

**City of Gig Harbor Planning Commission  
Open House and Public Hearing  
Council Chambers  
July 21, 2011  
5:00 pm**

**PRESENT:** Harris Atkins, Michael Fisher, Jim Pasin, Bill Coughlin, Craig Baldwin and Reid Ekberg. Commissioner Jill Guernsey was absent.

**STAFF PRESENT:** Staff: Jennifer Kester, Peter Katich and Diane Gagnon

**CALL TO ORDER:** at 5:00

**OPEN HOUSE**

**1. WWR Properties, Inc., 3803 Bridgeport Way W., University Place, WA 98466**

Randy Boss, on behalf of Jim White of WWR Properties, Inc., submitted a revised application for a zoning code text amendment which would increase the commercial gross floor area in the C-1 district outside of the view basin from 65,000 square feet to 100,000 square feet, provided a conditional use permit is granted.

Boards were displayed showing the areas affected by the proposed change and representations of the possible project. Commissioners and the proponents answered questions and held informal discussions with members of the public.

**PUBLIC HEARING:** at 6:00

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

**MOTION:** Move to approve the minutes of June 16, 2011. Pasin/Fisher – Motion carried.

Chairman Harris Atkins welcomed everyone and went over the rules for the evening and asked that everyone keep their comments to 3 minutes and if they wished to give their time to someone else they would have to come to the podium and do so.

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Senior Planner Jennifer Kester then went over the packet of information provided to the Planning Commission and noted that she had provided copies of the comments received so far this evening as well. She then gave a brief overview of the staff report and the elements of the proposal.

Mr. Fisher clarified that there is not a building square foot limitation for other uses such as office and Ms. Kester stated that it was true that there was no limitation for office uses.

Ms. Kester then went over the history of the zoning in this area and when the size limitations were adopted. She reviewed the process for reviewing traffic for a text amendment.

Chairman Harris Atkins went over the Planning Commissions role in this process and what would happen after this hearing.

Randy Boss, P.O. Box 237, Gig Harbor WA 98335

Mr. Boss spoke regarding the project and noted that Fred Meyer had pulled their letter of intent for this project and that they were hoping to bring them back to the project. He voiced his objections to the meeting and that he hadn't been given enough easels and he objected to the Safeway project being shown. He went over the timeline and history of their proposal. He also objected to not being able to put his written handouts on the back table. He emphasized that this is not a project specific proposal but is about building size. Mr. Boss went over other retail centers in the area and their size. He then talked about traffic and noted that they had mitigated traffic to the highest possible use. He showed on the aerial photograph where they proposed to construct a new road to handle some of the traffic. Mr. Boss noted that there were articles included in the Planning Commission's packet from 1996 regarding Wal-Mart and he didn't see that as relevant.

Peter Stanley, 602 N C St., Tacoma WA 98403

He stated that this was a hot issue and he didn't want any more large commercial development influencing the feel of our city as you drive down Hwy 16. He felt that Uptown and Gig Harbor North were good examples of development on the part of the City. Mr. Stanley stated he was opposed to increasing the limit to 100,000 and felt it would increase congestion. He stated that we already have affordable things in Gig Harbor and he didn't believe we were leaving money in Tacoma or Gig Harbor. He stated that the conditional use option makes it difficult for anyone to say no.

Mr. Pasin asked Ms. Kester to clarify who would make a decision about the conditional use permit and she explained that it was the Hearing Examiner.

Margot LeRoy, 3110 Judson St., Gig Harbor WA 98335

Ms. LeRoy stated that her two serious concerns were the Olympic Drive interchange and the traffic. She noted that even the DOT says that intersection is at capacity. More retail will just increase the problem. She stated she had empathy for people who live on the West side and the city needs to honor them by protecting their neighborhood. Sales tax is not more important than quality of life. We could end up with a lot of empty stores. She said that most people shop on the internet now, look at University Place's

town center project. She emphasized the need to have a vision and respect the voice of community. She provided staff a written letter to be entered into the record.

