

Land Use Committee

February 14, 2005

Members: Jim Llewellyn, Nezam Tooloee, Debbie Vann

Staff: Larry Frazier, Libby Hudson, Bob Katai, Peter Namtvedt Best,
Jennifer Sutton, Theresa Rice

Visitors: Sally Adams, Rob Arlen, Carol Ann Barrows, Bruce Brunton, Steve Gardner,
Debbie Lester, James Patterson, Jon Quitslund, Piero Sandri, Charles Schmid

Call to Order

Chair Jim Llewellyn called the regular meeting of the Land Use Committee to order at 1:30 p.m. The notes for the meeting of February 1, 2005, were approved with one correction - the name of the park that was discussed was "Battlepoint Park" rather than "Battlefield Park."

Haggar/Scribner Comprehensive Plan Amendment

Larry Frazier told the committee that this issue had been before them two or three times previously. The staff still recommends going forward with the Comprehensive Plan amendment. He also said that Jennifer Sutton was ready to go forward with illustrations of possible footprints, as requested by the committee.

Jim noted that the committee would not be discussing the clinic or what will or may be on the site. The committee's recommendation will be concerned only with which designation is appropriate to the site and not with design or use considerations.

Jennifer told the committee that there are at least four inter-related factors governing bulk to be considered - parking requirements, setbacks, lot coverage, and floor-to-area ratio (FAR). (The parking requirements are the same for Ericksen Avenue [the current designation] and the core overlay districts. Lot coverage is 35% in Ericksen and 100% in Core.) Lot coverage, setbacks, and FAR were taken into consideration when drawing the illustrations; parking requirements, fire requirements, and ingress/egress were not.

Jennifer went on to explain that FAR is the total square footage of allowable development. Within the Ericksen Avenue district the commercial base FAR is .6. Allowing for 15-foot setbacks, a height limit of 35 feet with underground parking, and lot coverage, three 3-story buildings and a two-story building could be built on the subject property under the current zoning.

Other illustrations showed 1.0 FR in the core achieved through four-story buildings (with underground parking), through 3-story buildings, through 2-story buildings, and through single buildings with underground parking. There were also illustrations of .6 FAR in the Ericksen district achieved through 2 3-story buildings on each floor and a 2-story building with 2500 square feet per floor, through 4 2-story buildings, and through 2 3-story and one 2-story buildings.

Nezam Tooloee asked for, and received, confirmation that the illustration is of the theoretical maximum, which could not be achieved if parking, ingress and egress, and fire requirements were taken into consideration.

In response to a question from the committee, Jennifer said that the height limit is 25 feet in the Ericksen district and 35 feet in the core. In both cases, an additional 10 feet can be added for providing underground parking.

Jennifer told the committee that Dr. Haggar had prepared a demonstration of bulk considerations. Larry suggested that the public hearing at City Council would be an appropriate time and place for the demonstration to be given. After some discussion, the committee asked Dr. Haggar to go ahead with the demonstration.

Dr. Haggar told the committee that, under current zoning regulations, 309 parking spaces would be required to maximize the commercial development for the five lots in common ownership. Any additional square footage that would be allowed if the Comprehensive Plan amendment request and resultant rezone were approved is unlikely to be built because of the parking requirements.

Having gone through a series of possible configurations under current zoning and the requested Comprehensive Plan amendment, Dr. Haggar said that the goal of the requested amendment is to provide more design flexibility and allow a greener, more energy-efficient structure. Considering the parking requirements, it is unlikely that the additional FAR that could be gained through the amendment could be built.

Nezam asked if current zoning would allow a series of 2-, 3-, or 4-story buildings to be built along Winslow Way and Ericksen Avenue now. Jennifer replied that it would depend on how the FAR was used and all the requirements mentioned earlier - parking, ingress/egress, and fire requirements.

Nezam told Dr. Haggar that his impression before the meeting was that approving the Comprehensive Plan amendment could lead to a scale of building that is not desirable, but that he now believes that such a building could be constructed under current zoning.

Sally Adams said that neither the drawings nor the demonstration had illustrated what could be built. A mixed use project with public amenities could increase the FAR by 50% and dramatically cut the parking requirements. She advocates a transitional overlay for the property.

Carol Ann Barrows told the committee that she is a proponent of green building but is opposed to this proposal. She recommended denying the amendment request or remanding it back to Planning Commission for additional public process.

Nezam agreed that there should be extensive public input, but feels that the most extensive format for gathering that public input is before the city council. Debbie also felt that dialog between the councilmembers and the public is needed and preferred that it be done through a workshop. Jim responded that dialog could occur during a public hearing, depending on the how the hearing was set up.

The committee forwarded the application to city council with a recommendation for establishing an opportunity for a dialog to occur.

Nezam verified that Virginia Mason, with which his wife works, is not a party to this request so that there is no need for him to recuse himself from the process.

Jennifer asked that all correspondence on this application be copied to the Department of Planning and Community Development so that it would be included in the official record for the application.

Washington State Ferries Shoreline Master Program Amendment

Peter Namtvedt Best said that staff is asking the Land Use Committee to review the public comments and recommend going forward to third reading.

Nezam said that the urban designation needs to happen, but that he is highly skeptical about the change to aquatic conservancy. He suggests that the city council designate funding for a habitat restoration effort in the estuary and leave the designation as aquatic.

Peter replied that one of the primary functions of the aquatic conservancy designation is to set up a management system. Debbie said that it seems obvious to her that the committee should recommend what the staff is recommending and that not changing the marine designation would allow more development.

Nezam responded that the change in the designation will not make a difference on the ground whereas a restoration program would. Peter then explained how the aquatic designation is influenced by the upland designation and the difference between an aquatic designation with a "natural" upland or with an "urban" upland. He added that the designations are more than just policy.

Nezam stated that he is very interested in continuing the waterfront trail through at least part of the Washington State Ferries property and that an aquatic conservancy designation could interfere with such an effort.

The committee unanimously forwarded the ordinance for third reading but did not reach consensus on a recommendation for the marine designation.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m. The next regular meeting is scheduled for 1:30 p.m. on February 28, 2005. Phase II code revision and the critical areas ordinance will be on that agenda.