

**CITY OF EDMONDS
PLANNING BOARD MINUTES
May 23, 2007**

Chair Guenther called the regular meeting of the Planning Board to order at 7:33 p.m. in the Council Chambers, Public Safety Complex, 250 – 5th Avenue North.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Cary Guenther, Chair
Janice Freeman
Jim Young
Judith Works
Michael Bowman

STAFF PRESENT

Duane Bowman, Development Services Director
Rob Chave, Planning Division Manager
Mike Clugston, Planner
Karin Noyes, Recorder

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT

John Dewhirst, Vice Chair
Don Henderson
John Reed

READING/APPROVAL OF MINUTES

BOARD MEMBER WORKS MOVED THAT THE MINUTES OF MAY 9, 2007 BE APPROVED AS AMENDED. BOARD MEMBER YOUNG SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF AGENDA

The agenda was approved as submitted.

AUDIENCE COMMENTS

There was no one in the audience who expressed a desire to address the Board during this portion of the meeting.

PUBLIC HEARING REGARDING APPLICATION BY ROB MICHEL FOR REZONE FROM RM-2.4 TO RM-1.5 FOR PROPERTY LOCATED AT 125 – 2ND AVENUE NORTH (FILE NUMBER R-07-15)

Chair Guenther reminded the Board of the Appearance of Fairness Rules and inquired if any Board Members received or participated in exparte communications regarding the subject of the hearing outside of the hearing. None of the Board Members identified an appearance of fairness concern.

Mr. Clugston displayed a Comprehensive Plan map, which identifies the subject property as high-density multi-family. He also provided a zoning map, showing the subject property as RM-2.4 zoning. He noted that the applicant is seeking a rezone

of the subject property from RM-2.4 to RM-1.5. He referred to the criteria the Board must consider when reviewing rezone applications and reviewed each as follows:

- **Comprehensive Plan.** Mr. Clugston explained that the Comprehensive Plan identifies the area as high-density multi-family, and both the RM-2.4 and RM-1.5 zoning designations would be consistent.
- **Zoning Ordinance.** Mr. Clugston advised that the current RM-2.4 zoning designation would allow a developer to construct one residential unit per 2,400 square feet of property. The proposed RM-1.5 zoning would allow one unit per 1,500 square feet of property. The difference between the two zones would be minimal. The setback requirements, height limits, and all other bulk standards would be the same for both zones. The only real difference would be the number of dwelling units allowed.
- **Surrounding Area.** Mr. Clugston advised that there is a mixture of uses surrounding the subject property. There is multi-family and single-family residential development, a post office, and commercial development in the vicinity.
- **Changes.** Mr. Clugston advised that the proposed change would essentially allow for an increase in density. The parcel is about 10,800 square feet in size. The current zoning would allow four units on the site, and the proposed zoning would allow up to seven units.
- **Suitability.** Mr. Clugston pointed out that the subject property is economically and physically suitable for the proposed zoning, as identified in the Comprehensive Plan. In addition, the RM-1.5 or RM-2.4 zoning designations are very similar.
- **Value.** Mr. Clugston said staff anticipates there would be some increased value if the parcel were rezoned to RM-1.5 since the density would be increased.

Mr. Clugston recommended the Board forward a recommendation of approval for the proposed rezone for property located at 125 – 2nd Avenue North.

Board Member Freeman pointed out that the height limit would be the same, regardless of whether the property is zoned RM-1.5 or RM-2.4. She asked if the current height limit would allow the construction of a 3-story structure on the subject property. Mr. Chave said it would depend on the topography of the property. Again, he emphasized that none of the bulk or setback standards would be changed by the rezone. The rezone would merely allow for more units to be constructed.

Mr. Chave said that if the subject property was located in an area where there was significant traffic concern, the City might be justified in restricting the number of units allowed on the site. But the subject property is bordered by high-density commercial and residential development, and the current infrastructure and street system can support the change.

Board Member Works asked if the developer would be required to provide two parking spaces per unit. Mr. Chave answered that the multi-family zones have a sliding scale parking requirement that is based on the number of bedrooms. Parking would be addressed at the building permit stage.

