

**City of Gig Harbor Planning Commission
Work Study Session
Planning Conference Room
November 17, 2011
4:00 pm**

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

STAFF PRESENT: Staff: Tom Dolan, Peter Katich and Jennifer Kester

CALL TO ORDER: at 4:00 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

MOTION: Move to approve the minutes of October 20th, 2011 as written. Coughlin/Fisher – motion carried.

MOTION: Move to approve the minutes of November 3, 2011 with the attached list of ideas from the public hearing. Pasin/Coughlin – motion carried.

WORK-STUDY SESSION

1. **Performance-based Height Exceptions for Private Schools (PL-ZONE-11-0005)**

A zoning code text amendment requested by St. Nicholas Catholic Church and School to include private primary and secondary schools in the uses eligible for performance-based height exceptions for gymnasiums and performing arts related facilities. Review of written recommendation for approval.

Ms. Kester presented the draft written recommendation for approval. Mr. Pasin stated that he believed that there were only 2 findings which were relative to the intent. He also reminded the commission that St. Nicholas is located within the Historic District and there are historic buildings on this property. Planning Director Tom Dolan noted that this amendment was not a site-specific proposal and was to allow St. Nicholas to apply for a performance-based height exception which is decided by the Hearing Examiner. He also noted that legal opinion would more than likely be that private schools cannot have different rules than public schools. Mr. Fisher stated that he felt the findings of fact were strong and supportive of the definition of private schools. Mr. Ekberg stated that they seemed straightforward and reasonable. Mr. Baldwin felt that they reflected the discussions held at the meeting. Ms. Kester stated that the city attorney was satisfied with the findings and the draft of the ordinance. Mr. Coughlin wondered if it should be added to findings that basically this was an oversight that private schools were excluded. Ms. Kester said that she didn't feel it was necessary and the city attorney has reviewed the ordinance and is satisfied with the language.

MOTION: Move to authorize the chairman to sign the recommendation of approval for PL-ZONE-11-0005. Coughlin/Fisher – Motion carried.

Ms. Kester noted that Senior Planner Pete Katich was present in order to address some of the parking issues which related to text amendments as a result of the Shoreline Master Program. She went over the commission's suggested text amendments relating to parking in the shoreline area that had been suggested during the development of the Shoreline Master Program. The first of these suggested changes which applied within the downtown was a proposal to look at marina parking requirements to make them the same for WM as WC. The next was for parking allowances for shared parking of mixed uses apply in waterfront zones. She then went over the proposal to prohibit commercial parking lots in the WC district. The last one was regarding off street parking requirements for liveaboards. Ms. Kester noted that the items had been discussed decided on at the September 23, 2010 and September 30, 2010 meeting. Mr. Fisher asked for clarification that the Shoreline Master Program discussion only applied to properties landward of Harborview Drive and Mr. Katich said that was true for the most part but there were some small areas that extended to the other side of Harborview. Mr. Atkins suggested that they review the interim ordinance on its own and decide if it should be made permanent, then look at other changes. He stated that he didn't think these issues as they related to the shoreline specifically, needed to be revisited with this process. Mr. Fisher expressed his concern that some bigger changes with downtown parking not get lost in the upcoming work program. Mr. Atkins suggested that they discuss the priorities with the Planning and Building Committee at their next meeting. He also emphasized that he felt that some of the smaller changes could be made along with the adoption of the interim ordinance. Discussion was held on the fact there is a need to discuss lots of issues related to the downtown such as a view basin plan. Mr. Dolan stated that the main reason this had not been done yet is that a view basin plan is costly. Ms. Kester noted that the council is well aware that some things need to be addressed and/or changed in regard to downtown but that they are unsure exactly what that needs to be and where it should fall within the work program. Discussion followed on the work program for 2012. Mr. Katich noted that any parking changes within the downtown needs to be in compliance with the Shoreline Master Program.

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

Review of the adopted interim ordinance that added special parking provisions for existing buildings in the downtown business (DB) district. Developing final language for public hearing.

3. Parking Provisions in the View Basin - Review of the existing private-property

parking provisions for the commercial zones in the view basin. Developing final language for public hearing.

