

**City of Gig Harbor Planning Commission  
Minutes of Work-Study Session and Public Hearing  
February 2, 2006  
Gig Harbor Civic Center**

**PRESENT:** Commissioners Jim Pasin, Harris Atkins, Theresa Malich, Scott Wagner, Jill Guernsey, Joyce Ninen and Chairperson Dick Allen. Staff present: Jenn Sitts, Rob White and Diane Gagnon.

**CALL TO ORDER:** 6:00 p.m.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

**MOTION:** Move to approve the minutes of January 19th, 2006  
Malich/Wagner – unanimously approved

**NEW BUSINESS**

1. **Gig Harbor Peninsula Historical Society, P.O. Box 744, Gig Harbor WA 98335** – Proposed amendments (ZONE 05-996) to Chapter 17.67 of the Gig Harbor Municipal Code to add museums to the list of structures eligible for a performance-based height exception. The amendment will also add criteria for review of performance-based height exceptions for museums.

Chairman Allen introduced the first item on the agenda and then turned it over to Senior Planner Jennifer Sitts who gave a brief overview of her staff report. Ms. Sitts pointed out that the applicant and agent were in attendance and available for questions during the work session. She stated that she had prepared a draft ordinance which would add museums as a structure eligible for a performance based height exception and add criteria for an exception to be approved. She then explained the height limits in the height restriction area and other areas in the city. She went over the proposed criteria, noting that it was very similar to the criteria used for schools and explained that one of the criteria would be that it was a museum used for public benefit. Ms. Sitts concluded by saying that staff is recommending a recommendation of approval.

Chairman Dick Allen clarified that there would now be criteria for schools, museums and all other uses eligible for a performance based height exception. Ms. Sitts added that there were also special criteria for lighting and noted the zones that museums are allowed and conditionally allowed.

Commissioner Scott Wagner asked why it was being written to allow performance based height exceptions in any zone that museums are allowed rather than just where this particular museum is wanting to site.

It was asked by Commissioner Theresa Malich if this would allow a museum to put a 60 foot tall building near an R-1 zone. Ms Sitts answered that any project would have to address zone transition issues as they relate to the size of buildings. She also noted that this text amendment

would not outright allow anything; the impacts would have to be mitigated. Commissioner Harris Atkins then asked who would make the final decision and Ms. Sitts answered that the final decision is made by the Hearing Examiner.

Commissioner Wagner then asked if any performance based height exception would be required to go to the Design Review Board. Ms. Sitts answered that they would not be required to go to the Design Review Board for a performance based height exception and pointed out that the DRB has no authority in relation to height as it is a zoning issue that would have to go to the Hearing Examiner.

The Planning Commission then asked the applicant for information on their application.

Owen Dennison, AHBL, 1200 6<sup>th</sup> St., Suite 1620, Seattle WA 98101

Mr. Dennison stated that the intent of the code amendment is for the Gig Harbor Peninsula Historical Society to house the Shenandoah. He stated that that any height exception would be based on effective performance and that they believed that not including museums in the original ordinance was an oversight rather than an intentional omission. He stated that the City's Comprehensive Plan supports this proposal. Mr. Dennison then went over the proposed criteria, noting that it required that museums be open to the public on an ongoing basis.

David Boe, Boe Architects, 705 Pacific Ave., Tacoma

Mr. Boe answered questions about the proposed design of the Harbor History Museum and used scaled models to illustrate the topography of the site and the relationship of the height of the building. He then explained that they would have to go to the Design Review Board for the proposed roof pitch and showed how the scale of the adjoining buildings would relate.

Chairman Dick Allen asked about the possibility of day lighting Donkey Creek and Jennifer Kilmer the Executive Director of the Museum gave a brief explanation of their eventual plans to hopefully daylight Donkey Creek.

Chairman Allen then called a recess at 6:35 until the public hearing at 7pm.

Chairman Allen called the meeting to order and opened the public hearing at 7pm

Commissioner Wagner stated that he would like to make a suggestion prior to hearing public comment and continued by saying that he was very supportive of the museum project, but was not supportive of allowing performance based height exceptions in every zone where a museum is allowed. He pointed out that height exceptions for schools were only allowed in the PI zone and stated that he would like to propose that performance based height exceptions for museums only be allowed in the C-1 zone.

Owen Dennison with AHBL asked if the entire site was in the C-1 zone and stated that he had a concern that museums are not an outright permitted use in the C-1. Ms. Sitts answered that museums are a conditional use in C-1 and B-2 and noted that their site was entirely in C-1. She then stated that the functional issues of a museum exist in any zone and noted that there are

safeguards that exist in the process and that limiting it to the C-1 zone could be construed as a special right to this museum.

Commissioner Guernsey asked why were performance based height exceptions for schools limited to the PI zone. Ms. Sitts answered that she had disagreed with that decision and pointed out that there are criteria that must be met and an opportunity for public comment.

Commissioner Wagner stated that he didn't want some retail center to house an artifact and use that for a reason to have a really large building. It was noted by Jennifer Kilmer that the proposed criteria stated that it had to be a museum with regular public access.

Ms. Sitts pointed out that in the PCD-C zone there is no height limitation so they would not need a height exception and that the two zones ultimately affected by limiting it to only C-1 are the PI and the B-2. She then cautioned the Planning Commission to make sure that they were doing this for function and performance and stated it would be difficult to say that the function and performance of a museum in the B-2 is any different than that in the C-1. She then read the proposed criteria and suggested that perhaps the Planning Commission could modify the criteria if they had concerns rather than limiting it to C-1.

Commissioner Pasin suggested that the criteria state that only the portion housing the artifact could exceed the height limit.

Chairman Allen closed the public hearing at 7:22 p.m.

**MOTION:**

Move to accept the staff recommendation as written  
Pasin/Malich -

**MOTION:**

Move to amend the motion to forward a recommendation amending 17.67.075 to remove the limitation to the PI zone for a performance based height exception for schools.  
Guernsey/

Commissioner Pasin pointed out that this was not what was on the agenda tonight and that public had not had an opportunity to comment. Commissioner Malich agreed that amending the criteria for schools was not related to the proposal for museums. It was then noted by Commissioner Pasin that Commissioner Guernsey holds a position on the school board. Commissioner Guernsey stated that this would not affect school property as they are all in the PI zone.

Owen Dennison stated that his primary concern was that this change would require additional public process and would affect the schedule. Ms. Sitts agreed that the DNS would have to be revised which could possibly add another four weeks to the process.

Commissioner Guernsey stated that her intent was not to hold up the museum proposal but rather to point out a problem with limiting performance based height exceptions for schools to the PI zone. She then withdrew her motion.

**RESTATED MOTION:**

Move to accept staff recommendation as written  
Pasin/Malich – Motion passed unanimously

Ms. Sitts then went over the upcoming meeting schedule. She stated that the next meeting will be a work session and public hearing for a proposed text amendment to allow two or more nonconforming lots to be combined.

Commissioners Theresa Malich and Harris Atkins announced that they would not be able to attend the next meeting.

**UPCOMING MEETINGS**

February 16th, 2006 – Work-Study Session and Public Hearing

**ADJOURNMENT**

Move to adjourn at 7:30 p.m.  
Malich/Atkins – Motion carried