Scott Schlumberger said he was present to represent the applicant, Michel Construction. He agreed with the information provided in the staff report to support the application, particularly the comments related to the rezone criteria. Mr. Schlumberger pointed out that any multi-family building that is developed on the subject property would be required to meet the same bulk and massing standards regardless of whether it is zoned RM-1.5 or RM-2.4. The building would be same size, but the rezone would allow the developer to add at least one unit. They would likely propose that one unit be placed on the ground floor next to the garage spaces, making it more affordable than the other units. He suggested the City's bulk standards need to be updated. He said they are finding that in urban infill, higher densities are found closer to the downtown areas, which allows the businesses to flourish. It is also a better way to build on a per capita basis and doesn't impact the environment as much as large units. Rather than building larger \$1 million units in downtown Edmonds, he said the applicant is proposing smaller units that are more affordable.

APPROVED

Mr. Schlumberger pointed out that the building right next to the subject property is 40 feet tall and the proposed building would be lower in height. He asked the Board to keep in mind that real estate is a product that is sold by the square foot, and allowing a few additional units on the subject property would not enable them to construct a larger building. The building would be the same size, but the units would be a range of smaller sizes. This would provide a benefit to people who want to live in the downtown, and it would also help the business core to succeed by providing people to shop at the downtown businesses.

Chair Guenther asked why the applicant included a traffic study in the application submittal. Mr. Schlumberger answered that the traffic study was required as part of SEPA. Mr. Chave added that the traffic study also contributes to determining the impact fees associated with the project. Mr. Schlumberger pointed out that the traffic study indicates the trip generation ratio would be less than what currently exists because the applicant is proposing to replace eight units with just five.

Board Member Works asked for more information about the existing apartment building on the site. Mr. Schlumberger answered that the existing 8-unit apartment building was built in 1955, and the individual units are about 700 to 800 square feet in size. While the structure fulfills the City's need for low-income housing, it is beyond its life span and is worn out.

Board Member Freeman inquired if the applicant plans to construct a three-story structure on the subject property. Mr. Schlumberger answered that it would not be cost effective for the applicant to construct a three-story building because the property is relatively flat.

Board Member Freeman noted that the rezone application is not project specific, so the Board should not consider any project proposals for the site. She emphasized that if the rezone is approved, the property owner could change his mind and develop something different on the site, or he could sell the property to another developer. Once a rezone has been approved, anyone could develop the property based on the RM-1.5 zoning designations. Mr. Schlumberger agreed. He reminded the Board that they are looking for opportunities to provide residential housing for people to live in the downtown, and the rezone proposal would help them meet that goal.

Diana Lundquist-Lin said she is one of the tenants in the 8-unit apartment complex that currently exists on the subject property. She asked how long the process would take before the applicant was ready to tear down the existing structure and start construction of the new one. She noted that she has a double handicap, and she needs an extended period of time to find other accommodations.

Jack Jacobson pointed out that the subject property was sold to the developer for \$1.2 million. With the current RM-2.4 zoning, that equates to about \$300,000 per unit. If the applicant is allowed to construct 7 units on the site, the per unit cost for the land would be reduced immensely. He suggested that if the City is going to establish a pattern of granting rezones from RM-2.4 to RM-1.5, they should just eliminate the RM-2.4 zoning designation altogether and let everyone have the RM-1.5 zoning. Approving the rezone would have a very positive impact for the property owner, since he could turn around and sell the property as a 7-unit site rather than a 4-unit site. Once the City opens the door for rezones of this type to occur, they should expect more applications. He disagreed with the applicant and staff that high-density residential development is located adjacent to the property, since the development only has four units.

Steve Burnheim said it was gratifying to hear the comments from Mr. Jacobsen, and he agreed with him wholeheartedly. He disagreed with Board Member Freeman's comment that more people are needed to support the downtown businesses because no information has been presented regarding the costs associated with increased density. He said the City must address the additional impacts associated with traffic, road wear, police and fire protection, water consumption, etc. He advised there are many impacts that were not even mentioned in the staff report or the applicant's presentation. Therefore, it would be presumptuous to blindly presume that more people in the downtown, especially in the area that is zoned for fewer people, would be good for the community.

