

TUMWATER PLANNING COMMISSION

MINUTES OF VIRTUAL MEETING

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CONVENE: 7:00 p.m.

PRESENT: Chair Elizabeth Robbins and Commissioners Grace Edwards, Terry Kirkpatrick, Michael Tobias, and Meghan Sullivan.

Excused: Commissioners Nam Duc Nguyen and Nathan Peters.

Staff: Community Development Director Michael Matlock and Planning Manager Brad Medrud.

Others: Mayor Debbie Sullivan.

CHANGES TO AGENDA: There were no changes to the agenda.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – MARCH 22, 2022:

MOTION: Commissioner Tobias moved, seconded by Commissioner Edwards, to approve the minutes of March 22, 2022 as presented. A voice vote approved the motion carried unanimously.

COMMISSIONER REPORTS: There were no reports.

MANAGER'S REPORT: Manager Medrud reported on the proposed appointment of Planning Commissioner Anthony Varela on April 19, 2022.

The City is celebrating Earth Day and Arbor Day on Saturday, April 23, 2022 at Tumwater Historical Park from 9 a.m. to noon for the Earth Day event and 10 a.m. to noon for the Arbor Day event. The Arbor Day celebration includes meeting members of the Tumwater Tree Board, receiving a free tree seedling, and receiving a giveaway bag.

PUBLIC COMMENT: There were no public comments.

ORDINANCE NO. O2022-004, BINDING SITE PLANS: Manager Medrud reported the presentation includes a review of previous public testimony and then the Planning Commission discussion of a recommendation to the City Council on the proposed ordinance.

The proposal would amend the binding site plan regulations in Title 17 of the Tumwater Municipal Code (TMC). Binding site plans provide specific information on plat proposals as an alternative type of land division. State law allows binding site plans as an alternative for land division for industrial, commercial, manufactured home parks, and condominiums.

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The Commission received one public comment during the public hearing on March 22, 2022. The individual requested more information on phasing and whether additional changes to Title 14 might be warranted. Staff reviewed the feedback and supports some proposed amendments to Table 14.08.030 (decision process table). The table identifies the process, decision authority, and the appeal process. Staff included information that speaks to any binding site plan that does not require phasing as an administrative approval process while a phased site plan requires hearing examiner approval and a binding site plan for a particular size (acreage) or number of units if the application is for condominiums. The proposal retains the recommendation that the phased approval to require a hearing examiner public hearing and decision.

Manager Medrud reviewed proposed changes addressing binding site plans:

1. TMC Chapter 15.44 Vesting of Development Rights – Added “binding site plan” to sections that specify the type of land division that is vested to clarify how and when binding site plan applications are vested.
2. 17.08.010 Binding site plan - Clarified that binding site plans can be utilized for manufactured home parks. The code already states condominiums and commercial/industrial developments are allowed to utilize binding site plans. State law allows manufactured home parks to use this method of land division as well. Added references to the land division processes addressed in the other portions of TMC Title 17 Land Division.
3. In Section 17.14.040 Review Criteria, added several review criteria specific to binding site plans to address the following:
 - Identify building envelopes and land uses
 - Parking lot plans
 - Access, roads, and utilities
 - Identification of previously approved uses
 - Identification of open space tracts, critical areas and buffers, and utility easements
 - Uses allowed in the underlying zone district
 - Adjacent properties and future development (language was revised to reflect “encourage” rather than “require” that the binding site plan allow for future development)
4. 17.14.050 Administrative Consideration - Required findings for approval were added that are specific to binding site plans and include the following:
 - Consistency with the Comprehensive Plan, Tumwater Development Guide, Tumwater Municipal Code, and any applicable state laws
 - A statement that uses approved for the property and the

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- conditions under which they are allowed are binding to the property
 - A statement that a binding site plan may not create new nonconforming uses or structures or increase the nonconformity of existing nonconforming uses or structures
 - A reference to the criteria in TMC 17.14.040 was added
5. 17.14.080 Duration of approval - “Binding site plan” was added to the section to clarify that it applies to binding site plans. Like other land divisions, such as plats, short plats, etc., the initial period of approval is for five years with up to three additional one-year extensions allowed.
 6. 17.14.090 Phasing of development - Phasing of a residential binding site plan is allowed if it contains ten or more residential dwellings. This is consistent with the SEPA exemption threshold that Tumwater adopted for short plats. Commercial or industrial binding site plans over 20 acres in size are allowed to phase development. Phased binding site plans are considered for approval or disapproval by the City’s hearing examiner.

Manager Medrud invited questions. No questions were offered by the Commission.

Manager requested the Commission’s recommendation to the City Council. The General Government Committee is scheduled to review the proposal and the recommendation from the Commission on May 11, 2022, followed by a City Council worksession on May 24, 2022, and final action by the Council on June 7, 2022.

MOTION: Commissioner Kirkpatrick moved, seconded by Commissioner Sullivan, to recommend the City Council approve Ordinance No. O2022-004, Binding Site Plans. A voice vote approved the motion unanimously.

MAYOR’S MEETING WITH THE PLANNING COMMISSION: Manager Medrud said that each year the Mayor attends a Planning Commission meeting to answer questions and share information on City plans, activities, budget, programs, and goals.

Mayor Sullivan advised that at future meetings, she plans to present a state of the City report. Her first meeting serves as an introduction and sharing of information on City activities.

Mayor Sullivan said she served on the Planning Commission for ten years and believes the Commission serves as one of most valuable resources for the City. She conveyed appreciation to members for their work and the extensive amount of reading required. Whereas most of the City’s boards and commissions meeting monthly, the Planning Commission meets twice a month. The Commission serves as one of the best conduits for

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understanding how the City operates.

Mayor Sullivan invited questions or requests for information.

