

**City of Gig Harbor Planning Commission
Open House and Public Hearing
Council Chambers
March 21, 2013
5:00 pm**

PRESENT: Rick Gagliano, Jim Pasin, Pam Peterson, Craig Baldwin, Bill Coughlin, Reid Ekberg and Harris Atkins.

STAFF PRESENT: Staff: Jennifer Kester, Lita Dawn Stanton, Lindsey Sehmel, Peter Katich and Diane McBane

Open House – 5:00 p.m.

Downtown Building Height Amendment

The Planning Commission is considering recommending increases to the maximum building height in the City's downtown area in order to allow flat-roof, two-story buildings in the City's downtown. Under the Commission's initial proposal, all buildings would be allowed to be 27 feet high as measured from the building footprint. The Commission is considering allowing this increased height in the Downtown Business (DB zoning district and the Waterfront Commercial (WC) zoning district that abuts the DB district.

The public had an opportunity to look at various graphics and photographs placed around the room illustrating how the proposed height increase may affect the downtown.

Mr. Atkins gave a brief overview of the history of this proposed amendment and it's intent. Ms. Kester gave a presentation using pictures and graphics of the streetscape. She explained that all of the other character defining elements of size, setbacks and design would still have to be adhered to. She stated that the Council's direction in the summer of 2012 was to review and identify codes that inhibit the preservation of character defining historic buildings in the downtown. Ms. Kester thanked everyone for coming and invited them to move around the room and look at the various graphics.

5:40 Questions and Answers

What is the view corridor dimension?

Ms. Kester explained the view corridor dimensions and the required sideyard setbacks, stating that it depends on the width of the lot with the minimum total being 20' with perhaps 5' on one side and 15' on another. She noted that there is also a requirement for public access to the shoreline for waterfront lots.

Why do the yellow lines on the map go out into the water?

The map is based on tax parcels and some of those parcels go out into the water.

How will the parking be addressed?

The parking requirements will remain the same. If square footage is added, the developer will have to provide parking.

What about traffic impacts?

Those would be addressed at the project level.

What is the overall goal?

The goal was to allow the historic character defining buildings to be maintained and to allow new buildings to match that character.

What about the pie shaped piece of property on Soundview and Harborview?

It is zoned RB-1 and would not be a part of this proposal. It would have to be rezoned in order to take advantage of these changes.

How do the existing buildings along Harborview meet setbacks?

The uphill side of Harborview if the building was no more than 6000 square feet in size and they had firewalls you could have buildings right next to each other, but not on the water side.

What is the tallest building in Gig Harbor?

St Anthony's Hospital. Downtown it would be the Bayview Plaza or the Luengen Building where Morso is located.

Would a project have to go through the same approval process for traffic?

Yes, each project would have to go through site plan review and have traffic analyzed. We analyze different areas of town in about a three year cycle or if there is a big project. We have a traffic model that analyzes the traffic.

Is the height being calculated within the buildable area for the properties downhill of Harborview?

It would be measured within the footprint of the building.

Chairman Atkins called a 5 minute recess before the public hearing.

6:00 Public Hearing

Mr. Atkins opened the public hearing at 6:00 pm

Jeni Woock, 3412 Lewis St., Gig Harbor WA Ms. Woock read the Harbor vision statement. She emphasized that two story buildings do nothing to promote the historic character of the downtown and stated that there is no room for picturesque views or the natural environment. Ms. Wood said it would be grand if there were second floor living with retail below, maybe that should be the requirement. How will this affect traffic? Perhaps we should do a traffic study first.

Dave Morris, 2809 Harborview Dr., Gig Harbor Mr. Morris expressed appreciation for the work that has gone into this and he thought it made sense and provided some equity and fairness to the downtown property owners and gives them some capabilities that others already have. He noted that most of the historic buildings downtown are 27' tall and it might help preserve them. He stated that he does own buildings downtown and fully support this.

David Boe, 705 Pacific Ave., Tacoma WA 98402 Mr. Boe stated that he has worked on many projects in Gig Harbor. He point out that this goal is in the comprehensive plan so it should be part of the zoning code. It says we want street frontage retail with housing above and he noted that you can't do that with 16' height restrictions. Mr. Boe went on to say that there are no flat roofed buildings, they are minimum pitch roofs, buildings settle so you need a 1/2" for every foot. It's very important that the 27' be measured from the sidewalk if you want retail at the street. They need 10' ceilings and room for duct work, etc. He explained that he would recommend measuring from the sidewalk in order to have an active street face. The minimum square footage you need is a 12,000 foot print in order to make a second floor pencil. He felt that the design requirements would support larger buildings. Mr. Boe pointed out that there are very few properties that could be redeveloped and concluded by saying that he supported the change with these slight amendments.

Peter Stanley, Tides Tavern, P.O. Box 287, Vaughn WA 98394

Thanked the commission for their hard work and said he was supportive of the proposal. He felt that this will help preserve downtown and he also felt that an increase in building size should be considered as well. The Tides would never have been built if it needed a traffic study. People will go where they want, regardless of traffic. We want downtown to be viable.

Mr. Atkins closed the public hearing at 6:16 p.m.

Mr. Atkins suggested that the commission have an opportunity to think about what has been said. Is there any additional data that could be helpful? None noted. Mr. Pasin noted that they should discuss measuring from the sidewalk. Ms. Kester also noted that it should be clarified existing grade or final grade. She pointed out that she had provided them with copies of the e-mails and written comments received. She noted that she had received verbal comments regarding concern about the water side of Harborview. Mr. Gagliano said that he had heard comments about expanding the area. He suggested creating a map of two story buildings in the other commercial areas. Mr. Atkins asked what the issues were around measuring from the sidewalk. Ms. Kester noted that not every building has sidewalk frontage so we would have to define something. She would suggest limiting the location where you would measure from the sidewalk. Some of what appears to be right of way is private property and vice versa. She went over the setbacks. Mr. Pasin stated that the expectation in a downtown is that you step off the sidewalk into the building. Mr. Atkins suggested that they could measure differently in WC and DB. Ms. Kester said you could word it that you measure from the footprint and if you put your building at the front property line you measure from

the sidewalk. Mr. Atkins clarified that we need to discuss where we measure from and do we have the right area. Mr. Gagliano noted that view of the water seems to be a big concern. He also noted that Mr. Boe's suggestion that you needed to increase gross floor area could be addressed with two 6000 square foot buildings with a firewall.

Other Business

Discussion of upcoming meetings – April 4th, 2013. Ms. Kester reminded them that the public hearing on residential height will be April 11th. She noted that she will not be at the April 4th meeting. Mr. Pasin said he would like to still meet on the 4th. It was decided that they would meet to deliberate this issue on April 4th.

Move to adjourn 6:50 pm. Pasin/Gagliano – Motion carried.