

**City of Gig Harbor Planning Commission
Minutes of Work-Study Session
June 21st, 2007
Gig Harbor Civic Center**

PRESENT: Commissioners Joyce Ninen, Jeane Derebey, Theresa Malich, Dick Allen and Harris Atkins. Design Review Board members Kae Patterson and Rick Gagliano were present. Commissioners Jim Pasin and Jill Guernsey were absent. Staff present: Jennifer Kester, Tom Dolan, Cliff Johnson and Diane Gagnon. Kurt Latimore from the Latimore Company was also present.

CALL TO ORDER: 5:30 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

MOTION: Move to adopt minutes of May 7th with typographic corrections. Ninen/Atkins – Motion passed unanimously.

MOTION: Move to adopt the minutes of May 17th – Ninen/Atkins – Motion passed unanimously.

WORK STUDY SESSION

1. City of Gig Harbor, 3510 Grandview Street, Gig Harbor WA 98335 (ZONE 06-1386) – Presentation and discussion on underground garages.

20-Minute Presentation: David Boe, Boe Architects

20-Minute Presentation: Dave Freeman, Snodgrass Freeman

Mr. Dolan explained that in January there had been a discussion of underground garages and it is on Tier one of the planning commission work program. This subject has been delayed due to the design review process improvements; however, we wanted to have a presentation by local architects to go over some of the design issues with underground structures. He stated that it is unknown as to whether this subject will come back before the commission before October.

David Boe gave a presentation and highlighted his understanding of the code. He stated that as an architect he frequently looks at a city's comprehensive plan first before the regulations in order to determine the goal. He went over several point in the city's comp plan that uphold the desire for underground parking such as the statement "avoid excessive parking along the waterfront". He also emphasized that the shoreline master program addresses these issues and states the same thing. He illustrated a typical office building along the waterfront and how much parking would be required. 10 parking stalls require 4000 square feet of area and would essentially require a variance. He offered that it may not be necessary to require as much parking. He stated that the building code actually has a definition of a basement and that it could be used as underground parking. He recommended that when they draft the regulations that they "test" them on a project and see if they work.

Dave Freeman distributed an illustration of the elements of underground parking and how it reduces the visibility of parking and lowers impervious coverage. He stated that he felt that if they were allowed to not be counted toward the building size limitation it would result in a more aesthetically pleasing street front. He went over an actual project on the corner of Harborview and Soundview and that they were hampered by the inability to not count underground parking in the total building size. He stated that underground parking can have a separate entrance and an exit to avoid the large opening. He also showed what could happen with the QFC parking lot if you could put the parking underground and add more retail.

Mr. Allen asked if they were asking that this be applied to a residential area and Mr. Freeman said that he was focusing on the DB zone. Theresa Malich said that there is a fear that it would creep around the bay and intensify the use in other areas where people live. She felt that it would be great to apply in the commercial areas.

David Boe pointed out that they are using the wrong mechanism to deal with that fear. Mr. Allen said that he felt they were increasing the intensity of the use and that in residential areas it would be out of place. Mr. Boe said that is not the way to control intensity of use, instead say that in these areas these uses are not allowed.

Mr. Gagliano said that this particular rule was written without consideration with construction. Ms. Malich asked if the same size of the building would have a higher intensity with an underground parking garage because it then allows a larger building. David Boe said if your concern is with size of the garage then limit the number of parking stalls, have a minimum and a maximum. He pointed out that in some European cities they have all their parking underground and have their downtown squares entirely pedestrian. Mr. Freeman illustrated that the area around QFC could be just like that.

Rick Gagliano pointed out that if you surround the Russell building with 3000 square foot buildings it will only look larger.

David Boe again reiterated that the garage is not where you control the use, traffic and intensity. Discussion followed on the need for a cohesive vision for the City and the visioning process held in 1992.

Chair Theresa Malich called a recess at 6:30 for 5 minutes. Ms. Malich reconvened the meeting at 6:40 p.m.

2. City of Gig Harbor, 3510 Grandview Street, Gig Harbor WA 98335 - Discussion of Phase 2 of the Design Review Process Improvements.

Ms. Kester went over the goal for the next item on the agenda. She talked about the possible sub areas and the need to define how each of the areas are special and what it is that makes them special.

Kurt Latimore then went over what the Planning Commission had accomplished so far and how these sub areas tied into those changes. He noted items that from a process standpoint seem to impact time frames.

Retaining walls
Zone transitions
Front setbacks
Garage – De-emphasize
IBE/800'
SR 16 screening
Public/private
Trees

Ms. Kester then had them break up into small groups for 20 minutes after which time they came back together with their ideas for sub areas.

Ms. Kester went over the sub areas developed by one group and Mr. Dolan went over the areas proposed by the second group, discussion followed on the similarities found by both groups.

Rick Gagliano pointed out that it would be helpful to see topography.

Ms. Kester asked for everyone give a couple of characteristics for each sub area.

Purdy – stop off point, services, potential for its own community
North Residential – lot sizes bigger, starts to feel rural, trees, suburban, pedestrian plateau
Gig Harbor North – pedestrian, commercial, trees, large buildings, medical services, regional attraction
Employment – industrial, services, not pretty, off the beaten path, wetlands, potential for screening
View Basin – protection, views, historic, heritage, tree line definition, ridgeline definition,
Finholm - best view, mixed use, hilly, retaining walls, second downtown, head of the bay, height and trees are just as important, newer architecture,
East bay - residential, large buildings, net sheds, maximize
Millville – history, homestead, culture, roots, built in the same era, mixed use, maritime, industrial fishing, water activities, net sheds, transition
Downtown – needs protection, historic, vibrant, retail, tourist, parks, focus on small town retail, neighborhood commercial, first floor should be retail/restaurant
Residential – parking slows people down, pedestrian, protection, topography, historic, density protection, mixed
Kimball Wollochet – ridge, business district, low impact, landscaping, city services, transportation area, married to the freeway, signage low key, street trees, serpentine building, melding the R-1, transition
Westside residential – suburban, newer, trees, large lots, no views, retirement communities, quick access to services,
Westside commercial – services, retail, landscaping, parkway, trees, hotels, primary commercial area, worst traffic, connections, hodge podge of designs, how do make it cohesive – do it with accessories rather than building design, no pedestrian connectivity, differing scale.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

July 5th – Cancelled

July 19th – Public Hearing

Mr. Atkins asked if we will have visual aids for the public hearing and Ms. Kester answered that staff will provide visual information along paper to write on. She then stated that Monday is the 2nd reading of the Design Review procedures amendment and updated them on council's concerns. She emphasized that it would be helpful for as many of them to attend as possible to help explain why this was being proposed.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Move to adjourn at 8:10 p.m. Derebey/Ninen – Motion passed unanimously.