Marian Berejikian, Friends of Pierce County, P.O. Box 2084, Gig Harbor WA 98335

Ms. Berejikian stated that she was speaking for livable communities. She handed out a prepared letter for the record. She noted that this amendment may affect other areas of Gig Harbor and Friends of Pierce County thinks this is inconsistent with the Gig Harbor Community Plan where 61.4% stated that they oppose buildings in excess of 35,000 square feet. She noted that there was a goal listed to assure that proposed changes have to be based on a community need and the applicant has not provided any basis for this. She provided other data regarding vacant commercial areas and noted that this area is already zoned for commercial uses and they have lots of options for building something else without this increase. She noted that these types of large retailers kill smaller retailers. She stated that we are a good example of how to do it right and we should remain that way. She noted that Olympic and Point Fosdick had some of the highest incidents of accidents.

Bruce Porad, 9306 74<sup>th</sup> Ave NW, Gig Harbor WA 98332

Mr. Porad stated that he has been a resident for 23 years and does all of his shopping here. He was speaking against the amendment and noted that Mr. Boss keeps referring to this as a project. He felt that the amendment was inconsistent with the C-1 zoning. He stated he didn't see a need for a change as they could do many other things on this property. He felt they could meet the current code and do something more compatible with the community and we have already examined this and decided that this is not what we want. He didn't feel it was in line with the vision of this community.

Mark Overland, 1602 Weatherswood Dr NW, Gig Harbor WA 98335

Mr. Overland yielded his 3 minutes to Tom Morfee and handed in written comments.

Carl Geist, 3709 Picnic Point Ct NW, Gig Harbor WA 98335

Mr. Geist stated that he has lived here for 40 years and has been involved in land use planning and in developing the comprehensive plan in the 70's. He said that he remembered the basic tenants of the planning efforts of the 70s and since then and it was a huge goal to maintain the SR16 corridor as a pleasant place for people to drive through and to have the commercial developments buffered. We didn't want to look like Fife or 6<sup>th</sup> Ave. How did we get away from our vision? Most of us are very concerned how you are not protecting the vision of this city. 65,000 square feet is even too big. This needs to be carefully planned and does not need to be big box. Big picture not big box.

Paul Cyr, 5606 55<sup>th</sup> Ave NW, Gig Harbor WA 98335

Mr. Cyr stated that he agreed with everyone's comments so far. He noted that he has been heavily involved in these issues over the years and was a County Councilman when the comprehensive plan was adopted. He said that buffers and setbacks were always an important issue and that there was 2 years of intense debate and it was a planning process and out of that came the current regulations. Gig Harbor North was

initially outside of the city and a lot of time went into developing it to be consistent with the Gig Harbor community. He noted that Uptown is within the 65,000 square foot limit and they worked with the city. Safeway's redevelopment has worked within these limitations. You are looking at changing a development standard and it is a large increase. He reiterated that he recommended that the Planning Commission not pass this proposal.

Helen Nupp, 11320 148<sup>th</sup> Ave., Gig Harbor WA 98329

Ms. Nupp handed out a prepared letter. Ms. Nupp stated that she has lived here since 1968. She noted that zoning text amendments should further health, safety and welfare and this amendment does not do this. She noted that other developments have managed to stay within these limitations; the applicant just wants to be the biggest and newest. She listed all the larger retail establishments and wondered when enough is enough and emphasized the value of the smaller retailers. She noted that these retail jobs are not a livable wage. Ms. Nupp stated that quality of life is more important than more shopping choices. She went over the statistics regarding traffic at the intersection of Olympic and Pt Fosdick and noted that it was already at a failed level of service. She noted the discrepancies in square footage in the applicant's information on their proposed project.

She went over the May issue of Smithsonian and noted that she had provided copies.

