

**City of Gig Harbor Planning Commission
Work Study Session and Public Hearing
City Council Chambers
November 3, 2011
4:00 pm**

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

STAFF PRESENT: Staff: Tom Dolan, Jennifer Kester and Dennis Troy

CALL TO ORDER: at 4:00 p.m.

4:00 to 5:45 p.m. - Open House

Downtown Parking - An open house to solicit community feedback on existing and future regulations for parking on private property in the downtown commercial areas.

Chairman Atkins welcomed everyone and went over the goal for the evening. Senior Planner Jennifer Kester then went over the current parking regulations and the interim ordinance that has been adopted. She then listed some of the ideas currently being considered and stated that the Planning Commission was asking the public for additional ideas.

The Planning Commission fielded questions from the audience, followed by a comment period.

Steve Skibbs – Mr. Skibbs stated that he owned the Harbor Inn building and that he leases 16 parking spaces and feels like he's subsidizing public parking. He noted that there is some property across the street from him that would be great for a parking structure.

Gary Glein – Mr. Glenn stated that he was from the Historic Waterfront Association. He said that they had found that there was enough parking but that it wasn't necessarily in the right place and that employee parking is impacting customer parking. Mr. Glein said that he felt that the interim ordinance needed more time to really see its impact. He also was in favor of the use of marina and church parking lots.

Kit Kuhn – Mr. Kuhn stated that he likes the current ordinance. He emphasized the need to invest in the downtown. He noted that he also leases space that everyone uses. He expressed appreciation for the Planning Commission efforts.

Steve Lynn – He expressed that he felt that these parking solutions were a great change that can be implemented without cost and will be a great help to the businesses. He suggested that perhaps the Anthony parking lot have a parking structure or have

retail on the bottom with parking on top. Mr. Lynn also stated that he was in favor of expanding the interim ordinance to apply to other areas of the city.

John Moist – He stated that he felt the Waterfront Millville needed to be included as they have marinas with very stringent parking regulations.

John Platt – Mr. Platt stated that they were against any public parking in the marina. They are required to have a certain number of spaces for each slip and if the public starts using it they won't be able to provide parking to their owners.

Jose Lopez – Mr. Lopez, proprietor of El Pueblito, stated that he has problems with the public parking in his parking lot and that he was in favor of exploring the leasing of portions of the marina while still respecting the slip owners.

Sue Jensen – Ms. Jensen asked about the new parking lot next to the Tides. Ms. Kester stated that it will be public parking. She then asked about the loss of the parking near Donkey Creek and Ms. Kester stated that it will be rearranged and hopefully no net loss. She expressed that it seemed that some businesses were allowed more leeway in regard to parking than others. She voiced her support for the interim ordinance.

Gary Myers – He asked for a master plan to provide public parking. Ms. Kester stated that there is no specific plan at this time.

Mr. Kuhn emphasized the need to make sure that our downtown remains vibrant in order to attract new residents. He continued by saying that this is why there needs to be an investment in downtown parking. He noted that something needed to be done in two areas of the city, rather than just one big solution.

Steve Skibbs posed the question as to whose responsibility is it to provide parking and noted that in Tacoma and Seattle you have to pay to park. He noted that Port Orchard is looking at this option.

Mr. Moist noted that there are several restaurants in town that have no off street parking. If you have a small parking lot, the codes are punitive.

Dave Morris – He asked about any funding available for the city to provide some kind of public parking. Ms. Kester said that the money for maritime pier was general fund money and Donkey Creek was funded by a federal grant.

City Administrator Rob Karlinsey said that it is possible for the city to lease private property to provide public parking.

Steve Lynn emphasized the need for shared parking to be able to be utilized in all areas.

Mr. Karlinsey stated that some additional ideas were to possibly relax parking requirements for certain uses that they wanted to encourage. He also suggested perhaps a development agreement where parking requirements could be relaxed for other things that the developer could possibly provide. He then suggested the shared parking idea. Ms. Kester noted that we have a current ordinance that allows for shared parking lot for different peak time uses, but the ordinance does not apply across different property owners.

Kit Kuhn noted that it had previously been suggested the Judson St. could be made one way and then have angled parking. He also suggested that there is a large piece of property behind the Mustard Seed that could be utilized for parking.

Mr. Karlinsey asked about what areas of the downtown on-street parking within 200 feet of the business can be used toward parking requirements. Ms. Kester answered that within the DB zone. She noted that if the interim ordinance were to remain permanent then that provision would not be necessary. He suggested allowing this provision be used in other zones to count toward parking requirements.

Bruce Gair – Mr. Gair noted that discussion had been held with the Tarabochias regarding parking and that the Stutz site should be considered for parking. He suggested that there be signage stating where employees shall park.

