

**City of Gig Harbor Planning Commission
Work Study Session and Public Hearing
Civic Center
March 6, 2014
5:00 pm**

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

STAFF PRESENT: Staff: Lindsey Sehmel, Jennifer Kester, Dennis Troy, and Diane McBane.

5:00 p.m. - Call to order, roll call

WORK STUDY SESSION

2015 Periodic Review

Senior Planner Lindsey Sehmel noted that she had provided them with a binder which would provide them with the materials they will be needing for the 2015 periodic review of the comprehensive plan. She went over the different sections of the binder. Ms. Sehmel then went over the proposed schedule and distributed a statement of work associated with the grant that the city received. Mr. Gagliano asked which portions of the statement of work would be staff and/or planning commission. Ms. Sehmel stated that the deadlines on the statement are grant deadlines and bring topics to them for discussion prior to these deadlines. Mr. Atkins asked how the commissioners bring forward their proposed changes. Planning Director Jennifer Kester stated that the work program will only be dealing with the required changes, not optional modifications. Ms. Sehmel went over the deliverables and stated that she had already completed 1.1. Discussion was held on how to solicit input from the public. Ms. Sehmel directed the commission to the checklist of the items that need to be included in a comprehensive plan. She said that she will bring a staff analysis of the checklist to the next meeting on this topic. The commission talked about how our comprehensive plan was doing in meeting most of these goals. Ms. Kester noted that the staff person assigned to us at Puget Sound Regional Council had given them some direction on things that they saw that should be looked at in the 2015 review. Ms. Sehmel went over some other possible changes that could be considered. She then went over the schedule in more detail. Mr. Pasin asked about their review of the transportation issues and where their review would occur. Further discussion was held on the commission's role in the review of the transportation element.

Chairman Harris Atkins called a 5 minute recess prior to the public hearing.

PUBLIC HEARING

Tree Preservation and Retention amendments

Senior Planner Lindsey Sehmel gave a brief overview of the proposed amendments regarding tree retention. She explained the goal to retain more of the healthy large trees on a site rather than just the trees on the perimeter. She went over some of the newly proposed definitions. She noted that these amendments are only for platting activities and large development.

Mr. Pasin asked about the minimum size of plat this would pertain to. She explained that this would be for a plat of 5 or more lots.

Chairman Harris Atkins opened the Public Hearing 6:05 p.m.

Jeni Woock, 3412 Lewis St., Gig Harbor WA 98335 –

Ms. Woock stated that she felt the intent of this document was great and asked the commission to please to see that heights and sizes would not impair scenic vistas. She noted that she had made written comments as well. She wanted to make sure that street trees are not placed in view corridors. She also asked that hedges be regulated and suggested no higher than 3'. She asked if there could be a place on the city's website for reporting code violations. She asked that another section be added for specific code enforcement on tree violations.

Carol Davis, Gig Harbor

Ms. Davis stated that she had been a resident of the Gig Harbor community for 20 years and that she had seen many visioning statements. She stated that people want a walkable community and that Harborview Drive should be preserved the way it is. She suggested that pertaining to vegetation, trees and shrubs should be a species that will not obscure views. Ms. Davis continued by saying that a wall of trees should not be allowed between Harborview and the water and that no fence or hedge should not be allowed along Harborview that is taller than 3'. She stated that a continuous canopy of trees may work in the Midwest, but it doesn't seem like it fits in a coastal city such as Gig Harbor. She concluded by saying the views belong to everyone.

Michelle Wilson – Bradley Design Group Landscape Architects. Ms. Wilson said she was happy to see tree conservation as part of the changes. She noted that the requirements were the same for commercial and residential and that these are usually looked at differently as commercial requires a lot more grading activity and infrastructure. She also noted that it doesn't seem to consider sites that aren't currently vegetated and wondered if that created a situation where a particular developer would get a pass. She suggested that the commission look at the Fife or Seattle green factor and Seattle's calculation of tree units per acre and perhaps consider using some elements.

Kathleen Reader, Bradley Design Group Landscape Architects – Ms. Reader stated that some of the changes do concern their firm because she thought that the intent was

to have this canopy in the woods feel, to have the feeling like they've been here forever and the current code doesn't allow us to do that. She stated that the language sounds like it will get you the end result but in actuality, I think the idea of having a point system should be looked at. Ms. Reader went on to say that this is not a piece of code that stands by itself; you have to look at parking, density and grading that may prevent you from keeping the vegetation.

