

City of Bainbridge Island CITY COUNCIL AGENDA BILL



PROCESS INFORMATION		
Subject: Planning Commission Appointment		Date: April 9, 2008
Agenda Item: Mayor's Report		Bill No.: 08-0070
Contact Person: Mayor Darlene Kordonowy	Referral(s):	
Reading:	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 st	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 nd <input type="checkbox"/> 3 rd

BUDGET INFORMATION		
Department or Fund: N/A		
Total Expenditure Required (tax included):	Budgeted? <input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no	Is a budget amendment required? <input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no

POLICY INFORMATION
Comprehensive Plan:
Municipal Code: BIMC 2.36

DESCRIPTION/SUMMARY
<p>With the confirmation of Mark Dombroski as the new City Administrator, it is necessary to fill his vacant position on the Planning Commission.</p> <p>Interviews held in early February to fill another vacancy were conducted by Mayor Kordonowy, Planning and Community Development Director Greg Byrne and commission member Charlie Averill.</p> <p>Gary Pettersen, interviewed in the last round of applicants in February, was the alternate for the previous vacancy. Therefore, the panel agreed to appoint Mr. Pettersen, to complete Mr. Dombroski's term ending Jan. 31, 2010. Mr. Pettersen's letter of interest is attached for information; note that he is also a member of the newly-formed Land Use Code Update Users Group.</p>

RECOMMENDED ACTION
Confirm Mayor Kordonowy's appointment of Gary Pettersen.

Gary Pettersen

NOV 26 PM 2:52

[REDACTED]
Bainbridge Island, WA 98110

Home Phone: [REDACTED]

November 22, 2007

RECEIVED
NOV 28 2007
EXECUTIVE

Subject: Letter of Interest for Planning Commission vacancy

I am interested in volunteering to serve on the Bainbridge Island Planning Commission for two basic reasons, to give back to the community, but mostly to support the Winslow Tomorrow initiative.

Brief Resume:

Age =60, Married with 2 children

Grew up in Shoreline and Edmonds, University of Washington, Served in army 4 years

Lived in Holland for 6 years in 1970's

Winslow resident since 1981

Profession: database programmer

Served 4 years on the City of Winslow Planning Agency (just prior to incorporation as Bainbridge Island)

If appointed to the Bainbridge Planning commission could provide some historical context to past decisions. During my tenure on the Winslow Planning agency the Hildebrand road end park was approved and the city was divided into districts each with unique values and requirements (i.e. Ferry Terminal District, Ericksen, etc.)

While on the commission I gave my advice on each project within the context of the zoning requirements. As a commuter who walked to and from the ferry terminal each workday, I was an advocate for the pedestrian and for a vibrant downtown Winslow. Attached is a copy of a letter to the editor published in the October 31, 2007, Bainbridge Island Review that expresses my view on Winslow's future.



Gary Pettersen

Letter to Editor printed in the October 31, 2007, Bainbridge Island Review

Letter to the Editor,

The Winslow Tomorrow and new parking garage seem to have us natives restless. I can't help but notice most of those writing letters condemning these two projects live in the hinterlands of Bainbridge. They want a little, low car friendly Winslow where they can park in front of their favorite store or next to the ferry terminal. They want what they can't have. The days when everyone could rocket unimpeded on the roads of Bainbridge and park anywhere vanished long ago when island population passed 10,000.

Now that Winslow is tasked with taking half the growth on the island, Winslow needs to cater to the pedestrian not the car. The ever expanding mass of Winslow residents need wider sidewalks, street trees/gardens, pocket parks and people places. I envision sidewalk strollers stopping to chat with friends and sidewalk cafes with tables spilling out toward the street filled with patrons honing their people watching skills. And we need to continue the traffic slowing, unofficial jaywalking privileges on Winslow Way.

Cars should be secondary to pedestrians and as invisible as possible. That's why I'm totally in favor of having my tax dollars pay for the proposed parking garage between the Winslow Clinic and City Hall. As a Winslow resident I will never park my car there, but it will be happy to pay for a building that concentrates cars out of sight, helps keep the rest of Winslow pedestrian friendly, and at the same time provides enough customers to keep the stores downtown prosperous so I can shop there too.

