

City of Mount Vernon
Planning Commission Meeting
Minutes from March 20, 2018

Chairperson Shelley Acero called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Present were Planning Commission members Shelley Acero, Bekki Cox, Christian Carlson, Adair Orr and Al Lyon. Chris Bollinger and James Stewart were absent. Staff present: Director Development Services Director Chris Phillips and Senior Planner Rebecca Lowell.

Minutes:

The minutes from March 6th were approved.

Continued work session on the South Kincaid Sub Area Plan:

Mrs. Lowell reviewed the Sub Area plan and what it is: a detailed plan - prepared for smaller areas.

She then went on to present Sub Area plans from other communities for examples. The Sub Area plans are main stream documents for planning. A sub area plan contains- existing conditions and then creates strategies for improvement, a little more detail than the Comprehensive Plan

Mrs. Lowell reviewed the South Kincaid Subarea plan showing the existing designations. Once the plan is adopted the existing designations go away and become SK- South Kincaid Comp Plan Designation. This designation covers 5 different zoning designations but, the “umbrella” will be SK. The city will encourage property owners to rezone to C1c. The city is offering to do that for them at this time. However, the city cannot make the property owners change their current zoning. The city mailed notices out to Property owners for a public open house to be held at City Hall to educate the owners on the Sub Area plan.

Mrs. Lowell explained that the city uses 2 different maps. Zoning and Comprehensive plan. The Growth Management Act requires 2 separate maps. The Comp plan map– umbrella designation, the Zoning map- more specific designation.

Mrs. Lowell showed an example of another Sub Area Plan- the Healthcare District. It was specific and detailed to the type of uses for the hospital and supporting types of uses.

Bekki Cox asked Rebecca Lowell for an example of how she might explain the benefits of the SK Sub Area Plan to an individual property owner. Rebecca gave example. Ms. Cox had another question about how Design Standards would be handled with existing in the new SK zone. April 2nd will be the last public meeting. Public hearings will be held on the following dates: Planning Commission on April 17th and City Council on April 25th.

Downtown Design Standards:

New material was presented. Mrs. Lowell explained that the illustrations presented today cannot be used in the actual document. Makers will be assisting with the final work on the document. This is still a draft document. The redlined notes from the Planning Commission were updated and incorporated with the exception of the question of building material and whether or not metal siding should be allowed. The goal is to be specific enough with this code so that the code can be enforced. Shelley Acero had question about alley lighting, and what is the trigger? Mrs. Lowell explained that it most

likely due to a significant improvement. Christian Carlson suggested having a down facing light at each entry way. Discussion continued. Christian Carlson had a suggestion for number 5, Building Massing. Discussion continued about the sketches and possible photos to be used in the Design Standards document.

Christian Carlson explained that City Council had approved City Staff and Planning Commission to further work on the Design Standards. Al Lyon mentioned that City Council requested that it not be too onerous but, more thought into the document. The way that the Design Standards were presented was that it was a positive for property owners and good for business, not a deterrent. The Design Standards will help enforce the existing sign code. There will be more to come and a continuing dialogue. The procedural steps have been initiated and is in the process. The timeline is still in place and is the same timeline track as the Sub Area plan.

Miscellaneous- Mayor's office

Mrs. Lowell explained an opportunity that the city will be applying for. The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act will have the City identify Opportunity Zones. These zones are in distressed areas that will benefit by the use of tax incentives for long term investments. If chosen, the tax incentives allow investors to avoid capital gains taxes for ten years. The staff is working on getting the letters out for submittal for this opportunity. The city has two areas that they are applying for. Mrs. Lowell presented a map showing the areas. The letters explaining the desired areas for the Opportunity Zones are to be submitted to the Governor's Office. The Mayor is asking that the Planning Commission sign the letters. It is the Mayor's hope that the Planning Commission members sign the letter. The Planning Commission members signed both letters.

Meeting adjourned at 7 p.m.