Mr. Burnheim said he lives right next door to property that was zoned RM-2.4, and he sued the City and won because the plans for the site were illegally approved as a 3-story building. The building was never constructed, but in the City's process of rezoning the downtown area, it was rezoned to RM-1.5. He agreed that buildings in the downtown should require

sustainable building techniques, he expressed his belief that the proposed rezone would provide no benefit to the public. Approving the rezone would be giving away public land and the rights of the people who want to constrain growth.

Mr. Burnheim cautioned the Board against assuming the developer's comments are correct that the units would be more affordable if the rezone is approved. He noted that eight affordable units already exist on the site, and the new units would be much more costly. Before the Board accepts that the new development would provide affordable housing opportunities, they should review figures to support that claim. He noted that, as proposed, the City would not ask for any public benefit in exchange for the rezone.

Mr. Burnheim said staff has not presented any analysis as to the purpose of the RM-1.5 zone, and why the subject property should be rezoned. Staff's only comment in that regard was that there is no reason to oppose the rezone application because the bulk standards would be no different than the existing RM-2.4 zoning. Mr. Burnheim summarized his belief that there is really no reason to approve the rezone. He said he is a "green guy," but he doesn't believe that is the motive and purpose of the proposed rezone. He expressed his belief that the developer's objective is to acquire a financial gain. On the other hand, no analysis was provided in the staff report about the impacts that would result from the increase in density. He emphasized that if the rezone is approved, there would be no guarantee the bulk of the building would be the same the applicant is currently proposing. He noted the rezone would grant the property owner a 35% profit if approved.

Mr. Schlumberger said the applicant made a commitment to the seller that it would be two years before the property is redeveloped. Given the process, it would likely take at least 1½ years from now to start the new development.

Mr. Schlumberger pointed out that the Bel Air Development was constructed 12 years ago when land was more affordable, and much has changed since that time. He invited the Board Members and the public to read a document titled, "Higher Density Development: Myth or Fact," which was published by the Urban Land Institute, National Multiple Housing Council, Sierra Club, and the American Institute of Architecture. He submitted a copy of the document as part of the record and said he would be happy to provide a copy to Mr. Burnheim, as well. He agreed that the City should not just arbitrarily decide they want more density in the downtown. But some of the impacts Mr. Burnheim referred to earlier are myths.

Mr. Schlumberger said that higher density, by definition, does not result in all of the developer benefits brought forward by Mr. Jacobson, either. While many think the proposed rezone would result in more money for the applicant, it does not really work out that way. The bulk standards would not change, and the price per square foot of sellable area would remain the same. In fact, he pointed out that developing more units would raise the development costs since more bathrooms, kitchens, etc. would have to be constructed. He summarized that the rezone would not result in a windfall to the property owner, but there would be some measurable benefits to the public, as described in the pamphlet he referenced earlier. He noted that, at this time, the City does not offer incentives for low-income development.

Mr. Chave referred to Mr. Burnheim's concern about the impact the proposed rezone would have on the existing infrastructure. He pointed out that the Comprehensive Plan identifies the subject property as high-density multi-family, which means that either the RM-1.5 or RM-2.4 zoning would be appropriate. He explained that when the property analysis was done as part of the Comprehensive Plan, the circumstances of each particular site dictated the zoning that would be appropriate. For this particular site, the Comprehensive Plan indicates the traffic patterns and infrastructure would support either an RM-1.5 or RM-2.4 zoning designation. The Comprehensive Plan policies state that density should be placed in activity centers such as the downtown, where the required infrastructure is already available. Under the Growth Management Act, it is important to focus the density in urban areas where services are available, which is downtown Edmonds. He further explained that typically cities try to meet their density requirements through greater height limits or by expanding the bulk, but Edmonds is unique because there is no bulk and size differences between the RM-1.5 and RM-2.4 zoning designations. While this is something the City might want to reexamine in the coming years, the Board must base their recommendation on the zoning designations as they currently exist. The only impact staff could identify for the rezone was that the number of units would be increased. If the rezone proposal would have no material impact on the infrastructure, it would be hard to identify a reason for denying the application. Again, he emphasized the Comprehensive Plan policies talk about the need to encourage density in the downtown so that more people can live there and support the businesses.

Mr. Chave agreed that affordable housing is an issue the City should address, but that this time they cannot control either the number of units or the price of the units. There is no direct or exact relationship between square footage, the number of units, and the price. However, as a general rule, the per unit cost of more smaller units would be less than for fewer large units.

