



PLANNING COMMISSION

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

MEETING SUMMARY

Regular bi-monthly meeting
Thursday, December 15, 2016, 6:30pm
City of Sammamish Council Chambers

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT

Frank Blau, *Pos. 6, Chair*
Shanna Collins, *Pos. 3, Vice-Chair*
Eric Brooks, *Pos. 1*
Larry Crandall, *Pos. 4*
Nancy Anderson, *Pos. 7*

STAFF PRESENT

Jeff Thomas, Director – Community Development
Kellye Hilde, Project Manager
David Goodman, Management Analyst
Mike Sugg, Management Analyst
Tammy Mueller, Administrative Research Assistant

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Frank Blau called the Sammamish Planning Commission meeting to order at 6:31 pm.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: Vice-Chair Collins motioned; seconded – **Approved 5:0**
The Agenda was approved as read.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Larry Crandall motioned; seconded – **Approved 5:0**
11/17/2016 minutes approved as distributed.

Public Comment: Non-Agenda: (3 Min Individual / 5 Min Representative)

[Bookmarked Video Link](#)

No public comment provided.

Public Comment Closed

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Community Development Director Jeff Thomas presented a PowerPoint presentation ([link](#)) and provided the Planning Commission with a preview of the 2017 work program.

- 2017 Program Timeline: a quarterly program timeline was displayed and discussed.
 - Q1: Sign Code Updates, Neighborhood Character
 - Q2: SMC 24 Interim Comp Plan Rewrite, Comp Plan Transportation Element (docket), Comp Plan Utilities Element (docket)
 - Q3 & Q4: Urban Forestry Management Plan, Housing Strategy

Commission requested an update of the application status for the Planning Commission from Director Thomas.

- Director Thomas informed the Commission that the deadline for applications to the Planning and Arts Commissions has been extended by the City Council until December 30, 2016. They will then review the applications and hold interviews in the beginning of January. To allow for a full Planning Commission to work on the Q1 work program items, the January 5, 2017 Planning Commission

meeting will be canceled to allow the City Council to fill the two open vacancies to the Planning Commission.

NEW BUSINESS

Sign Regulations – Work Session

David Goodman, Management Analyst presented a PowerPoint presentation ([link](#)) reviewing the information discussed during the December 13, 2016 joint City Council/Planning Commission meeting and provided additional detail for the Commission regarding proposed changes to the City's Sign Regulations.

- **Overview:** Reed vs. Gilbert, AZ – Good News Church utilized temporary signage which they were cited for due to regulations regarding time limits and date requirements. Supreme Court found its form of “content-based” regulation unconstitutional.
- **Impacts on City Regulations:** Cities must change content-based regulations into content-neutral regulations to become compliant with the Reed vs. Gilbert Supreme Court ruling. Cities may focus on “time, manner, and location” of signs and strengthen the “Purpose” section of the code.
- **Sammamish Municipal Code:** An overview of sign regulation sections in the Sammamish Municipal Code (SMC) were overviewed.
- **SMC 21A.45.010 – Purpose:** Sammamish's code is compared to Kirkland's which has already changed their codes to become compliant with Reed vs. Gilbert.
- **SMC 21A.45.120 – Signs of Limited Duration:** A matrix of types of signage and regulations applied to them by the SMC is displayed. A goal is to reduce the complexity and make it more user-friendly.
- **City of Kirkland:** Temporary sign rules in Kirkland were similar to Sammamish's but were replaced with a simpler version.
- **Other Focus Areas:** Other areas of the SMC that will be affected are 21B.45 – Town Center Sign Code, the Electronic Reader Board “Pilot” Program, “Housingkeeping” amendments to improve clarity for code enforcement and citizens, and the Community Banner program.

Staff and Commission commenced discussion:

- Commission called out Kirkland's code from the presentation regarding election signage, questioning whether it is compliant with the Reed v Gilbert requirements.
 - Staff responded that the wording is a bit confusing and discussion with the City of Kirkland may be needed to better clarify.
- Commission requested clarity for whether, after the required changes are made, signage will be more or less difficult to have signage in the City.
 - Staff responded that this is within the power of the Planning Commission and the City Council to decide.
- Commission stated that there is much information and discussion out there regarding what other cities are doing or might do to become compliant with the ruling.
- Commission requested whether commercial signage would be reviewed and amended.
 - Staff responded that review of commercial signage would fall under the Town Center Sign Code: SMC21B.45.
 - Director stated that the City is monitoring other cities such as Covington which are further along in the process than Sammamish to help guide and expedite Sammamish's amendments.
- Commission requested whether there was a deadline to the Sign Code implementation.
 - Director stated that the ruling was effective immediately. Cities should change their code as soon as possible to become compliant.

NEW BUSINESS

Neighborhood Character – Work Session

Mike Sugg, Management Analyst presented a PowerPoint presentation ([link](#)) reviewing the information discussed during the December 13, 2016 joint City Council/Planning Commission meeting and provided

additional detail for the Commission regarding the City Council's request for the Planning Commission to define Neighborhood Character with regard to buffers.

