

City of Lake Forest Park - Planning Commission
Regular Meeting Notes: October 12, 2016
17425 Ballinger Way NE—Forest Room

Planning Commissioners present: Chair Jon Lebo, Connie Holloway; Ray Holmdahl, Doug Gochanour, Richard Saunders

Staff and others present: Steve Bennett, Planning Director; Ande Flower, Principal Planner; Jake Tracy, Assistant Planner; Mike Dee, resident; Mark Phillips, Councilmember; Phillipa Kassover, Councilmember; Doug Rice, Resident

Planning Commissioners absent: Vice-Chair Joel Paisner

Call to order: 7:08 PM

Approval of Meeting Agenda:

Cmr. Gochanour moved to approve the meeting agenda. The motion was seconded by Cmr. Holmdahl and passed unanimously.

Approval of Meeting Notes:

September 27, 2016

The commissioners recommended several corrections to the draft minutes:

- Change page 1 line 49 to read “members who are experts”
- Change page 2 line 8 to read “Saunders recognized that the proposed graduated scale makes it more attractive to replant”
- Correct page 2 line 18 to read “Lebo” rather than “Riddle”
- Add missing end quote mark to page 3 line 15

Cmr. Gochanour moved to approve the minutes with these amendments. Cmr. Holmdahl seconded the motion and the minutes were approved unanimously.

Next meeting:

The next regular meeting occurs on November 8, 2016. Planning Director Steve Bennett mentioned that if the commission is able to approve the draft ordinance prior to that date the meeting may not be necessary. He also stated that the introduction of the Planning Commission’s recommended draft update is on the Council’s Committee of the Whole meeting on October 24th. Mr. Bennett clarified that this will not be a joint meeting, but that commissioners are encouraged to attend.

Public Comment

Doug Rice – Mr. Rice asked how the regulations will be handled after this meeting. Mr. Rice stated that the impact of the existing regulations to homeowners with lots of trees is greater than the impact to developers who do clear cuts. He stated that, if there was more planning on the part of the developer, there could’ve been more houses and less trees removed at a subdivision near where he lives. Mr. Rice stated that he doesn’t have a problem with the replacement requirements in theory, but he thinks they should all be canopy based. He also stated that a 5% tree tract is too small. He suggested that money from selling tree lumber should pay into a fund that protects adjacent property owners from risk. Finally, he stated that the City should hold developers to the same standards as property owners.

Mike Dee – Mr. Dee mentioned that he experienced issues with the Planning Commission website but that they had been resolved. He stated that he saw tree removal occurring near his property and wonders if it was permitted. He also stated that he spoke with the owner of Sheridan Market, who was concerned about possible effects of the new development on NE 155th Street. Mr. Dee suggested a moratorium on all new construction, citing concerns about the City’s budget. He is also concerned that the City doesn’t have a land-use meeting other than official hearings, stating that neighborhood meetings do not go far enough. He

believes that there should be larger and more inclusive meetings for land use permits. Regarding trees, he stated that he wants to have a larger tree tract requirement. He also suggested that the Five Acre Woods property could be returned to those from whom it was taken under eminent domain.

Old Business:

Tree Regulations

Discussion of Changes Made Based on September 27th Discussion

Mr. Bennett reviewed the changes made based on the Commission discussion at the previous meeting. The following additional changes were agreed upon:

- Add a statement that some commissioners felt that all major development activity should be barred from using fee-in-lieu.
- In 16.14.090(A)(6), start a new subsection (a) beginning with “any at risk.”
- In the same section, add to the new subsection d. “Tree replacement shall occur in accordance with the applicable procedures in 16.14.080”

Changes Recommended from Public Comments at Open House

Principal Planner Ande Flower discussed the list of actionable items that the Commissioners had identified since the public meeting. She explained that most of the items had been addressed by the Commission, but two in particular had not:

- Treating remnant forest as a sensitive area. She explained that this will take more research and studies, and that this is something the commissioners can include in their memo to Council.
- Front yard tree protection. Ms. Flower explained that other cities include street tree standards in complete streets codes and road standards. She suggested that the Commissioners could recommend to Council that they address this issue in future regulatory updates.

Other Changes

The commissioners discussed including trees in the right-of-way as part of canopy coverage for a property. Further, they discussed whether the right-of-way size should be added to the lot size. Cmr. Saunders and Cmr. Holmdahl expressed concern that giving credit for right-of-way trees might cause more trees to be removed. After discussion, the Commissioners decided that right-of-way canopy should be included in the canopy coverage calculation, and that the lot size should not include the right-of-way area.

Ms. Flower introduced the topic of hedge trees such as arborvitae. She stated that the definition from Woodway’s ordinance would allow hedge trees to be removed with an approved notice of exception. The commissioners agreed to add the definition used by the City of Woodway. They also agreed to add Woodway’s hedge requirement as new language within the exception section 16.14.050(B)(4). There was consensus that the required replacement should be 1 tree for every two hedge trunks.

Commissioners then began reviewing the full draft update document and considering comments submitted by Don Fiene. That review resulted in the following changes:

- In 16.14.050(B)(4), Commissioners agreed to change the phrasing to “ provided that the person undertaking such action shall provide information that”
- Add 16.14.050(C)(7): “Unless authorized in writing by a Qualified Tree Professional, stumps shall remain in the ground, and all vegetation cut shall remain within the sensitive area or buffer.”
- Commissioners asked the Planning Department to come back with a recommendation on Mr. Fiene’s utility pruning language.

New Business:

None.

Reports/Communications/Announcements:

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Agenda for Next Meeting: Finalize proposed tree regulations. Planning Department will send out a survey to determine when this meeting should occur.

Adjournment: 9:04 PM

APPROVED:

Jon Lebo, Chair