Board Member Young pointed out that whatever building is constructed on the site would be better environmentally than the existing structure that was built in 1955. The impacts referenced earlier by Mr. Burnheim would not likely occur since the proposal is to replace the existing 8-unit development with a new structure that could only have up to seven units. The activity level associated with the subject property would not measurably change. However, there are currently eight affordable units that would be replaced with four to seven units that would be substantially less affordable.

Board Member Young expressed disappointment that the eight affordable units could not be preserved, and he suggested the City address this issue at some point in the near future. Mr. Chave said that, under certain circumstances, the City has been able to work with the Snohomish County Housing Authority to purchase some fairly large apartment complexes so they can be renovated and maintained as low-income housing projects. He said the Housing Authority has been more active in Edmonds than in recent years; but unfortunately, they do not have funding to purchase every unit or complex that is affordable.

Board Member Works asked if any studies have been done regarding the loss of affordable housing in Edmonds. Mr. Chave answered that none of the studies have been specific to Edmonds. However, Snohomish County Tomorrow is gearing up to do another study in the next year or so. There is a broad concern across the County, but no one has come up with a master solution.

Board Member Freeman agreed that affordable housing is a problem in Edmonds, but they need to be realistic, as well. Land prices in Edmonds are very high, particularly in the downtown area. She recalled that the City attempted to address this issue when they changed the zoning along SR-104 to allow more space for affordable housing. She noted that the subject property is in a prime location, and refurbishing the existing apartment units would result in more costly rent, as well. Board Member Young agreed with Board Member Freeman. He said he is not suggesting the Board recommend denial of the rezone application in order to protect affordable housing.

CHAIR GUENTHER CLOSED THE PUBLIC HEARING.

Chair Guenther said that, as an architect, he is aware that buildings are not typically designed to last forever. The existing apartment building is more than 50 years old, and it is worn out. What was allowed to be constructed in 1955 would not meet the new code requirements. The building must be replaced, and eight units would no longer be possible using either zoning option. If the Board wants to maintain as much density as possible on the lot, they must recommend approval of the proposed rezone application.

Board Member Bowman said he plans to support the rezone application. He recalled that the issue of affordable housing has come up numerous times over the past several months when the Board has reviewed rezone applications. He noted that more apartment units have been added to the inventory along SR-104 and he doesn't see any negative impacts associated with the proposed rezone.

Board Member Works said even though it would reduce the affordable housing stock in the downtown, she plans to support the proposed rezone for all of the reasons stated in the staff report, by the applicant, and by the Board. Board Member Freeman said she, too, would support the rezone application based on the analysis provided by staff. She said she doesn't want the housing stock in the downtown to be reduced. She referred to Mr. Hinshaw's report on the downtown, which identified the need to increase the number of people living within a 15-minute walk of the downtown. She said she supports that statement and is in favor of taking advantage of every opportunity to increase density in the downtown. If the density is not accommodated in the multi-family residential zones, they will have to start thinking about possible changes to the single-family zones that are located within close proximity of downtown.

APPROVED

BOARD MEMBER WORKS MOVED THAT THE COMMISSION FORWARD A RECOMMENDATION OF APPROVAL TO THE CITY COUNCIL FOR FILE NUMER R-2007-15 BASED ON THE ANALYSIS PROVIDED IN THE STAFF REPORT AND ADDITONAL COMMENTS PROVIDED BY THE APPLICANT AND BOARD. BOARD MEMBER FREEMAN SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

PUBLIC HEARING REGARDING APPLICATION BY ROB MICHEL FOR REZONE FROM RM-2.4 TO 4M-1.5 FOR PROPERTY LOCATED AT 318 – 320 WALNUT STREET (FILE NUMBER R-07-28)

Chair Guenther reminded the Board of the Appearance of Fairness Rules and inquired if any Board Members received or participated in exparte communications regarding the subject of the hearing outside of the hearing. None of the Board Members identified an appearance of fairness concern.

