

CITY OF PORT ORCHARD
Planning Commission Minutes
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Planning Commission Meeting Minutes
December 01, 2009

COMMISSIONERS:

Present: Bek Ashby, Stephanie Bailey, Tim Drury, Tim Matthes, Gil Michael, Annette Stewart, Vance Vaught.

Absent: Kim Ruona.

STAFF PRESENT:

City Development Director James Weaver, Assistant Planner Jim Fisk.

1. CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Bek Ashby called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

2. AUDIENCE COMMENTS:

None.

OLD BUSINESS:

**3A. Public Hearing (continued): 2009 Amendment to the Comprehensive Plan,
Appendix F: Port Orchard Downtown PSRC Regional Urban Growth Center**

City Development Director James Weaver gave the staff report, stating the requirements to update the Comprehensive Plan, and gave the background of the meetings held previously, both Planning Commission and City Council. At the November 19th Planning Commission meeting, the Commission passed Resolution No. 008-09, in support of proposed changes regarding Administrative, clerical errors, map updates, and Appendix G. The Commission determined to continue the hearing on Appendix F: Port Orchard PSRC Regional Urban Growth Center until December 01, 2009 special meeting.

Planning Commission Chairman Bek Ashby stated that at the City Council meeting on November 24, 2009, nine people spoke in opposition to elements of Appendix F, or were critical of Puget Sound Regional Council and its Vision 2040.

Director Weaver explained the task that was given to staff to provide Appendix F as a possible vehicle for meeting PSRC requirements for the Centers funding opportunities and gave the background of the proposed inclusion of Appendix F. It was identified in mid-October that the document would need to be adopted as part of this year's update to the Comprehensive Plan to be considered in this current round of new centers designations by PSRC. Appendix F is primarily an assemblage of previously adopted documents, with the inclusion of a few new Urban Center policies to comply with PSRC's requirements. The new policies address sustainability, land use, housing, economic development, transportation, and implementation. Planning staff put together Appendix F to serve as a vehicle for PSRC funding, which has received conceptual support from PSRC. Staff did not have a recommendation, but looked to the Commission and the City Council for direction and approval.

Chairman Ashby asked if there was any specific project that the City was looking at for this type of funding. Mr. Weaver stated it could be tied into Bethel gateway improvements, the parking garage, or the library building redevelopment and waterfront. The funding would most likely have to be used within the boundaries of the Urban Center. The City would have the ability to opt out of the designation in the future if it so desired. Ms. Ashby stated that without the Urban Center designation, Port Orchard could access funding from a smaller pool, and asked if there were other funding sources besides looking at the Urban Center funding pool. Mr. Weaver stated there were other options, that PSRC funds were primarily for transportation.

Planning Commissioner Tim Matthes asked about use of the funds for parks. Mr. Weaver stated that they don't directly fund parks, but would subsidize non-motorized trails and boardwalks, and transit hubs such as the ferry interchange.

Planning Commissioner Vance Vaught asked if the transit hub would have strings attached that would prohibit vehicles from driving up to it, as the testimony was at the Council meeting regarding the Bremerton ferry dock, or if there would be other social engineering conditions. Mr. Weaver said he was not familiar with the language of the Bremerton funding agreement, but that it was conceivable that the PSRC would have requirements for any project they funded. Mr. Vaught stated that it was a reason for concern that PSRC would be driving the project, and wanted to know if there would be the opportunity to pull out of a project. Mr. Weaver stated that once the funds were received, the City would be committed. Mr. Vaught wanted to know how to be informed prior to accepting the funding. Mr. Weaver stated that it would be written in the grant contract, and included in the scope of work. In applying for funding, the Department has looked for opportunities which minimize the local impacts while providing benefit to the City. Ultimately it is the Council that makes the decision. Mr. Vaught would like to see other ways to provide funding through trusts and volunteers.

Chairman Ashby brought up the option to have more public involvement for crafting Appendix F, as there was for the Downtown Overlay District.

Planning Commissioner Tim Drury didn't see a lot of difference between Appendix F and what has been part of the planning efforts for the past few years, including the DOD, the parking garage, and the library. It has all been geared to get more housing and retail in the downtown. Ms. Ashby stated her concern with the limited designated area of the Urban Center. Mr. Drury stated that it appealed to him to contain the density to the downtown core and not see it sprawl. The City center would be built up with transportation, business, and residential, and outside the center would remain more suburban. Mr. Drury did not see any of the newly-proposed policies as departing from the direction the City has been going in with its recent planning, and asked for others to point out any they felt were bad.

