

**City of Gig Harbor Planning Commission
Work Study Session
Civic Center
January 16, 2014
5:00 pm**

PRESENT: Harris Atkins, Rick Gagliano, Bill Coughlin, Pam Peterson, and Craig Baldwin and Jim Pasin. Reid Ekberg was absent.

STAFF PRESENT: Staff: Jennifer Kester and Dennis Troy

5:00 p.m. - Call to order, roll call

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION: Move to approve the minutes of December 19, 2013 as written. Pasin/Gagliano – Motion passed unanimously.

WORK-STUDY SESSION

Tree Preservation & Retention Amendments – Discussion regarding the changes and draft language.

Associate Planner Dennis Troy went over the draft language he had provided. The first item for discussion was the definition of Mixed Use. Mr. Troy passed out the current definition. It was decided to use the current definition. He then presented the information on requiring internal islands to be made up of native plantings. Ms. Kester clarified that staff was asking how far did they want to take native as there could be some really beautiful significant trees that aren't native. Mr. Coughlin suggested that perhaps they exclude the weed trees rather than requiring native. It was decided that the intent was that non-native trees can't be counted toward perimeter landscape area but native and/or significant trees could be within internal islands. Further discussion was held on the remaining draft language. Mr. Pasin suggested that the priority should be on retention of evergreen trees rather than deciduous. Discussion continued on how these regulations work with zone transition requirements. Mr. Gagliano emphasized the need to make sure that existing and new development are treated the same. Mr. Troy went over the instances when zone transition would apply. Discussion was held on opacity and whether a fence should be required in areas where the buffer is reduced. Ms. Kester noted that the real purpose behind this change was to allow for retention of better trees and ecological function rather than creating better barriers. Mr. Gagliano felt there was no need for opacity if they did a good job modulating the buffers. Mr. Pasin said he didn't feel that the buffer needed to be opaque, he would rather see good landscaping. Mr. Atkins said he was rather mixed in his opinion and that he could see where in different situations opacity may be more or less important. Mr. Baldwin said he wasn't sure it was needed but expressed concern for buffering existing homeowners from a denser neighborhood. Mr. Coughlin said he didn't want to force a solid row of

arborvitae and would rather see good landscaping. The commission agreed on some basic wording to reflect the desire to not regulate opacity. Staff agreed to finalize the language and bring back to the commission. Height of vegetation was discussed next. Mr. Troy asked that they discuss whether this language should also be included within residential site plans as well. It was agreed that it didn't need to be a separate section. Discussion followed on how the regulations would differ if the buffer were in a tract versus being located within each lot.

Mr. Troy distributed the Pierce County Native Species List and stated that staff was recommending that it be adopted by reference within the chapter. Everyone agreed.

The charts regarding tree retention were discussed next. Mr. Troy asked if the charts seemed too complicated and Mr. Baldwin said he felt that it was a little complicated. Discussion followed on the different tree sizes and percentages. The first proposal was to make the retention 20% and 8" diameter trees along with percentages for certain types of trees. Mr. Atkins pointed out that there should be a way to maximize the retention of big healthy trees, requiring the applicant to count those first as part of their 20%. Ms. Kester asked why have the overriding 20% if you have percentage requirements for each tree size/type. Mr. Atkins wondered how it would be addressed in a situation where there are no trees. Ms. Kester noted that it would be planted. Everyone agreed that the overall percentage of retention should be removed and see what kind of feedback is received at the public hearing.

Mr. Troy then went over the replacement/enforcement section for trees that have been removed that were required to be retained. Ms. Kester noted that currently there is not a differentiation between a tree that was lost due to wind or intentional removal. It was decided that lost or damaged due to an act of nature should hold a different penalty than a tree that is removed intentionally.

Mr. Gagliano pointed out some grammatical corrections that needed to be made. The commission then discussed the introduction section.

Ms. Kester then asked the commission about a possible date for a public hearing. It was decided to discuss it once more on February 6th and then hold a public hearing on February 20th.

A 5 minute recess was called to change the batteries in the recorder.

Harbor Element - Discussion on the January 30, 2014 open house and materials. Ms. Kester went over the proposed structure of the open house and public hearing. Noticing for the hearing was discussed.

Nomination of Officers – Chair and Vice Chair for 2014.

The chair opened nominations. Mr. Gagliano nominated Mr. Atkins to continue as Chair. Mr. Atkins noted that his term is over in June and he wasn't sure he would

seek reappointment. Mr. Gagliano amended his nomination for Mr. Atkins to continue as Chair until June. Ms. Peterson seconded the nomination. The nomination passed unanimously.

Mr. Pasin stated that he felt that the date of his term was wrong on the roster. Ms. Kester said that she would investigate the matter. Mr. Gagliano nominated Mr. Pasin to continue as Vice Chair for the same six month term as the Chair. Mr. Coughlin seconded the nomination. The nomination passed unanimously.

OTHER BUSINESS

Discussion of upcoming meetings – January 30, 2014 and February 6th, 2014.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Move to adjourn at 7:43 Gagliano/Peterson – motion carried unanimously.