Mr. Chave provided a map to illustrate the location of the subject property. He noted that the Comprehensive Plan identifies the property as part of a large area designated as high-density residential. Land use designations for surrounding properties include commercial, single-family residential, and public. He advised that the property is currently zoned RM-2.4, and the applicant is requesting a rezone to RM-1.5. He reviewed that properties to the north of the subject property are zoned RM-1.5 and generally developed with multi-family buildings. Multi-family development is located to the east on property that is zoned RM-1.5. Two multi-family developments lie south of the subject property, and a mix of residential units, including single-family, lie to the west. He summarized that there is a true mixture of development in the area.

Mr. Chave advised that much of the staff's analysis is similar to the previous application. He noted the difference between RM-1.5 and RM-2.4 zoning is only the number of units permitted. All of the zoning regulations governing the development would remain the same. He reported that the applicant has already received Architectural Design Board approval for a four or five-unit project. However, if the rezone is approved, the additional units could be provided using the same design, without modifying the box of the building. This further illustrates that the only affect the rezone would have is simply the number of units allowed. The appearance and design of the project would not be impacted. He suggested that as the number of units increase, the cost per unit would decrease.

Mr. Chave referred to the staff report, which cites the Comprehensive Plan policies that call for increased density in the downtown because the infrastructure to support more intense development is already available. The property is identified in the Comprehensive Plan as high-density residential, which would accommodate either the RM-2.4 or RM-1.5 zoning designations. Staff has found no reason to recommend denial of the rezone application, and increasing the number of units by just a few would not have an impact on the existing street system or the City's utility capacity.

Mr. Schlumberger again referred the Board and public to the document he provided earlier entitled, "Higher Density Development: Myth or Fact," which was published by the Urban Land Institute, National Multiple Housing Council, Sierra Club, and the American Institute of Architecture. He referred to staff's earlier comments about how the application is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan policies which stress the need for providing more housing stock in the downtown to help the businesses succeed. He briefly reviewed how the application would meet the rezone criteria as follows:

- **Comprehensive Plan.** Mr. Schlumberger referred to staff's earlier comments about how the application is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan policies which stress the need for providing more housing stock in the downtown to help the businesses succeed. The recently approved BD-1 zoning has reduced the amount of housing that can be economically built in the downtown. The subject property is close to the business district, and would help the City meet their goal.
- **Zoning Ordinance.** Mr. Schlumberger pointed out that not only would the RM-1.5 zoning designation be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan designation, the higher density would be consistent with the Growth Management Act and the zoning ordinance as it pertains to infill development.
- **Surrounding Area.** Mr. Schlumberger advised that surrounding uses vary. The project to the south of the subject property is developed as 1,100 and 950 square foot units, which is much smaller than what the applicant is asking for. He said it is important to keep in mind that smaller units can meet a need for housing in the City.

APPROVED

- **Changes.** Mr. Schlumberger pointed out that if the developer was allowed to build more units, they would become more affordable.
- **Suitability.** Mr. Schlumberger advised that the existing house on the site was built in the 1940's and is worn out. There are wiring and heating issues. While improvements have been made to the other house in the northwest corner, it is also worn out and needs to be replaced.
- **Value.** Mr. Schlumberger said it is important to note that the improvements, in general, are worn out and new construction would be better. They already have approval from the Architectural Design Board for a 5-unit project, and this project would stay basically the same if the zoning was changed to allow a 7-unit complex.

Mr. Schlumberger summarized that the applicant's intent is to replace the substandard development that is currently located on the site and it would be nice to provide more units.

Chair Guenther opened the public hearing and reminded the audience to keep their comments brief.

Steve Burnheim said public should be allowed to provide remarks without charges by the chair to keep them brief. He expressed his belief that approval of the rezone application would not maintain the diversity of housing stock. He noted there has been no analysis or even the question of why the property was designated RM-2.4 in the first place. Was it to maintain the character of the area?

Mr. Burnheim said he supports the process of increasing the sustainability of the location, but merely allowing builders to increase the number of units allowed within a certain envelope would provide only a minimal ecological benefit. If the City is interested in maximizing the ecological benefits, they should carefully examine what these benefits are. He asked that his remarks from the previous rezone hearing be incorporated verbatim into the record for this application. He summarized that the applicant has not provided any evidence to show that increasing the number of residential units in the downtown area would automatically benefit the citizens of Edmonds. This is only a presumption at this point. He suggested that before the Board makes a recommendation on the proposed rezone, they should conduct a more comprehensive review of the objectives rather than just consider the short-term gain of a particular project.