Winslow does have a parking problem and will always have a parking problem as long as the ferry terminal exists. The ferry is both the blessing and the curse of Winslow. As for the blessing, it provides easy access to Seattle jobs and shopping. The ferry is the reason for the town of Winslow, and was the reason I moved here some 25 years ago. It allowed me to combine work in Seattle with life in a small, friendly town with great schools. I basically walked to work: walking to the ferry, getting my reading done while on the ferry, then hiking uphill to my high rise job.

The curse of the ferry is the parking it requires. The ferry terminal area is the least attractive part of Winslow, a sea of striped asphalt punctuated by a few ordinary buildings (the close-by Harbor Square is the only asset in the area). Any parking space within a mile or more of the ferry will be filled by a commuter looking to save on ever rising parking fees. Witness the wall to wall cars that infested lower Grow Avenue until the no parking signs went up. I love the ferry and the convenience of travel to downtown Seattle, but managing the parking is a price we Winslow residents have to pay. I admire the Town and Country for its generosity in providing parking for itself and other nearby businesses. However, it has the extra burden and cost of having to police its lot to prevent abuse by commuters looking for a free parking space.

I see Winslow as more like Capital Hill or Queen Anne Hill in Seattle, not the sprawling mega-stores and mega parking lots of Silverdale. You don't expect to park your car in front of Nordstrom's in Seattle when you go there any more than you should expect to park exactly in front of your destination in Winslow. It seems we go to Europe and enjoy the cafes of Paris and the pedestrian promenades, but when we return home demand to park that Hummer in front of, if not in the store.

Let's worry less about three or four stories of height on Winslow Way and more about the one story at street level where all the action and interaction is. I see three floors of apartments above the storefronts as a positive, with owners on the balconies chatting with friends as they walk by below or enjoying the 4th of July parade as it marches past. More apartments downtown, mean more pedestrians downtown, and a more people oriented downtown.

Let me list my favorite parts of Winslow, beginning with the hanging flower pots and little landscaped islands along Winslow Way, which will remain and maybe even expand under Winslow Tomorrow. I like the outside seating at Café Nola, the Winslow Café, the Winslow Green Bakery, and Blackbird Bakery. Also appreciated are the benches between Heart and the bookstore, the pocket park between the banks, the open space of Winslow Green and the covered space of the Winslow Mall. The waterfront park is also nice, but the best part of Winslow is the area between Doc's and the Pub with its waterfront trail and views of the yachts and the harbor.

Things that need improvement: Most of all it's the sidewalks. They are in disrepair, car bumpers protrude, and are so narrow it is impossible to walk two abreast if you meet someone coming the other direction. We badly need the Winslow Tomorrow streetscape improvements.

My free advice to two owners, whoever you are: I'd like to see more life on the second floor of the Winslow Mall. The stairs are hidden and the elevator is little noticed. I suggest you add glass walls to the elevator and its supporting structure. It would be an inviting focal point to the second story. Sure you may get some joy riders, for a quick up and down, but I guarantee you will attract more customers to the second story. I have fond memories of the now long defunct restaurant Hemmingway's, where my wife and I first toasted our move to the island while gazing down at the shoppers below.

My second unsolicited bit of advice is to the owner or owners of the two complexes where Heart and the Bookstore/Willows are located. They both have long open walkways that are little used. It's hard to get customers to walk down a dead end path. You should construct an arched pedestrian bridge to connect the far ends, making a loop out of the two dead ends. You'll get more foot traffic and the cars can still drive under to use the parking lot.

Today's Winslow is more the result of what was not done than what was done during the last 50 years. It has the charm of a 1950's small town. It didn't pave itself over to serve the almighty car. It didn't sell its soul to big box stores or chain restaurants.

Let's worry less about the car access and more about people access. Let's worry less about four stories of height and more about the one story at street level. Let's go ahead with Winslow Tomorrow and the parking garage. And during the big dig when all is torn up, let's make an effort to support the merchants so they will still be there when Winslow Tomorrow finally becomes Winslow Today.

Sincerely,

Gary Pettersen