

**City of Gig Harbor Planning Commission
Work Study Session
Planning and Building Conference Room
October 6, 2011
5:00 pm**

PRESENT: Harris Atkins, Craig Baldwin, Bill Coughlin, Jill Guernsey and Reid Ekberg. Jim Pasin and Michael Fisher were absent.

STAFF PRESENT: Staff: Jennifer Kester, Tom Dolan and Dennis Troy

CALL TO ORDER: at 5:00

Planning Director Tom Dolan introduced new Associate Planner Dennis Troy.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

The chair asked if there were any changes to the August 18th or September 1st minutes.

MOTION: Move to adopt the minutes of August 18th, 2011 as written.
Coughlin/Ekberg – Motion carried

MOTION: Move to adopt the minutes of September 1st, 2011 as written.
Coughlin/Ekberg – Motion carried.

1. Zoning Code Text Amendments – Discussion on text amendment process issues.

Discussion was held and it was decided to defer further discussion on this item until December when all commissioners will be present.

Commissioner Jill Guernsey arrived.

Senior Planner Jennifer Kester asked if the commissioners would rather discuss schedule or move on to agenda items 2 and 3. Chairman Atkins suggested that they discuss the agenda items in order to determine their impact on the schedule. Everyone agreed.

2. Interim Parking Provisions for Existing Buildings in the DB zoning district -

To review the adopted interim ordinance that added special parking provisions for existing buildings in the downtown business (DB) district. As required by the adopting ordinance, by January 19, 2012 the Planning Commission must review the interim amendment, conduct a public hearing and make a recommendation on whether the amendment, or some modification thereof, should be permanently adopted.

Senior Planner Jennifer Kester stated that the City Council passed an interim ordinance

in May that is good for one year. She went over the allowances in the interim ordinance, stating that it was intended to be an incentive for a change of use in existing buildings. Mr. Atkins asked if this was initiated by a downtown business organization and Mr. Dolan stated that perhaps in a general sense it was, as they had asked for some help. Ms. Kester noted that the provision is only if you keep the building exactly as is. She then went over the reasons for it being only applied in the DB and noted that the Planning Commission could consider other zones within the view basin or just parcels abutting Harborview and North Harborview Drive. Ms. Guernsey asked what the response has been and Ms. Kester noted that the downtown businesses were appreciative but no one has taken advantage of it to date. Ms. Kester also pointed out that the ordinance allowing for street parking within 200 feet had not been repealed since this was only an interim ordinance but if the Planning Commission wanted to make it permanent, that ordinance would have to be repealed. She then showed the commission on the zoning map where the DB zone was located. Additionally she went over the proposed design of the area around Donkey Creek Park. Mr. Coughlin asked if any parking studies had been done and Ms. Kester said that the Downtown Historic Waterfront Association had done some studies. Mr. Atkins asked about ways to provide some kind of threshold to prevent a situation similar to what happens on 6th Avenue in Tacoma where parking problems extend into the residential areas. Discussion followed on possible ways to provide a threshold. Further discussion was held on the need for a stakeholders meeting in addition to a public hearing. Ms. Kester said that she would provide the parking study conducted by the Downtown Waterfront Association. Discussion followed on ways to communicate where public parking is located. Mr. Atkins asked if anyone had any issues with the proposed ordinance and the commission expressed that they didn't have any issues. Ms. Guernsey asked about what the stakeholders meeting would be and expressed concern with not including the residences. She suggested holding a different type of meeting so that we could have a discussion with all sides. Mr. Atkins stated that his concern was the viability and whether anyone would utilize it. Ms. Kester stated that she could remember at least three businesses that wanted to locate in the downtown and their problem was parking. Everyone agreed that something more like a workshop or open house may be more appropriate.

3. Parking Provisions in the View Basin - The City Council has asked that in the fall of 2011, the Planning Commission review the existing parking provisions for the commercial zones in the view basin and make recommendations for changes if appropriate.

Ms. Kester went over some of the parking regulations that the Planning Commission might consider changing. Discussion was held on the pros and cons of increasing the radius allowed for shared parking.

Discussion was then held on joint use parking lots. Ms. Kester noted that the code did provide for joint use parking between DB and WC as long as the uses were occurring at

different times. Different scenarios were discussed and how joint parking would work in those situations.

The next idea discussed was property owners paying a fee if they cannot provide parking on their site in order to fund a public parking lot or additional street parking. Mr. Atkins stated that he didn't feel that the citizens should pay for businesses that can't provide parking.

First floor retail incentives were discussed next.

Discussion was held on the open house and soliciting ideas from the local business and resident groups. Ms. Kester then went over the proposed schedule. She noted that the City Council asked that the Planning Commission fit in a proposal to allow private schools to apply for performance based height exceptions that may need 3 meetings. She stated that this and the parking should be completed in December in order to meet the timelines for the medical marijuana ordinance. Mr. Atkins asked about whether the open house and public hearing should be held on the same day and it was decided they should be held on different days in order to include everyone's ideas. It was decided to hold the open house on November 3rd from 4:00 to 6:00 and have a meeting on October 20th to discuss the performance based height exception. Mr. Atkins suggested that they have a public hearing on the performance based height exception after the open house on November 3rd. November 17th would be a work study to finalize the text and then hold a public hearing on December 1st for downtown parking. Ms. Kester then went over who could attend each of the meetings.

Mr. Dolan gave a summary of the Shoreline Master Program meeting with the City Council. He went over the Department of Ecology's comments and noted that the City Council did not have any major comments. He expressed the council's appreciation for the work the commission had done. He noted that staff would be modifying the draft to reflect the Department of Ecology requests. He stated that then the City Council will hold their own hearing and that that will be held after the first of the year.

Ms. Kester then went over the Mayor's Next Steps for the downtown vision. Mr. Coughlin expressed his desire to see some kind of direction for the downtown. Ms. Kester said that she would provide a copy of the 2008 Downtown Business Plan to the commissioners.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Move to adjourn at 6:58 p.m. – Baldwin/Ekberg – Motion carried.