Diana Lundquist-Lin said she has a hard time because she has a double handicap. She doesn't drive and her apartment is accessible to downtown businesses, etc. She said she wants to live out her years in Edmonds and moving would be an extreme hardship for her. She said she likes where she lives and wants to stay.

Mr. Chave recalled that one speaker asked where the analysis was and why the change would be good for the downtown. He explained that analysis was conducted as part of the Comprehensive Plan when land use designations and policies were established. He referred to the staff report, which describes the Comprehensive Plan policies and how the proposal would be consistent. The City does not conduct a separate land use analysis for every rezone application that is submitted. As long as an applicant is requesting something that meets the policies and criteria in the Comprehensive Plan, no further analysis would be required.

Board Member Works questioned if the Board should consider changing the multi-family zoning designations at some point in the future when the Comprehensive Plan is updated again. Mr. Chave recalled that the Comprehensive Plan has been updated on a regular basis. However, the multi-family zoning designations have not been changed much since 1980. He explained that over the years the City has tried to incorporate density in compatible ways, but when the only difference between the classifications is the number of units allowed (the bulk and size requirements would stay the same), it does not really make sense to have both the RM-1.5 and RM-2.4 zoning classifications. He noted that the City is very interested in encouraging more multi-family units without impacting surrounding properties, which would result in more affordable housing opportunities.

Mr. Chave explained that the current Comprehensive Plan designation for the subject property is high-density residential, which allows either an RM-1.5 or RM-2.4 zoning designation. The difference between the two zones is negligible, and the

other policies in the plan lead staff to the conclusion that RM-1.5 zoning would be appropriate in most cases. Board Member Young suggested this discussion take place separately from the discussion related to the proposed rezone application.

Again, Board Member Young expressed his concern about losing existing affordable housing in the downtown area. The new units would not be less expensive to rent than what currently exists. However, more small units would be more affordable than fewer larger units. In addition, placing these density opportunities within close proximity to the services that people need would be appropriate.

CHAIR GUENTHER CLOSED THE PUBLIC HEARING.

Board Member Freeman said she plans to support the proposed rezone based on the relative gain to the public health, safety and welfare. She noted that the property is particularly close to the services provided by the downtown businesses, which can accommodate a number of Edmonds residents who don't drive. She reminded the Board of the City's goal to encourage a more pedestrian lifestyle in the downtown. She said she would always support opportunities to increase density, particularly in the downtown area.

Chair Guenther agreed. He suggested that part of the value of the rezone is that it would provide an opportunity for better housing stock for the residents of Edmonds rather than maintaining substandard, worn out structures. He reminded the Board of the City's Comprehensive Plan policy to intensify the downtown and get more people into the urban areas.

Board Member Works said she would support the proposed rezone for the reasons stated in the staff's analysis. However, she suggested that, in the future, staff should expand on Criteria 6 to address the points raised by Chair Guenther and Board Member Freeman regarding the City's goal to intensify uses in the downtown to encourage the pedestrian lifestyle. While the public has expressed concern that the new units would not be affordable, she pointed out that the units would be more affordable if the rezone were approved since they would be smaller.

BOARD MEMBER WORKS MOVED THAT THE COMMISSION FORWARD A RECOMMENDATION OF APPROVAL TO THE CITY COUNCIL FOR FILE NUMER R-2007-28 BASED ON THE ANALYSIS PROVIDED IN THE STAFF REPORT AND ADDITIONAL COMMENTS PROVIDED BY THE APPLICANT AND BOARD. BOARD MEMBER YOUNG SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTON CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Board Member Freeman suggested it would also be appropriate for the Board to consider the parking requirements for downtown development at some point in the future. She reminded the Board of their goal to get people out of their cars, and having a minimum parking requirement of two cars per unit is counterproductive. Reducing the parking requirement could result in additional units at a reduced cost.