Mr. Pasin asked the audience if parking is really affecting redevelopment of the downtown. A majority of attendees raised their hands. He also asked if some of the current restrictions are preventing businesses from filling the existing buildings. A majority of attendees raised their hands.

Mr. Fisher spoke about the importance of the downtown core and economic activity.

Mr. Moist stated that during events that draw upwards of 1,000 people they all find a place to park. He stated that he felt that it was more about the disparity in the regulations.

Mr. Gair spoke against the 2 hour parking limitation stating that it wasn't enough to enjoy the harbor. You can't have a meal and then shop within a 2 hour window.

Mr. Atkins went over the next steps in the process and asked for a show of hands as to how many people were in favor of keeping the interim ordinance (a majority raised their hand) and then how many were in favor of expanding it to other areas (a majority raised their hand).

A brief recess was called.

Public Hearing

1. **Performance-based Height Exceptions for Private Schools (PL-ZONE-11-0005)** A zoning code text amendment requested by St. Nicholas Catholic Church and School to include private primary and secondary schools in the uses eligible for performance-based height exceptions for gymnasiums and performing arts related facilities.

Ms. Kester summarized her staff report on this issue. She went over the history of the current ordinance and its applicability. She stated that staff felt that this request was consistent with the intent of the original ordinance.

Mr. Pasin asked if the St. Nicholas property was within the Historic District. Ms. Kester said that the property where the school is located is not within the Historic District. He then asked about the specific plans for the school and Ms. Kester explained that this is not a project specific proposal.

Mr. Atkins opened the Public Hearing at 6:00 p.m.

Eileen McKain, representing St. Nicholas. Ms. McKain noted that she was present when the current ordinance was adopted but that they had chosen not to pursue changing the Harbor Ridge proposal in order to not hold up Harbor Ridge's construction. She stated that St Nicholas had narrowly tailored the language in order to be sure that they were being respectful of view corridors. She noted that the requirements to become a private school were quite stringent so this allowance would not apply to just anyone trying to say they were running a private school. She stated that although this was a legislative proposal they had identified two areas where they might construct a gymnasium. Ms. McKain stated that they had not started design and wouldn't until they were sure they had this proposal was approved.

Mr. Dolan asked that Ms. McKain expand on the constitutional conflicts. Ms. McKain said that basically it means that religious institutions cannot be treated differently than a public institution. She emphasized that she didn't believe that it was the intent of the city to exclude St. Nicholas and she realized that Harbor Ridge had been in a tight spot.

Ron Harpel, BLRB Architects – Mr. Harpel went over the height standards for a gymnasium and said that the interior standard for volleyball was 23' from floor to structure and for basketball it's 25'. He noted that in other cities there is a maximum 35' exterior allowance. Mr. Pasin asked what their proposed height would be and Mr. Harpel said that they are not that far into design yet.

Mr. Atkins closed the public hearing.

MOTION: Move to approve the text amendment as submitted. Baldwin/Coughlin

Mr. Pasin voiced his concern with this school being in an R-1 zone rather than in the Public Institutional zone. He also stated that he felt the implications could be great since this is in the view basin.

Mr. Dolan noted that the motion should state to “recommend approval” rather than “to approve”. Mr. Atkins asked about the process that the project itself would have to go through and Ms. Kester explained the criteria and process. She also noted that schools in residential zones are required to get conditional use permits.

Mr. Pasin said that he would like to see a restriction on what type of building this could apply to and that in the future it could not be converted to any other use. Mr. Dolan asked if this would apply to both public and private schools. Mr. Pasin said that he didn’t think that a public school would have the ability to convert it to another use. Mr. Dolan cautioned that he was sure the City Attorney would advise that any regulations would have to apply to both.

Mr. Fisher stated that this amendment is to standardize definitions and there are four different schools that this would apply to and he didn’t feel that they should treat one school different from another. He noted that a public school could close due to lack of students and then the gym may become something else.

Ms. Kester suggested that in the definition of primary and secondary schools be changed from “accredited” to “approved” since Washington State approves schools and the accreditation is voluntary and approval is required.

RESTATED MOTION: Recommend approval of the proposal as submitted.
Baldwin/Coughlin – Motion carried with Mr. Pasin abstaining.

MOTION: Recommend the City Council change the word “accredited” to “approved” in the definition of primary and secondary schools in order to be consistent with the Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction nomenclature.
Fisher/Baldwin – Motion carried.

A brief recess was called.

