

**City of Gig Harbor Planning Commission  
Work Study Session  
Planning and Building Conference Room  
July 5, 2012  
5:00 pm**

**PRESENT:** Harris Atkins, Reid Ekberg, Rick Gagliano, Jim Pasin, Bill Coughlin and Craig Baldwin. Michael Fisher were absent.

**STAFF PRESENT:** Staff: Jennifer Kester

**CALL TO ORDER:** at 5:00 p.m.

**WORK STUDY SESSION:**

**1. Downtown Zoning Code Amendments –**

Ms. Kester stated that at the last meeting there had been three areas that they had wanted to spend more time looking at and those were gross floor area, building height and the nonconforming thresholds for remodeling. She also stated that staff had compiled a little bit of information from the open house last week and will be continuing to compile it in the coming weeks.

Ms. Kester passed out a chart showing what areas people thought of as the downtown. Mr. Pasin asked since they were given a task of looking at the downtown do they take the area that most people defined as the downtown and ignore the other areas. Mr. Gagliano said that he thought that this chart just showed how many differing opinions there are. He also noted how few people thought that the downtown was not the entire view basin.

Mr. Atkins noted that Mr. Pasin had a good idea that we need to approach the property owners with what may or may not help them redevelop their property. The various comments received at the public hearing were discussed.

Mr. Gagliano asked if there were instances where uses don't match up with zoning. Ms. Kester answered that there were only a couple tiny areas.

Mr. Pasin reiterated that the 5 items suggested as quick fixes should be brought to property owners to see if they felt they would be beneficial. Mr. Gagliano also noted that there is an issue of how long it will take to see the results of these changes and if it's too long then why do it.

Ms. Kester suggested that allowing increased floor area to the interior of the building is probably one of the easiest to change. Then if you want to stay within the historic district design requirements you could allow a greater level of remodeling threshold (75% versus the 50% nonconforming threshold). Mr. Coughlin noted that without the

vision statement we still don't know what we want. Do we want to go back to some earlier time or are we trying to create something new. Mr. Gagliano expressed that you want to save good buildings for good buildings sake not just for history sake. Mr. Pasin reminded everyone that the success of the business within the building is also important. Everyone agreed it has to be successful on all levels.

Mr. Pasin wondered about the Gig Harbor Historic Waterfront Association and why weren't they taking a more active role in this. Ms. Kester noted that one of their goals this year was to do a market analysis of what is needed downtown.

Ms. Kester went on to say that none of the code changes are going to make people redevelop or improve their properties but she thought it could definitely help if the time is right for property owners to make that decision. Discussion followed on the benefits of allowing more square footage. Ms. Kester went over the proposal for the boat barn and what could happen there if it were allowed more gross floor area.

Ms. Kester stated that some cities have developed guidance for infill development. She asked if the commission was interested in looking at some of what other cities have adopted for an infill process. Mr. Coughlin asked about what the definition of infill was and Ms. Kester explained the difference between infill and adaptive reuse. Mr. Gagliano pointed out that there are some buildings in town that are just not appropriate for adaptive reuse. He also suggested that perhaps more residential units should be allowed downtown.

Ms. Kester suggested that increasing the 50% threshold for remodeling a nonconforming building would really make a difference in allowing people to make improvements. Discussion followed on how the code reads now and what the pros and cons were of changing the threshold. Mr. Gagliano cautioned that they need to assure that people are not just adding more poor construction to an already poorly constructed building. Ms. Kester used an example of Neptune's Court and calculated what their threshold would be for remodeling and it was noted that the way the code dictates how that is calculated could be changed. She then explained the design review process and how it could help to assure that what is built meets everyone's expectation.

Discussion was held on various uses and the required square footage for those uses. Mr. Baldwin asked about the hazards of increasing the threshold for remodeling a nonconforming structure. Ms. Kester explained that nonconformities are intended to go away, so if you are just allowing everything should you be changing the code. Mr. Atkins suggested that it could be a requirement to go to the Design Review Board if you want to do more than the 50%. Mr. Pasin cautioned that these additional steps also cost money and staff time.

Mr. Gagliano suggested that they hold a meeting downtown and walk around. Ms. Kester said that she can advertise the meeting as a walking tour for the 19<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Atkins noted that he wouldn't be in attendance at that meeting as he would be out of town. Mr. Baldwin said he liked the idea of asking the business owners if these changes are really

gaining anything. Everyone agreed that they should schedule a meeting with the business owners. Mr. Gagliano said he will be gone for approximately 3 weeks. It was decided to pick up this issue and do the walking tour later in August when everyone can attend. The next meeting will be about the upcoming Comprehensive Plan amendments. They tentatively scheduled a public hearing on the Comp Plan on August 2<sup>nd</sup> and the walking tour on the 16<sup>th</sup> of August.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

MOTION: Move to adjourn Gagliano/Pasin – Motion carried.