

**City of Lake Forest Park
Planning Commission
Regular Meeting Summary
17425 Ballinger Way NE—Council Chambers
February 7, 2012**

Commissioners present: Chair Richard Saunders, Vice Chair George Piano, Mark Phillips, Chuck Paulsen, John Resha, Chuff Barden, Sean Bouffiou, Dixie Coggins, Doug Gochanour

Commissioners absent: None

Staff and others present: Steve Bennett, Planning Director; Jennifer Franich, Assistant Planner; Mayor Mary Jane Goss; Catherine Stanford, City Council Liaison to Planning Commission; John Owen, Rachel Miller, Consultants; Judy Altman, Community Services Commission co-chair; Charlie Heffernan, Civil Services Commission; and Ray Holmdahl, Gretchen Bennett Guethner, Scott Campbell, Liz Krysinski, and Teresa McDade, residents; Police Chief Peterson; Councilmember Jeff Johnson.

Call to order: Chair Saunders called the meeting to order at 7:03 pm.

Approval of meeting minutes:

The Planning Commission reviewed the draft minutes from the January regular meeting. It was noted that there was one typographical error. Cmr. Paulsen moved to adopt the minutes as revised. The motion was seconded by Vice Chair Piano and approved unanimously.

Old Business:

Southern Gateway Project Update: Security and Safety in the Gateway Neighborhood

Chair Saunders thanked Police Chief Peterson for attending and said that throughout the project, there have been worries about crime in the area. Police Chief Peterson stated that he wanted to address those concerns. Chief Peterson said that the Gateway Project will be great for cleaning up the south end of the city. Lake Forest Park does not have the frequency of crime as other cities, because 1) Seattle police are not present in the area South of 145th Street, and 2) our city is seen as environmentally-friendly and strong on community participation. We want to maintain our identity as a “showcase of peace.” A mix of retail will clean up the area, and a nice restaurant with a bar is better than Déjà Vu. It’s a constant battle to keep drug deals, prostitution, and crime out. Well lit, vibrant, appealing construction, business and housing that attracts people in positive ways will help the situation. On Thursday, Friday, and Saturday night, one car stays in the Gateway area, but other neighborhoods need patrol as well. He went on to indicate that redevelopment in the Gateway area can reduce the drug deals, tagging, gangs, etc. more than if you don’t do anything.

Cmr. Resha asked whether outdoor gathering spaces invite negative element. Chief Peterson said that open spaces will attract all people, and the City should be careful with how big the open space is and how it is designed. Councilmember Stanford added that using appropriate design principals should make the space more secure and safer—for example utilizing sightlines to see through to these areas. Resident Teresa McDade, who lives in the Gateway neighborhood, said that any crime seems to stem from the Déjà Vu. Resident Ray Holmdahl said that he is not convinced that if we extend Lake City Way into LFP, that the riffraff won’t follow.

January 24th Open House Feedback Discussion

Rachel Miller provided a summary of the feedback from the January 24 Open House. The overall concept, the concept for the Elk's site, improvements across Bothell Way, protecting neighborhoods, protecting the ravine, and bringing in local services were all rated positively. The feedback indicated that the group is concerned about seeing seven stories close to 147th Street, better access to the Burke-Gilman Trail (mixed opinions), an entry feature (not a important factor for that many people), a community center (mixed opinions), and encouraging affordable housing. The weighting system for the feedback was as follows: "a great idea" got 2 points, "good idea" 1 point, "bad idea" -1 point, and -2 points for "a very bad idea."

John Owen said that Part 2 of the project will deal with setbacks and moving buildings further from the single-family residences. The purpose of the EIS is to look at impacts, however, we can still flag certain things in the Part 1 report and change the drawings. The consultant team will also talk with potential developers and homeowners in the area to hone their ideas and get an idea of the real conditions. It's our job to protect through regulations, but developers will look at the property and decide what is feasible. For the EIS, you want to look at the "worst case" or the most extreme. Developers may not go there, but at least we will have planned for it. There are other ways of configuring it—maybe the highest buildings are along the main street, or maybe we step it down. A mix of uses with a strong residential component at the Elks site will be key to spurring the development of the rest of the subarea.

Rachel Miller said that studies have shown that there are health risks within 100 feet of major highways because of the impacts on air quality. Cmr Paulsen said that retail will want exposure to Bothell Way. Cmr. Phillips said that he is excited about the prospect of more pedestrian movement across Bothell Way. John Owen said the team will work with consultant partners that are good with working with WSDOT to look at safety, congestion, etc at the 153rd Street intersection.

The Commission then discussed altering the elevation drawings for the Elk's site to give a better idea of what the development could look like with larger setbacks. John Owen said that he does not want to be specific about numbers, but can draw a diagram to show that the Commission is recommending the step down scheme with setbacks to protect the neighborhood but allow for feasible development.

Cmr. Resha said that he would like to see the idea for the pathway/trail better articulated as well.

Public Comment:

Judy Altman, Community Services Commission reported that at the recent Legacy meeting, creating a Green Street on 35th/Main Street was discussed as a possibility.

Resident of 147th Street, Scott Campbell presented a drawing that John Starkey, his neighbor, drew up. He explained that the idea was to move townhouses to the border between the single-family and new mixed use development. He also said, in response to a comment made by Consultant Owen, that the neighborhood does not want to be dealt with, they want to be worked with.

Resident Gretchen Bennett said that the Commission needs to develop the format of the meeting for the future. The Commission could avoid controversy and continue the conversation if the strands of opinion were named and ideas were not talked about as a laundry list.

Resident Liz Krysinski said that she is hopeful for the resurrection of a senior housing development, which would have been great for the community.

New Business:

Dir. Bennett announced that there would be a joint meeting with Council and the Planning Commission on February 16th to look at where we are in the process, how we have progressed, what we have learned,

and what the next steps are. Councilmember Stanford explained that the Council wants to have a focus meeting for the Gateway project, because sometimes there is not enough time for individual items at the study sessions, and this project is important enough to spend more time on.

Chair Saunders reminded the Commission of the 2012 Chair Nomination and Vice Chair Election in March. He said that he and George are willing to continue on, but there is a process. If you are thinking of running, give it some thought and let George know.

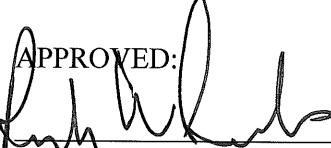
Reports/Communications/Announcements:

Commissioners Phillips, Bouffiou, and Saunders went to the first Shoreline 2012 Comprehensive Plan Update Speaker Series. Charles Wolf, a writer and contributor of articles on urban development topics to The Atlantic and The Huffington Post and land use attorney in Seattle gave the presentation. Richard will continue to forward these meeting dates to the Commissioners. The next is February 27 at 6:30 PM.

Vice Chair Piano announced that there was one vacant seat available for the Friends of 3rd Place Books community breakfast, if anyone else wanted to attend.

The next Planning Commission meeting is scheduled for March 6, 2012.

Adjournment: 8:51 PM

APPROVED:

Richard Saunders, Chair