

**City of Gig Harbor Planning Commission
Work Study Session and Public Hearing
Community Rooms
September 20, 2012
5:00 pm**

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

STAFF PRESENT: Staff: Jennifer Kester

CALL TO ORDER: at 5:00 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

The minutes of August 16th, 2012 were deferred to the next meeting to allow Mr. Gagliano time to provide additional notes.

Mr. Pasin noted in the minutes of September 6th the word “mean” needs to be added.

MOTION: Move to accept the minutes of September 6th, 2012 as corrected Pasin/Baldwin – motion carried.

WORK STUDY SESSION:

Downtown Zoning Code Amendments – Planning Commission review and identification of codes that inhibit the preservation of character-defining historic buildings in the downtown. Discussion of potential amendments.

Ms. Kester noted that at the last meeting they had decided to work on items 2 and 6 of the downtown code amendments. Item 2 was regarding the allowance of increased floor area within an existing building envelope (such as a mezzanine) and item 6 was to consider increasing the remodel threshold for nonconforming buildings. She provided some beginning code language for them to discuss.

Discussion was held on item 2. Mr. Pasin asked if this allowance was only for commercial structures. Ways in which you could expand gross floor area were discussed along with the need to possibly allow increased height for certain situations. Mr. Gagliano asked if they needed to specify whether the expansion needed to have additional parking. Ms. Kester said yes, that should be specified.

Discussion followed on item 6. Ms. Kester asked which zoning district this would apply to. She also noted that there are nonconforming uses of land and nonconforming structures and felt that they needed to clarify the application of this amendment. She further explained the nonconforming rules in the Shoreline Master Program. Discussion followed on ways to promote the retention of historic structures.

Mr. Coughlin asked about the tower on the church for example and Ms. Kester stated that the mass you have is the mass you would get. Mr. Gagliano noted that in some instances a building may be slightly over their property line and the city would have an opportunity to buy back some property to widen sidewalks. Ms. Kester said that it could say “unless it crosses a property line”. She also noted that there are some issues with adverse possession.

They then went over the uses not allowed in DB and whether there were any existing non conformities for each. Mr. Gagliano noted that there needed some special exceptions for historic structures and Ms. Kester agreed and suggested perhaps requiring DRB review. Discussion continued on legal lots of record.

Ms. Kester spoke about keeping their focus more narrow or creating loop holes.

PUBLIC HEARING

2012 Annual Comprehensive Plan Amendments

PL-COMP-12-0002: Transportation Element. A city-sponsored Comprehensive Plan text amendment to update the Transportation Element to include additional policies that encourage and enhance pedestrian and vehicular connections in the downtown.

Chairman Atkins opened the public hearing at 6:00 p.m. Ms. Kester identified which of the policies would be affected and read them for the record.

The commission continued discussion on the proposed amendment. Mr. Pasin wondered if “downtown area” was the correct terminology. Ms. Kester stated that the term was intended to be fuzzy. Mr. Atkins wondered if it should say “harbor area”.

There being no one present who wished to speak Mr. Atkins closed the public hearing at 6:10 p.m. Ms. Kester noted that she had prepared a recommendation but also pointed out that she needed to revise the title. Everyone agreed to change the terminology to harbor area.

MOTION: Move to accept the staff recommendation as presented with the exception that policy 11. 1.13 shall strike the word “downtown” and substitute the word “harbor”. Gagliano/Pasin. Ms. Kester suggested a friendly amendment that the motion is a recommendation to the council and to authorize the chairman to sign. The amendment was accepted and the motion passed unanimously.

OTHER BUSINESS

Discussion continued on amendment #6. Ms. Kester asked which zones this should apply to, should it apply to a nonconforming use, structure or both. What should the threshold of rebuilding be, is it a percentage? How do we deal with historic structures that are eligible or are on the historic registry? What do we say about parking? Can

parcels be combined and still be given this right and can buildings be combined and be given this right? Mr. Pasin said he would like to discuss the parking issue. Mr. Coughlin stated that he didn't feel you should have to provide additional parking. Mr. Gagliano said he had heard business owners complaining about lack of parking. Mr. Pasin said he had heard the general public state that there is adequate parking. Mr. Gagliano felt that the city should provide more parking, but he didn't feel that building owners should have to provide more parking if they upgrade their building. Mr. Baldwin agreed that they should not require more parking. Mr. Atkins pointed out that the issue of parking also related to item #2 – Allow increased floor area within an existing building's envelope. Everyone agreed that if they are trying to provide an incentive then parking should not be required for either of these items. Ms. Kester asked for additional input on #2 regarding which areas it would apply to and what about height. Mr. Gagliano stated that he would say that if it's a flat roof building the height of the parapet is the maximum you could go to and it's a pitched roof the height of the ridge if the maximum and you could create dormers. Mr. Atkins asked if someone could find out if there are any nonconforming uses in relation to item #6. Discussion followed and everyone agreed that the existence of existing nonconforming uses didn't matter. The commission continued discussing the height issue. Ms. Kester felt that she had enough information to craft some language and item 2 and 6.

DRB Alternate

Mr. Pasin volunteered to serve as the alternate for a period of no more than 6 months. Ms. Kester clarified that quorum would be determined prior to a DRB meeting and then Mr. Pasin would be asked to attend. She noted that even if there was a quorum, he could attend at his option if Michael Fisher couldn't attend.

MOTION: Move to create a position for an alternate DRB member from the Planning Commission. Coughlin/Gagliano – Motion carried

MOTION: Move to appoint Jim Pasin to serve as the alternate for no more than 6 months. Coughlin/Gagliano – Motion carried.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Gagliano drew a map illustration of what could occur in terms of heights and views if these incentive proposals were instituted. He noted where it would not make any impact.

Ms. Kester went over the schedule of upcoming meetings.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Move to adjourn at 6:55 p.m. Pasin/Gagliano – Motion carried.