- **Arterial Street Setbacks:** A table is displayed showing the minimum setbacks required for R-1, R-4, and R-6 zones. Minimum setback from Principal Arterial is 50 ft, Minor Arterial is 40 ft, and Collector Arterial is 25 ft. Two visual examples of this are displayed.
- **Zone Transition Setbacks:** A table is displayed informing that R-4 and R-6 zones should have a 100 ft minimum setback from R-1 zones while R-6 zones should have a 50 ft minimum setback from R-4 zones. Example diagrams are shown of zones and the proposed setbacks for the area. A proposed 30% of the total square footage would be required for the buffer rather than a set amount.
- **Real Sammamish Examples:** Current areas of Sammamish are displayed using overhead maps and photos from the street.
- **Existing Code Provisions:** 21A.25.040 – Densities and Dimensions – Commercial zones. Setback requirements for neighborhood business, community business, and office zones are displayed. These requirements are much smaller than those proposed for neighborhoods: 20 feet. Those for Town Center are also 10-20 feet with various landscaping requirements.
- **Existing Code Provisions:** 21B.30.080 – Site Planning – Side and back yard compatibility. Landscape buffers required where new development in the Town Center is adjacent to existing single-family residential.

Staff and Commission commenced discussion:

- Commission expressed concern that there are no setback requirements for R-8 and above and requested what the Town Center is zoned as.
 - Staff responded that the smallest would be R-8, but most of Sammamish is zoned R-1, R-4, and R-6. The staff only researched these zones at this time but offered to research R-8 and above as well should the Commission wish.
- Commission questioned whether there would be a setback required of two bordering, same-zoned properties (e.g. R-4 and R-4).
 - Staff responded that the intent is to shield lower zoned areas from denser, larger zoned areas.
 - Commission questioned the intention of the buffering between differently zoned areas and whether the requests for the buffer were coming from the higher or lower zoned property owners. Also, questioned what value might be gained by the buffers.
 - Staff responded that the Comprehensive Plan speaks of smooth transitions between zones.
 - Commission stated that buffers are not an adequate tool for a smooth transition, citing landscaping standards or other such methods as being able to accomplish the goal more appropriately.
 - Commission also expressed concern for separating single family homes from other single family homes, as this likely does not address the intended neighborhood character issues which created this discussion.
 - Director responded that the Commission's questions are good and the beginnings of what will become a robust conversation. Regarding the buffers, they will have requirements to not allow empty space, though additional landscaping standards may be required in addition to those currently in the SMC.
- Commission questioned whether the buffer would be split between the two zones or whether the larger zone would assume the entire buffer requirements.
 - Staff responded that only the higher-zoned area would be subject to the buffer requirements, though the Commission would be free to change this.
 - Commission posed a scenario of an R-4 zone which had developed had the vegetation in its buffer die, whether a neighboring R-1 zone which develops later could be subject to replacing that failed vegetation within the buffer.
 - Staff responded that they could look into such scenarios should the Commission wish.

- Commission requested information regarding how buffers determined.
 - Staff responded that the higher zone gets a buffer, not a lower zone.
 - Commission indicated that splitting or changing which zones are responsible for the buffer should be considered to help ensure a smooth transition between them.
- Commission questioned whether the newly adopted Public Works Standards would create a buffer and, if so, how that would play into additional buffer requirements.
 - Staff agreed that it was a good question and valid concern.
 - Commission stated that there are various scenarios regarding house placement and ROW size which can affect the sense of community and that policy will need to be thoughtfully crafted to prevent limiting developments too much.
- Commission questioned what aspects of neighborhood character are attempting to be preserved; whether it is neighborhood to neighborhood, street to street, etc. Also, whether the purpose of the buffers are meant to benefit the residents of the lots, those driving down the street, or both. Proposed that landscape requirements might be dependent on the size of the buffer.
- Commission stated that isolating neighborhoods too much can be a detriment to the overall neighborhood character of Sammamish.
- Commission suggested using the City of Sammamish website and the virtual town hall feature to request public feedback regarding this issue. Also suggested were submissions of photographs which capture the neighborhood character of Sammamish neighborhoods, possibly made into an art contest.
- Commission noted the importance of preserving the trees that we have rather than just focusing on planting new trees.
- Commission questioned, when looking at new developments and redevelopments, how these and specifically neighborhood character and transitions between zones and/or neighborhoods are addressed in the Sammamish Municipal Code.
 - Staff stated an assumption that redevelopment would trigger the same requirements as development.
 - Commission stated that certain areas of the city are being impacted more greatly by redevelopment rather than new development.
 - Director stated that the examples and information provided by Staff are not Staff recommendation, rather starting points to begin the discussion.
- Commission suggested that buffers be applied along arterials but not smaller roads. Both would serve neighborhood character.
- Commission requested interactive GIS maps during sessions which would allow them to see overlays of various information layers which would assist in informing their decisions.
 - Staff stated that a King County web application called imap exists and it could be displayed during meetings.

Public Comment – Agenda (7 Minutes)

[Bookmarked Video Link](#)

- Mary Wictor, 408 208th Ave. NE, Sammamish, WA Time: 7:55pm
 - Topic: Neighborhood Character and Signage – Art and Color
Presentation: Neighborhood Character
- Paul Stickney, 504 228th Ave. SE, Sammamish, WA Time: 8:04pm
 - Topic: Neighborhood Character, Zoning map requests

Public Comment Closed

Motion to Adjourn: Nancy Anderson motioned to adjourn; seconded. **Approved 5:0**
Meeting adjourned at 8:10pm.

Chair: Frank Blau

PC Coordinator: Tammy Mueller

[Video Audio Record 12/15/2016](#)

Roberts Rules of Order applied: [RONR (10TH ed.), p. 451, 1. 25-28]