Commissioner Tobias asked about current plans for Isabella Bush Park as the park serves several purposes of providing open public space and stormwater retention. The park lacks sufficient parking to accommodate users. The pedestrian entrance from Crosby Boulevard often experiences flooding during inclement weather. Mayor Sullivan referred to the Parks and Recreation Commission and the Tumwater Metropolitan Park Board for information on the status of City parks. The park also houses the Tumwater FRESH Farm. The park is designed to serve as an area for water retention. A trail is also planned for the park.

Director Matlock referred the Commission to the City's Capital Facilities Plan on the City's website for information on projects funded for the next six years.

Commissioner Kirkpatrick asked about the Mayor's vision for development priorities in the City. Mayor Sullivan responded that the City intends to hire an economic development manager to assist the City in managing development activities in the City. Previously, former City Administrator Heidi Behrends Cerniwey served in that capacity by promoting and managing commercial and housing development activity in the City. The City is on track for many housing projects comprised of single-family and multifamily housing projects, as well as numerous commercial projects. The Craft District is adding additional buildings and will eventually add an amphitheater complex. A mixed use building is planned between Heritage Distilling and South Puget Sound Community College with office/retail on the lower floor and apartments within the upper stories of the building. Panattoni is moving forward on several projects on Port of Olympia property near the airport.

Manager Medrud referred to the City's Economic Development Plan for information on the focus of development activities by the City's new economic development manager.

Mayor Sullivan referred to a large roadway project on Trosper Road and Capitol Boulevard to add roundabouts, which is scheduled within the next several years and will impact traffic in the City. Once the project is completed, the improvements will open up additional properties to attract new development.

Mayor Sullivan shared information on a recent meeting with local retailers. Many of the individuals in attendance represented the Toyota Dealership, Costco, and Safeway. Representatives from the businesses shared information on future needs for their respective businesses. She stressed

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the importance of continual outreach to local businesses as retention of existing businesses is important.

Chair Robbins spoke to the recent news about federal infrastructure funding. She asked how the City is positioned to receive some of the funds through the different transportation funding programs. Mayor Sullivan said it depends on the focus of the funding area. It is likely the funds would be focused on improving Interstate 5 from Tumwater to Mounts Road. The City is seeking funding support for the E Street connection. Much of the funding availability will be based on how much the state receives and the type of projects.

Director Matlock added that Transportation and Engineering Director Brandon Hicks has submitted many federal grant applications. The City has successfully received many grant awards for transportation projects. Director Hicks has been so successful in receiving grants that the City's extensive project list has required the department to fund another communications position to coordinate public outreach for public works projects.

Commissioner Kirkpatrick referred to the ongoing issue surrounding the community's desire for a community pool. It appears the City of Olympia is leading an effort for an aquatics center. Thurston County apparently is supporting the effort. However, he is unsure of the City's support for an aquatics center. Mayor Sullivan said the City addressed a community pool during discussions on the new community center. A pool, as a component of the City's new community center, would require a source of funding and well as a community process to receive feedback on the design of both the center and/or pool. She is uncertain as to the City's investment or involvement with the City of Olympia. Aquatic centers have been a discussion topic in the region for many years. She suggested following up with Parks and Recreation Director Chuck Denney for more information.

Commissioner Kirkpatrick commented on the lack of swimming facilities for local high school students who likely spend more time traveling to other community pools than practicing. The swimming facility at The Evergreen State College is in such poor condition that it required the last conference swim meet to relocate to a pool in Puyallup. The entire county needs a pool to meet the needs of student swimmers and to ensure schools remain competitive.

Commissioner Sullivan asked about status of the Arts Commission and future art projects. Mayor Sullivan said the City is moving forward on establishing an Arts Commission. Manager Medrud noted that Recreation Manager and Volunteer Coordinator Todd Anderson is leading the effort to establish the Arts Commission. Mayor Sullivan added that several individuals have been identified to participate in the interview process for

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the Arts Commission. The City is seeking a diversity of applicants representing different ethnic groups, tribes, and others to ensure inclusiveness within the Arts Commission.

Mayor Sullivan reported on the proposed appointment of a new Commissioner. The applicant is scheduled for appointment at the Council's April 19, 2022 meeting. The Commission has another position to fill. She encouraged members to seek other potential candidates. The membership of the Commission was approved to remain at nine members.

Chair Robbins asked Mayor Sullivan for input on the best ways for the Commission to assist her as Mayor. Mayor Sullivan said the work of the Commission is incredibly helpful. She said she also does not believe members fully grasp the importance of their role as a Commission for moving the community forward. The Council has many areas of responsibility and for the Council to undertake the same level of review conducted by the Commission would not be possible. She reviews the Commission's minutes reflecting the Commission's discussions. The topics are well vetted through the Commission's discussions. She thanked Commissioners for their time and efforts invested as members of the Commission.

Mayor Sullivan commented on how the pandemic has affected the nation and that soon, she is hopeful in-person meetings can resume. The Council is scheduled to begin hybrid meetings effective on April 19, 2022. At some point, the Commission would likely consider the same option.

Mayor Sullivan thanked members for their service to the community. She anticipates that at some point, she can visit with members one-on-one during community events.

NEXT MEETING DATE:

The next meeting is scheduled on April 26, 2022. The agenda includes an introduction of ordinance updates on planned unit developments, a special planning tool used throughout the state and development housekeeping amendments. The preliminary docket of development housekeeping amendments will likely include 12 items with minor changes, such as updating the City's Public Works Department to reflect the new Transportation and Engineering Department.

ADJOURNMENT: Commissioner Sullivan moved, seconded by Commissioner Tobias, to adjourn the meeting at 7:49 p.m. A voice vote approved the motion unanimously.