Commissioner Vaught stated that the City would be giving up its freedom to make its own choices by taking money from PSRC with its strings attached. The City should find other ways for development that would allow it to control its own destiny. He used the recent proposal of Commercial zoning of his neighborhood as an example of how the public got involved and the zoning proposal was revised. He didn't think there would be that kind of opportunity if it was a PSRC-driven project, as their conditions would take precedent over local concerns.

Planning Commissioner Tim Matthes pointed to the inclusion in Appendix F that "regional policies that this plan seeks to fulfill include PSRC Vision 2040 plans" would mean that they would be adopted by reference. He would not want to see PSRC in the community any more than they are already. He agreed that it needed more public input.

Chairman Ashby asked if the PSRC provided funding for development, such as the parking garage, would they own it. Mr. Weaver said no, but discussed many possible options such as they may have a certain number of transit spaces allocated, similar to what might be expected if funded through Port of Bremerton or Kitsap Transit.

There was discussion regarding grant funding, and that typically its use conformed to the goals of the granting agency. Mr. Vaught questioned the residential densities proposed in Appendix F, and the density goals of PSRC, and felt that required more review.

Planning Commissioner Gil Michael wanted to know if staff was directed to bring this forward. Mr. Weaver stated that the Mayor and Council were aware of the funding available to Silverdale and Bremerton, and wanted to explore how the City could access the same opportunities. The time frame was the thing that was not anticipated. Ms. Ashby stated that even if Appendix F were approved by Council, it would be at least five years before any funds might be available. Mr. Michael stated that even though there are a lot of good concepts in the documents, he was concerned about the densities and what the City

would look like. He thought any project of merit should be able to secure funding without the dictates that come with a Regional Growth Center that could destroy the small town character of Port Orchard.

Planning Commissioner Stephanie Bailey asked if the densities were a requirement, as that seemed to be what the Commissioners were uncomfortable with. Mr. Weaver stated that the requirement would be to encourage the densities and could be met with the existing zoning. Ms. Bailey's concern was that an Urban Growth Center could be created, but that it would not necessarily limit growth in other areas.

Planning Commissioner Annette Stewart brought up how many people came together to promote Cedar Cove Days, showing the appreciation for the small town flavor of Port Orchard. That is something she appreciates, but would like to see some form of economic development, which would mean change. She was uncomfortable with the idea of PSRC mandating what they could or couldn't do.

Commissioner Drury stated that after the comments of other Commissioners, he could see the point of the density requirements as too high just to be able to vie for funding from the Urban Growth Center pool.

Commissioner Vaught wanted to pass along to the City Council that the Planning Commission would like to look at developing other strategies, not just voting down the proposal before them, so the Commission could be more proactive than reactive.

Commissioner Michael made the motion to recommend to the City Council that they remove Appendix F from the update to the 2009 Comprehensive Plan Amendment. Commissioner Matthes seconded the motion. Upon vote, motion passed unanimously, 6 – 0.

Commissioner Drury made the motion to recommend to the City Council that prior to any City Council action on a PSRC Urban Growth Center that they include a one year study through the Planning Commission and public input for possible inclusion in the 2010 Comprehensive Plan Amendment. Commissioner Stewart seconded the motion. Upon vote, the motion failed 2 – 4.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

October 19, 2009:

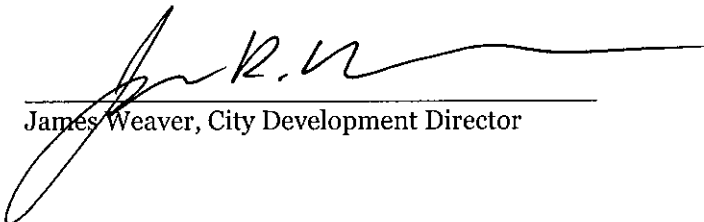
Planning Commissioner Annette Stewart made the motion to approve the minutes. Commissioner Tim Matthes seconded the motion. Upon vote, motion passed unanimously, 6 – 0.

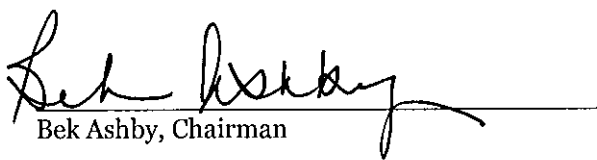
November 16, 2009:

Planning Commissioner Tim Matthes made the motion to approve the minutes. Commissioner Vance Vaught seconded the motion. Upon vote, motion passed 5 – 0, with Commissioner Michael abstaining.

5. ADJOURN:

Chairman Ashby adjourned the meeting at 8:50 p.m.


James Weaver, City Development Director


Bek Ashby, Chairman