REVIEW OF EXTENDED AGENDA

Mr. Chave reviewed that the agenda for the June 13th Meeting would include another discussion with Mr. Bowman regarding the proposed Edmonds Community Development Code changes. In addition, staff would present the Historic Preservation Commission's draft Historic Preservation Design Guidelines, which were reviewed by the City Council last week. Chair Guenther said Mr. McIntosh, Parks and Recreation Director, also forwarded him an email asking that the Board schedule an opportunity for him to discuss the concept of prohibiting smoking in all City parks. He agreed to contact Mr. McIntosh to find out more information. Chair Guenther announced that Stevens Hospital has requested an opportunity to present their master plan to the Board in July or August.

PLANNING BOARD CHAIR COMMENTS

Chair Guenther announced that King County would sponsor a "Green Tools for the Environment Conference of Local Leadership" at Bellevue City Hall on June 19th. Community leaders, City Council Members, Planning Board Members, etc. have been invited to attend.

Chair Guenther reported that he and Board Member Freeman recently attended a “Short Course in Public Planning.” He was able to obtain copies of the handouts for interested Board Members.

PLANNING BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Board Member Freeman reported on her attendance at the National Main Street Conference. She particularly noted the key note address, which was presented by Tim Egan who writes for the New York Times. The theme of his presentation was “sustainability is sexy.” He pointed out that people who encourage sustainability might not be popular now, but they would make great ancestors. He commented that a city needs more than exposed brick panels and flower baskets to make it sustainable. He quoted from Winston Churchill, “We shape our buildings; and thereafter, they shape us.” He encouraged those in attendance not to let buildings narrow their thinking. He spoke about the Town of Astoria, Oregon, which is a fishing community. People from the City were coming to soak up the quaintness of the fishing town, and the residents expressed their dislike of being called quaint. He spoke about the need to provide affordable housing closer to where people work. He said cities must find their own solutions from within the community. They must build upon these solutions, using what they can obtain from their surroundings. Board Member Freeman said that while she enjoyed the conference, she felt the American Planning Association Conference she attended in 2006 was much more applicable to the City’s needs and goals.

Board Member Works reported on her participation on the Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Plan Update Committee, which met on May 16th. Mr. MacIntosh provided a virtual tour of all the parks in the City, and the committee began brainstorming ideas. Some of the ideas discussed included the need for connectivity between the trails, walkways and public areas. Participants are very interested in expanding the arts corridor concept, too. A few participants expressed a desire for the City to consider the option of providing an overpass to the waterfront over the railroad tracks. Interest was also expressed about the possibility of providing kayak’s for rent on the waterfront.

Board Member Freeman asked if the committee discussed the option of providing more dog parks in the City. Board Member Works said the committee did discuss dog parks. She advised that the public would be invited to an open house on June 20th, and she encouraged the Planning Board members to attend and participate.

Board Member Young suggested the Board hold a discussion in the near future about the concept of changing the multi-family zoning designations, as discussed earlier in the public hearings. If the City is going to grant rezones because developed units would be less costly, they should keep in mind that the change would still not make the units affordable. Perhaps they should consider a zoning ordinance that would require property owners to contribute to affordable housing in order to obtain a rezone. He suggested staff gather information about how other jurisdictions address the issue of affordable housing. He expressed his belief that the situation would continue to get worse. While rezones are good for City revenues and property owners, it is difficult for the people who live in the vicinity. They need to consider what other benefits are provided by increased density other than complying with the Growth Management Act.

Board Member Freeman agreed but reminded the Board that tonight’s discuss was only about the rezone applications. There are numerous opportunities and tools for addressing the issue of affordable housing, such as inclusionary zoning. Mr. Chave agreed. He said one option would be to grant benefits to developers in exchange for a certain percentage of low-income units in a project. He said the existing code includes a tool to encourage low-income senior housing by reducing the parking requirements and potentially increasing the density in exchange for a certain kind of housing within a project. This same concept could be used to address affordable housing and green building techniques in multi-family residential zones.

Board Member Bowman asked if staff could provide maps to the Board to illustrate how the zoning has changed over the years. Mr. Chave answered that historic maps are available to illustrate times when various parts of the zoning ordinance were amended in the 1950’s, 1960’s, and 1970’s. However, in recent years there have not been wholesale zoning ordinance amendments, so the changes to the maps would be more subtle. He invited Board Member Bowman to stop by the Planning Department Office to review the historic maps.

APPROVED

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:22 p.m.

APPROVED