Mr. Gagliano asked about her statement "doesn't stand alone" and asked if she saw where there were some conflicts. Ms. Reader said she felt that Woodinville, Olympia, and Bend, Oregon were some good examples where the calculations are done differently. She continued by saying there needs to be flexibility where grading can be permitted, noting that parking, lot density and utilities are the biggest barriers with trees ending up at the end of the food chain. She stated that if someone doesn't understand tree retention requirements, it can kill a project.

Marc Ross, 8913 Prentice Avenue, Gig Harbor WA 98332

Mr. Ross stated he was glad that the commission was doing things to protect our view corridors and he hoped that they also considered property owners. He stated that the property in front of him has gone feral and his view has disappeared. He suggested that large leaf maples be included in the tree list because they are so quick growing. He also asked that the commission think about the people who pay the taxes not just the people who visit and not just the new plats but established residences who are losing views.

David Fisher, 7766 Beardsley, Gig Harbor WA 98332

Mr. Fisher applauded the Planning Commissions effort. He said that his comments were similar to Kathleen Reader's. He felt that there are different requirements for civil vs. residential. If a project wants to cut down all the trees per section E. it doesn't seem clear, is it an option to not have significant tree retention.

Seeing no further speakers, Mr. Atkins closed the public hearing at 6:27 pm.

Ms. Kester answered some of the questions addressed in the public comments. She updated the commission on the tree removal happening on Grandview. Mr. Coughlin asked if we had received any written comments from arborists. Ms. Sehmel said no, she had comments from master builders and concerned citizens.

Mr. Atkins said they will consider everyone's comments and look further at these amendments. He stated that they will also examine the issue as to what will happen when there are no trees on the site

Ms. Sehmel said the next meeting is on March 20th where this will be discussed again at a work study session.

Mr. Atkins asked staff if they could research the issue of restricting trees in view corridors for the work study sessions. Ms. Sehmel said that item is being addressed under another amendment, not part of these plat amendments.

Mr. Gagliano noted that the comments of the professionals received is extremely important and noted that we will continue to solicit comments from professionals. Ms. Kester asked if they would like to make a motion to extend the comment period.

MOTION: Move to extend the written comment period through the 18th of March. Gagliano/Pasin. Motion carried.

Mr. Pasin noted that the citizens have been kind enough to give input on subjects that may be outside of what they were considering tonight; however, he wanted them to know that they are listening to their concerns and they will be addressed in the future and he asked for their patience.

Mr. Atkins expressed appreciation for everyone's attendance and called a 5 minute recess until 6:40 p.m.

OTHER BUSINESS

Ms. Sehmel went over the topics to be discussed at the next meeting. She stated that they would be discussing the 2015 changes and the Harbor Element along with addressing the comments received at the joint meeting with the City Council. She noted that it would be preferred to have a full quorum to wrap up the Harbor Element. She also wanted to address that the first meeting in July happens on the 3rd and asked if they should cancel that meeting. Everyone agreed that the 3rd of July would be cancelled.

Mr. Atkins asked about the suggestion of reorganizing the Harbor Element. Ms. Sehmel gave an example of separating it into 5 different sections and stated that they would have to develop headers for each section. She noted that the commission had discussed this previously and suggested that perhaps there are other ways to identify the goals rather than fully reorganizing the element. Mr. Gagliano expressed a concern with fully reorganizing and how much reworking that would entail. Ms. Kester said that creating headers out of the 16 goals could work without reworking all the language. Mr. Coughlin stated that he felt it made it cleaner and more understandable. Mr. Atkins said that at first he was not supportive of it but after looking at it further some of it made sense. He stated that the introduction needs to be more like poetry and the body should feel more like prose. He didn't feel like it needed total reorganization. Mr. Gagliano did feel that there is some additional clarity needed to tie it back to the vision, although he didn't want to tackle more language. Mr. Pasin said he wasn't sure that the amount of work was worth it. Ms. Kester suggested that in addition to making a more poetic intro, Ms. Sehmel could just make the 16 different headers and see if that helped. Mr. Ekberg supported the new headers without reorganizing the body of the documents. Mr. Baldwin agreed with Mr. Ekberg. Mr. Atkins said he will send staff his

reorganization and he thought that we were preparing this document for a different audience. Ms. Sehmel clarified that Mr. Coughlin, Baldwin, Ekberg and Gagliano may support just the middle ground of just putting the headers; however, Mr. Pasin is not interested. Mr. Atkins also agreed with putting in the headers. It was emphasized that the headers need to reflect words from the vision statement.

MOTION: Move to adjourn at 6:55 pm. Ekberg/Pasin. Motion carried.