

City of Lake Forest Park - Planning Commission
Regular Meeting Notes: November 4, 2014
17425 Ballinger Way NE—EOC Room

Planning Commissioners present: Chair Ray Holmdahl; Vice-chair Jon Lebo; Semra Riddle; Richard Saunders; Doug Gochanour; Rocky Oliver; Jean Maixner; and Connie Holloway

Economic Development Commissioners present: Chair Robert Henderson; Vice-chair Norman Lieberman; Gretchen Bennett; Linette Bixby; and Donna Hawkey

Staff and others present: Steve Bennett, Planning Director; Ande Flower, Assistant Planner; Mark Goodman, Planning Analyst for Community Attributes (sub-consultant to Studio 3MW)

Planning Commissioners absent: Joel Paisner

Call to order: 7:00 PM

Approval of Meeting Agenda: Cmr. Lebo moved to approve the agenda. The motion was seconded by Cmr. Gochanour and approved unanimously.

Presentation and Discussion:

Comprehensive Plan Update

Economic Development

Mr. Goodman, sub-consultant to Studio 3MW, introduced himself and described how his presentation integrates the new information within the former document presented to the PC and EDC on September 16, 2014. He then presented each slide and focused especially on new information. He added a new chart for resident occupations and spoke about how similar LFP numbers are to King County data. The Retail Trade Capture slides on pages 22-23 was explained at length.

Cmr. Lebo asked whether Non-store Retailer (online) purchases should be encouraged, given that it represents the largest proportion of the tax revenue for LFP. Further, he surmised that improved internet services could become an improved revenue driver for our city. Cmr. Riddle added that online shopping could also be encouraged via discounted lockable mail boxes to deter delivery to workplaces in other cities. Mr. Goodman cautioned that the tax collected for online sales is a complicated concept, a fairly new policy, and there haven't been a lot of strategies built around that new tax.

Mr. Goodman went on to point out that 71% of the City's revenue comes from taxes. Mr. Goodman added that there are service costs that are not included in the table (Exhibit 27). Mr. Goodman explained how it will not be viable for the City to depend on property taxes primarily since they are limited to 1% per year increases. There was discussion about how taxes and land-use are related when discussing fiscal sustainability for the city. Mr. Goodman described how having a diversity of retail is financially healthy, and an anchor store can act as a magnet for other retail. EDC Chair Henderson suggested that something like Juanita Village could be a great asset to our city.

One way to diversify revenue flow in order to meet the service needs of the residents would be to increase density and commercial development. Commissioners discussed the possibility for increasing density and whether or not they would just be suggesting study areas for zoning changes or recommending re-zoning areas now. It was pointed out that specific proposals for zoning changes now would require additional SEPA processing and prolong the Comp Plan amendment process. Mr. Goodman described possible Land Use Scenarios described with Exhibits 28 through 32. It was established that LFP has moved beyond Scenario One, given the ongoing construction of the Twelve Degrees North neighborhood in the Southern Gateway zoned area.

Cmr. Saunders asked if Scenario Four would be an extreme proposition, given that so much of the vacant or underutilized properties are integrated within current single-family areas. Mr. Goodman clarified that this information is not intended to be a recommendation for what exactly needs to be done. Mr. Bennett gave an example of how a four acre site with sensitive areas could be developed appropriately by clustering higher density housing on the non-sensitive areas, buffered from the protected sensitive areas.

Cmr. Lebo asked if there political will to propose something different than what exists with current zoning. EDC Chair Henderson proposed that Town Center is the primary opportunity to pursue higher density housing. Cmr. Riddle suggested that an area southeast of Town Center could also be considered an opportunity. Mr. Bennett added that there may be a few areas that could be recommended with the Comprehensive Plan as future study areas. Cmr. Riddle raised the issue of branding. Mr. Goodman suggested that land-use factors into branding and regional reputation.

Mr. Goodman continued his presentation with a new slide, not included in the hand-out. The slide focused on self-employment and showed how this makes up at least 20% of employment in LFP. This was higher than the 11% - 14% found in surrounding cities. The data shows a combination of both self-employment and home-based businesses. There was discussion about whether the City could support the current home-based businesses so that they are able to remain and grow, with office space and incubator space, for instance. Cmr. Gochanour asked for a copy of this new slide to be sent to Commissioners.

EDC Cmr. Bennett asked for a ratio between developed areas and recreation, or what is understood as a service level analysis for parks relative to population, to understand if there is a deficit. Cmr. Saunders stated that the Community Service Commission is also looking into appropriate standards for their Comp Plan element drafts, specifically comparing active and passive parks. Many Commissioners relayed that they have heard from the public, a desire for more parks and recreation options.

Cmr. Lebo asked if a scenario that includes the Southern Gateway development without the additional projection of dense build-out for Scenario Four. There was discussion about whether a developer's perspective is included in this inquiry. Mr. Bennett suggested that having a developer's quorum for the second phase of the Comp Plan amendment process would be beneficial. Both the EDC and PC members thanked Mr. Goodman for his hard work in preparing this presentation.

Updates from Liaisons to other Commissions

Cmr. Saunders asked on behalf of the CSC to meet again December 16, 2014. It was discussed that the Transportation Commission is planned for a joint meeting on that date. Mr. Bennett suggested that November 18, January 6, or January 20 could be options.

Reports/Announcements:

Relevant City Council Agenda Items and Activities

Mr. Bennett said that the Council will be discussing the Planning Commission's recommendations on retail marijuana on November 13th.

Report on Chairs Meeting

Mr. Bennett shared a letter written in response to the scope of planned action EIS on 145th Street Light Rail Station Subarea Plan. Commissioners expressed gratitude for getting the City's position on the record so that it may be considered during the design process.

Adjournment: 9:00 PM

APPROVED:



Ray Holmdahl, Chair