Sam Goodwill, 2805 41<sup>st</sup> St., Gig Harbor WA 98335

Mr. Goodwill stated that he has lived here for 11 years and he lives on the West side. He stated that this proposal will forever change the character of Gig Harbor and will impact other retailers. He said he was not anti growth and liked having choices to shop but noted that no one chooses to live here because of big box retailers or traffic. He quoted from the comprehensive plan and noted that the West side is supposed to be neighborhood retail. He stated that the big box retailers belong in Gig Harbor North. He noted that this could be several 100,000 square foot buildings in full view of the freeway and emphasized that other developers have complied with the 65,000 square foot limit.

Don Bremner, 7916 54<sup>th</sup> St NW, Gig Harbor WA 98335

Mr. Bremner stated that this subject keeps popping up to increase the building size and all the justifications put forth were directed at a specific tenant rather than the general text amendment. He said he was glad the previous attempts had been rejected and he believed it should be rejected again. Mr. Bremner felt the proposal would change the intent of the C-1 district, rather than providing different uses than B-2 it would just be the same. He said it would also be contrary to keeping the big boxes at Gig Harbor North and the development is in contrast with the comprehensive plan. He asked how this protects our small town character and stated that this proposal is unfair to the existing retailers who have developed under the rules. Similar uses should play by the same rules.

Kae Paterson, 7311 Stinson Ave., Gig Harbor WA 98335

Ms. Paterson said that she agreed with everything said. She noted that they had gone through this exercise when she was on the Planning Commission and there are

community values that want buffering from Hwy 16 and it was decided that Gig Harbor North was the place for this type of development. She stated that she didn't think the analysis that went into that had changed.

Evie Lynn, 10321 Rosedale Bay Ct NW, Gig Harbor WA 98332  
Ms. Lynn yielded her time to Mr. Morfee.

Chuck Carlson, 3505 Harborview Dr., Gig Harbor WA 98335

Mr. Carlson stated that he was on the advisory committee that wrote the community plan and he has also served on the Gig Harbor Design Review Board. He said that the original plan was something that people on this side of the bridge developed in order to preserve our sense of being different on this side. He continued by saying that's why you don't see any frontage roads, we wanted screening from SR16 and that has been maintained. He stated that the Boys and Girls Club and St Anthony's have been through a lot of hoops to be screened and this project would stand out like a sore thumb. He stated that this would not create jobs it would suck jobs out of our community as it would drive small retailers away.

Ralph Flick, 4210 27<sup>th</sup> Ave NW, Gig Harbor WA 98332

Mr. Flick said he lives on the West side in Quail Park and is president of the homeowners association and is also a tenant at the Gig Harbor Corporate Center. He said he is opposed to this proposal. He noted that there are only a few tenants who will use a 100,000 square foot building and Fred Meyers is the worst use of this site. He stated he thought it would have an impact on the traffic and his neighborhood would be the one to suffer if this development goes through. Mr. Flick stated that Uptown and Safeway have complied and they should have to do so as well. He continued by saying that no major property owner on the West side is in favor of the change or anyone in our neighborhood and as we heard tonight even Fred Meyer doesn't want to be involved with this proposal any more. He said he moved here to be away from this kind of thing and that any 100,000 square foot retailer would not get his business.

Michael Crites, 9514 Goodman Ave., Gig Harbor WA 98332

Mr. Crites said he agreed with the other comments and said that he had grown up in Gig Harbor and preferred running around in the woods of Gig Harbor North.

Andrew Williams, 206 35<sup>th</sup> Ave., Gig Harbor WA 98332

Mr. Williams said he was against this proposal. He said that the reason he moved here was because it is unique. He stated that when he says he lives in Gig Harbor people say it's cool and that's because it's not like everywhere else. Mr. Williams said that big box stores just have sameness and they will not make this a better community and if he wanted to live in Federal Way he would have moved there. He said that we have buffers with trees and this just opens the door to these iconic bland stores. He noted that there is nothing wrong with these stores but they don't belong here. Those stores don't generate livable wage jobs.