Mr. Atkins asked the commission if they supported making the interim ordinance permanent. Commissioners Fisher, Pasin, Coughlin, Ekberg and Baldwin all voiced their support. Mr. Atkins asked if there were amendments they wanted to make. Mr. Fisher stated that he felt that WM should be added. Mr. Atkins asked to see a zoning

map to determine if there were other zones that should be included such as WC. Ms. Kester went over the different zones in the view basin and their locations. Mr. Pasin stated that he felt these parking provisions should apply to all commercial areas in the entire city. Ms. Kester noted that this was intended to keep existing buildings downtown. Mr. Dolan stated that it was not the council's intent to have large retail buildings in other areas of the city change use without having to add parking, but rather to help protect the historic area of the city. Ms. Kester stated that it was within the direction of the council to look at other areas within the downtown as it was specifically stated within the council bill adopting the interim ordinance. Mr. Fisher stated that there is a feeling that the city has turned it's back on the downtown businesses. Mr. Pasin said that he felt that it was discrimination. Mr. Ekberg stated that it's not discrimination; it's an area of the city that has special circumstances. Mr. Fisher pointed out that he had done significant research regarding this topic and it is common to have different parking standards in a downtown area. Mr. Pasin asked what the damage was in allowing this to take place everywhere. Mr. Atkins stated that he wasn't sure what all the risk was but in the instance of downtown he was willing to take risk. He gave an example that someone could build a building for a use requiring the least amount of parking, knowing that later they can change it and not need more parking. Mr. Dolan stated that large developers in different parts of the city have stated that the downtown is important to them because people move to Gig Harbor because of the downtown, not because of Costco. Mr. Fisher stated that he didn't feel that it was appropriate to expand this to other areas of the city at this time. Mr. Atkins asked for a poll of what the commission wanted to do. Mr. Coughlin said he was okay with adopting the interim ordinance and expanding it to the other zoning districts downtown, Mr. Fisher agreed, Mr. Pasin felt that it should be city wide, Mr. Baldwin supported the permanence of the interim ordinance and was open to expanding to other areas of the city. Mr. Atkins felt that the interim ordinance should be made permanent and he felt that they should talk about applying it to other areas downtown. Mr. Ekberg voiced his support for making the interim ordinance permanent and would like to at least have the issue of expansion to other areas of the downtown a subject for the public hearing.

Discussion was held on how to define the zones to be addressed by the ordinance and it was decided to just include those nonresidential areas within the view basin neighborhood design area.

Mr. Dolan suggested that a date could be added to the ordinance in order to define existing building and prevent someone building a building to lower parking standards and then changing the use at a later date. Ms. Kester pointed out that the intent of this ordinance was to preserve historic character. Everyone agreed that adding a date was a good idea. Ms. Kester stated that she felt that section GHMC 17.72.070 on parking within 200' could be stricken if this new provision for existing buildings is kept.

Discussion followed on the provision for off-site, off-street parking. She then read section 17.72.020(B) that restricted off street parking to a lot within 100'. Discussion was held on what the appropriate distance should be.

Ms. Kester emphasized that this provision was for new and existing building anywhere in the city. Mr. Dolan suggested that a certain percentage of parking could be allowed at a further distance and then a certain percentage at a closer distance. I was decided that the 100-foot provision with 17.72.020(B) be changed to 500 feet.

Discussion was then held on the 17.72.020(A) addressing who can park in the required off-street parking. Ms. Kester then went over the mixed use parking provision from 17.72.060 and 080. She suggested some alternate language to make it work in other zones. It was decided that she would develop some language for the public hearing.

Two hour parking limits were discussed. It was noted that two hours was not enough to shop downtown but also that it was nice that employees weren't taking up parking all day. The importance of signage was also talked about.

It was decided that Mr. Atkins and Mr. Pasin would attend the Planning and Building Committee meeting on December 5th.

OTHER BUSINESS

1. Direct Consideration request for text amendment – Side yard setbacks for parks along the waterfront

Planning Director Tom Dolan went over the proposal, explaining that the Kayak Club was hoping to build a kayak storage building in Skansie Brothers Park. There is no other place for it except within 5' of the southerly property line and that the City Council was asking to have direct consideration of this text amendment.

Mr. Pasin said he had a problem with this going for direct consideration since they had spent so much time on the Shoreline Master Program this year, in addition to this being a historic site.

Ms. Kester explained that this would be an amendment that would only apply to wide lots where the current setback calculation becomes a problem. She also noted that the Shoreline Master Program is silent on the subject of side setbacks except as a reference to the required setbacks within the zone. Mr. Ekberg agreed with Mr. Pasin. Mr. Coughlin also felt it needed additional consideration. Mr. Fisher also expressed that it need Planning Commission review.

2. 2012 Planning Commission Work Program.

Ms. Kester went over the proposed work program for 2012 that would be discussed at the Planning and Building Committee on December 5th.

Mr. Fisher suggested they add an item to the work program to examine the development regulations within DB in order to encourage development. Mr. Pasin

agreed. It was decided to that the Planning Commission would request that it be put on the work program.

Further discussion was held on the other items on the work program.

Mr. Pasin noted that they had developed neighborhood design areas and had never completed what the criteria were for these designations. He also noted that there were some RB-1/RB-2 properties that needed changing.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Move to adjourn. Ekberg/Pasin – motion carried.