commissioners expressed support for a generally prescriptive standard for a steep slope setback that could be modified by geotechnical studies. Mr. Trimm suggested including PACE Engineers in determining an appropriate setback.

Commissioners expressed their appreciation to Ms. Clancy for her review. The next Planning Commission meeting was scheduled for July 2 and it was agreed to cancel the August meeting. Chair Stead offered to email Commissioners a paper from the University of Oregon regarding the inability for carbon emissions to affect global warming. Chair Stead commented on Island County's extensive wetland research and prescriptive standards.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

APPROVED BY THE PLANNING COMMISSION

Heidi K. Swenson
Secretary to 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.)