Jack Hart, 147 Maple Lane NW, Gig Harbor WA 98335

Mr. Hart said he has lived here since 1955 when it was a charming fishing village. He stated that we have had growth and it has been controlled in a way that hasn't wiped that out. He continued by saying we have a good comprehensive plan that a lot of time and effort went into and we shouldn't make exceptions to it or we wouldn't have a plan. He noted that this is near the most congested intersection on the Peninsula and that this will suck more life out of the downtown. He concluded by saying that this is homogenizing this community and taking away from its uniqueness and to please reject this proposal.

Florice Johnson, P.O. Box 1333, Gig Harbor WA 98335

Ms. Johnson stated that she lives in Quail Run. She stated that in 1980s she attended the meetings regarding the first comprehensive plan and it was crafted to prevent Gig Harbor from looking like Tacoma. She stated that this is a residential community and we want to keep it livable with lots of green space and smaller businesses and that we do not need more than we already have. She said that she hoped we could retain Gig Harbor the way it is right now. She continued by saying that as far as traffic is concerned, the proposal for the additional road will still bring the cars through the intersection. She asked if the area is on city sewer and water and Ms. Kester said it is on city sewer but not on city water. She concluded by saying the traffic will be horrible and the overpass will have to be widened.

Tom Morfee, 3803 Harborview Drive, Gig Harbor WA 98335

Mr. Morfee stated that he had been all over the country and this is the greatest city in the country. He spoke about the history of land use actions that bear on this subject. He noted that many people here were involved in planning of this city and that he was involved in the 70s and 80s. He stated that ours was the first comprehensive plan in Pierce County and the thing that inspired that plan was a concern for urban sprawl and this proposal is another example of urban sprawl and the community values haven't changed since then. He stated that Peninsula Neighborhood Association helped define Urban Growth Areas and rural zoning and did not oppose Gig Harbor North, that type of development was acceptable there. He noted that 14,000 signatures rejected a big box concept on the Westside and nothing has changed. Mr. Morfee stated that this amendment would increase the allowance by 54%, this proposal does not further health safety and welfare and no one here tonight believes that it does. He continued by saying that this is a square peg in a round hole and we are volunteering our time because we believe in the wonderful character and lifestyle of Gig Harbor.

Mark Hoppen, 8133 Shirley Ave., Gig Harbor WA 98332

Mr. Hoppen stated that he had been the City Administrator and asked that the commission please consider the future possibilities of this property as retail and that all retail uses should be on the even footing. He stated that perhaps the zoning should be changed to B-2 if they want retail, then height, impervious coverage, landscaping, etc. would all be similar in scale. He stated that on the site of Uptown there was originally a proposal for Wal-Mart and Wal-Mart withdrew their application the day after we adopted square footage limitations in pre-annexation zoning. He noted that Fred Meyer wanted

to go where Uptown is today. He asked that the commission not change the nature of the way business is now.

John McDonald asked if Mr. Hoppen was opposed and he answered yes.

Chairman Atkins closed the public hearing at 7:47 p.m.

The chair asked if there was issues raised tonight that required further study from staff. Mr. Coughlin asked about the buildable lands report and Ms. Kester said that nothing within it is current today and she could generate current data and Mr. Coughlin said that he didn't feel it was necessary.

Ms. Kester clarified that the site was Rainier View water and they would have to provide a water tank to provide fire flow.

Mr. Pasin suggested they continue discussion at the next meeting as they had received a lot of information tonight. Mr. Fisher agreed. Mr. Coughlin said it was pretty clear to him. Ms. Kester noted that there were some written comments provided tonight that need to be given to the commission.

It was noted that the next meeting is August 4<sup>th</sup> and that this would be the only item on the agenda.

MOTION: Move to adjourn at 7:52 p.m. Pasin/Fisher – Motion carried.