

CITY OF BLAINE
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
Thursday, June 13, 2019
7:00 PM
Calvin Armerding - Chair

A. CALL TO ORDER: 7:04 P.M.

B. ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Calvin Armerding, Tom Hanrahan, Steve Hrutfiord, John LeBrun, Richard May, and Kevin Owens.

EXCUSED: Commissioner Susan Sturgill requested to be excused in an email dated 6.13.2019. Motion to excuse Commission Sturgill approved 6-0.

DEPARTMENT: Stacie Pratschner, Community Development Services Director (CDS).

C. AUDIENCE COMMENTS

No audience was present for the Planning Commission meeting.

D. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

No unfinished business was conducted.

E. PRESENTATION: 2019 CDS WORK PROGRAM

1. The Department described the purpose of CDS; the core functions of Community Planning; and presented the following 2019 CDS Work Program (PowerPoint) pursuant to the City Council Retreat held on May 23, 2019:

Enforcement Program Evaluation. The Department described the designation of the Community Planner I as the Code Enforcement Officer, and updating NOV and VCA templates.

Paperless Permitting Program. CDS is working with its cloud-based permitting software vendor, iWorQ, to establish online submittal; payment; and approval of the following permits: mechanical, plumbing, re-roofs, and home occupations. Beta-testing will commence shortly, and the Department is anticipating going "live" with the permits by the end of July or early August.

Commissioner LeBrun asked if other Departments are implementing online permitting. None are known at this point.

Commissioner Owen requested clarification on how the City accepts and processes land use violation complaints. The Department described the complain-based procedures, and the ability to submit complaints online.

Commissioner Owen requested clarification on electrical permit processing. Electrical permits are processed by the Department of Labor and Industries.

Tourism and Marketing Plan Update. CDS and its consultant, BounceBox, are developing nautical tourism ("Blaine by the Sea") branding strategies for Blaine. The Department described the four top goals of the program. The final deliverable, the draft Tourism Marketing and Development Plan, is currently under review by the City.

Design Contract for Skate Park Relocation. CDS will prepare a Request for Proposal (RFP) to contract with a design firm to determine the cost and layout of the skate parking moving adjacent to Marine Park. The Department described the analysis and public outreach process in late 2018 that led to Council's direction that CDS prepare an RFP for the Marine Park location.

Commissioner Owen explained that the impetus for the contract was the City's desire to sell the property that the skate park is currently on. CDS will follow up with the City Manager on the status of the sale.

Commissioner LeBrun described the current camping events that take place in the summer adjacent to Marine Park.

Commissioner May described the testimony at the last Council meeting where a commenter expressed that the current location near the Police Station is appropriate.

Shoreline Master Program Updates. CDS announced the public hearing and anticipates providing a presentation to the SRA in advance of the hearing on June 27.

Multi-family Property Tax Exemption (MFTE). The Department explained the process that will culminate in a public hearing concerning the property tax exemption in the four sub-districts of the CBD zone (Title 5 updates) with the Council on June 24 (workshop in April -> Resolution in May -> Amendments in June).

Central Business District Residential Parking Standards. The Council passed a Resolution in early 2018 directing the Department to develop reductions in residential parking standards in the Central Business District (CBD). CDS described the likelihood of hiring a summer intern to conduct a parking utilization study and develop a proposal.

Commissioner Owen asked if there is a parking issue to be solved.

Chair Armerding stated that with applications that Planning Commission has reviewed, the public states concerns about a lack of parking.

Commissioner May stated that the MFTE and parking reductions may spur development, but may also be detrimental in the long run.

Commissioners LeBrun stated that there have been many instances of the Planning Commission reviewing projects in the CBD, and applicants have stated that additional height allowances would be advantageous to their project(s).

Commissioner Owen concurred with Commissioner LeBrun, and Chair Armerding discussed that the Planning Commission in addition to the Council can bring code and Comp Plan amendments forward for the Department's consideration. CDS stated that the Department can bring forward recommendations directly to the City Manager for Council's consideration.

Commissioner Hrutfiord stated that eliminating parking was not a good idea.

Commissioners May and Owen requested that the Department bring forward two code suggestions to the City Manager: the possibility of design guidelines for commercial buildings in the manufacturing and industrial zones; and additional height allowances in the CBD. The Department agreed to discuss these with Mr. Jones.

Wharf District Design Standards. CDS described the inter-local with the Port of Bellingham to update the 2007 Wharf District Design standards. General clean-up of the document includes updating the Vision Statement and references to the Water Reclamation Facility.

Sign Code Update. CDS described the Department's efforts so far to amend BMC 17.22.

Chairman Armerding described the past enforcement process for signs in the ROW.

Commissioner May addressed the disconnect between what the City legislates and what residents need, specifically in reference to sandwich boards.

Chair Armerding reminded CDS of addressing the electronic sign board issue.

The Department provided at the request of Commissioner Hanrahan a synopsis of the *Reed v. Town of Gilbert* (2015) decision, a Supreme Court ruling that declared content-based non-commercial signage regulations unconstitutional.

Micro-Cell Tower Regulations. CDS described the FCC ruling and 5G deployment, including addressing aesthetics through zoning regulations and the implementation of franchise agreements with Public Works for co-locating in the ROW.

Commissioner LeBrun discussed the two monopolies he's aware of.

Commissioner May described the City's past approval of a tower that was designed to look like a tree, but does not appear life-like.

Commissioner Owen described the relocation of businesses to the City of Blaine, and the possibility of design guidelines for commercial buildings in the manufacturing and industrial zones.

Commissioner LeBrun discussed a variance that was not approved due to a lack of aesthetics.

2. Chairperson Armerding and Commissioner May will not be present at the next Planning Commission meeting schedule for June 27, 2019.
3. CDS announced that Debbie Harger, Blaine's Tourism and Community Development Coordinator, will be retiring at the end of July.

F. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- **March 28, 2019:** Modify minutes on page 5 of 7 – Commissioner Owen asked the question. Motion to accept as modified. Hanrahan and Hrutfiord abstain. Passes 4-0.
- **May 9, 2019:** Commissioner LeBrun requested clarification on the motion made to not adopt ECYs recommendation concerning the name applied to a non-conforming structure. Modify minutes on page 2 of 2 – Commissioner Hrutfiord asked a question about Drayton Reach. Hanrahan abstains. Passes 5-0.

G. ADJOURNMENT: 8:03 PM.

Calvin Armerding, Chair

Stacie Pratschner, Secretary to the Planning Commission

Planning Commission minutes from June 13, 2019 to be approved at the June 27, 2019 Planning Commission meeting.