Work-Study Session:

1. Downtown Parking - Discussion on the comments received at the open house.

Ms. Kester went over the list assembled from the comments received during the open house. Mr. Atkins stated that he did not want to discuss each of the items but rather just go over them as refresher in order to be prepared to further discussion at the next meeting. She stated that she would have the list typed up for further discussion. Discussion was held on the importance of supporting the downtown businesses.

Mr. Atkins stated that he would like to go through the existing parking regulations and

then decide what modifications the commission would like to recommend. Mr. Pasin stated that it would be his recommendation that the interim ordinance be made permanent but apply to all commercial zones within the city. Ms. Kester noted that some draft language will need to be developed for the next meeting. Mr. Fisher felt that just continuing the interim ordinance would be an incomplete analysis of the parking situation. Mr. Pasin stated that he felt that more time was needed during 2012. Mr. Coughlin said that he felt that there is an opportunity here to at least make some small changes which could make an impact on businesses. Mr. Dolan noted that they only had one more work study session to figure out what they wanted to do since the Public Hearing is scheduled for the first meeting in December. The interim ordinance needs to go back to the Council in January and he didn't feel that there is enough time to do much more than get the interim ordinance adopted. Ms. Kester stated that she felt that there could be some minor tweaks that could be made along with the adoption of the interim ordinance. Mr. Atkins cautioned that soliciting the public's concerns and then not doing anything is bad politics. He felt that perhaps there is some low hanging fruit that could be plucked and placed within this ordinance and then of course they could do further analysis in 2012. Mr. Atkins noted that the City Council had asked that they do an analysis and bring back some suggestions. Mr. Dolan stated that the Planning and Building Committee will be deliberating on the calendar for the upcoming year and suggested that perhaps the Chair and Vice Chair attend that meeting on the 5th of December to provide input. Mr. Fisher suggested that they start their next meeting at 4:00 in order to get more done. It was agreed that if there was staff and space the next meeting would start at 4:00 p.m.

Mr. Dolan noted that also at the December 5th Planning and Building Committee meeting they will be discussing the proposal by the Kayak Club that would require direct consideration by the City Council. The Kayak Club is proposing to locate at Skansie Park and it may require a change to the setbacks for the park.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

OPEN HOUSE
NOVEMBER 3, 2011

PUBLIC COMMENTS ON DOWNTOWN PARKING

1. Public already uses private parking lots.
2. Could Bonneville Greens be developed as a public parking lot?
3. Enough parking – wrong place.
4. Where should employees park? Marinas, churches, need places for them to park.
5. Not enough time for interim
6. 100'-300' – More flexibility is good
7. More flexibility within existing shell
8. Tweak code to help
9. City underground parking
10. Time limits help customers
11. Need to get customers in business
12. More tools in parking toolbox
13. Removing marina limitations good idea
14. Finholm should not be taxed for DB parking lot
15. Expand interim to all commercial zones – not WM
16. Expand interim ordinance to include expansion
17. WM should be in mix – fairness
18. Review parking requirement per slip
19. No public parking in marinas
20. What about slip owners
21. Allow dual use of parking – but how much is too much
22. Maritime pier will be Tides parking
23. Donkey Creek good parking space
24. Museum site for leased parking
25. Fairness in decision/regulations
26. People move here because of downtown
27. If downtown looks shabby, no one comes
28. City should invest in downtown parking in addition to Maritime Pier
29. Two smaller lots – underground. Split downtown/Finholm
30. Pay for public parking
31. Don't burden businesses on \$\$ of public parking
32. Gazabat space
33. Parking regulations punitive
34. ERU's, parking, fire code – restaurant
35. Parity throughout downtown include WM
36. Marina/Church use – permissive
37. Business and city needs to work together to fix parking
38. What can you do with a pen
39. Extend off peak (mixed use Uptown) parking over multiple property owners

40. City encourage certain use – relax or eliminate parking
41. Development agreement to relax parking requirement for other city benefits
42. 800 employees downtown. 300-400 M-F workers
43. Judson one-way with angled parking
44. Mustard Seed parking
45. Parking before beauty
46. On street 200' to other zones
47. Count public parking lots within so many feet (generous)
48. Work w/Tarabochia parking – Stutz site
49. Signs “If you work here, you can’t use lot”
50. Get stakeholders together
51. Parking is affecting development downtown waterfront
52. Economy is issue
53. Parking is a real ongoing issue to business existence
54. QFC lot full even w/QFC closed
55. Grandfathering is unfair
56. 2 hrs not enough to enjoy Gig Harbor
57. Need 2 hrs of shopping options in downtown
58. Shoppers are lazy
59. Change regulations to increase retail
60. Give up quaint for vibrant – chains may be okay
61. Vertical zoning
62. Need flexibility to evolve w/reasonable restrictions to maintain character