

City of Lake Forest Park - Planning Commission
Regular Meeting Minutes: March 16, 2021
Virtual/Zoom Meeting

Planning Commissioners present: Chair Maddy Larson, Vice Chair Rachael Katz, Lois Lee, Ira Gross, David Kleweno, Richard Saunders, Melissa Cranmer, T.J. Fudge, Steve Morris

Staff and others present: Steve Bennett, Planning Director; Nick Holland, Senior Planner, Councilmember Tom French (Planning Commission Liaison); Deputy Mayor Phillippa Kassoover, Councilmember Lorri Bodi

Members of the Public: Mike Dee, Don Fiene, Greg Jacobs

Planning Commissioners absent: n/a

Call to order: Chair Larson called the meeting to order at 7:01pm.

Approval of Agenda

Comr. Gross made a motion to approve the agenda, Comr. Saunders seconded, and the agenda was approved unanimously.

Land Acknowledgement:

Comr. Gross read the land acknowledgement.

Approval of Meeting Minutes from February 9, 2021

Comr. Gross made a motion to approve the February 9, 2021 Planning Commission meeting minutes and Comr. Saunders seconded. Comr. Kleweno asked about line 49 and for clarification about providing the correct information regarding the topic being addressed. Director Bennett confirmed that Comr. Kleweno was referring to line 49 on page 2 and responded that intent of the meeting minutes is to capture a summary of what was said even if when a statement is not factual or out of date. All voted and the minutes from February 9th was approved unanimously.

Introductions:

Chair Larson led introductions for the new Planning Commission members. Comr. Lee provided her background and her role in the community and expressed her interest in a comprehensive sidewalk plan for the City. Comr. Kleweno provided his background and reasons for joining the Planning Commission. He said he had also been a member of the Tree Board. Comr. Cranmer talked about her background, her profession, and her reasons for joining the Planning Commission.

Comr. Larson summarized the direction of the Commission. Director Bennett suggested that current Commissioners introduce themselves for the benefit of the new members.

Comr. Morris, Comr. Gross, Vice Chair Katz, Comr. Fudge, Comr. Saunders, Chair Larson, and Councilmember French all introduced themselves and spoke about their backgrounds and history with the Commission.

Meeting Dates:

Next regular meeting is scheduled for April 13, 2021.

Citizen Comments:

1 Don Fiene said that he would like to welcome the new Commissioners and noted that he was a past
2 Commissioner and Councilmember.

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4 **Report from City Council Liaison**
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6 Councilmember French announced that the Council had adopted the Town Center ordinances. He said that
7 community input and the Commission's input were key elements of the process. He said that the regulations
8 were meant for the future of town center. He said that the Council reviewed the ADU presentation and
9 explained Council's direction on the matter. He said that the Council would like to take a step back and
10 solicit additional feedback from the public and that they would like to see how a successful project has
11 occurred in another jurisdiction. He mentioned the backyard locational requirement. He said that the
12 Council is very supportive of alternative housing types. He asked Director Bennett for feedback. Director
13 Bennett summarized Council's previous direction for the Commission. Councilmember French emphasized
14 the independent role of the Commission in evaluating new land use policy.

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16 Cmr. Saunders asked for updates from Sound Transit. Director Bennett said that staff has met with the
17 agency regarding the most recent letter of concurrency and summarized a meeting about the LFP permitting
18 process for a project of that scope. Director Bennett said that the discussion surrounded the BAT lanes and
19 tree removal as well as critical areas within the project area. He said that staff is currently evaluating Sound
20 Transit's permitting plan and the 30% design. He emphasized that no applications have been received.
21 Councilmember French said that the letter of concurrency is a big milestone for LFP. He said that the staff
22 has done a good job in reflecting community needs in conversations with Sound Transit.

23
24 **Old Business**

25 None.

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27 **New Business**

28 Cmr. Larson introduced the new business and summarized the topics of the Commission's discussion. She
29 turned the floor over to Director Bennett to review the content of his memorandum to the Commission.
30 Cmr. Fudge asked about the housing study that Council had previously discussed and asked Councilmember
31 French if the study is going forward and if there are any future plans regarding that subject. Councilmember
32 French said that the housing study had been deferred and that it needs funding. He talked about a recent
33 staff presentation regarding urban growth and target studies. Chair Larson alluded to a conversation with a
34 relative regarding the content of housing studies and asked Commissioners if there were additional questions
35 for Councilmember French. There were none.

36
37 "Addressing Housing Diversity and Affordability in LFP

- 38 • Relevant LFP Comprehensive Plan Goals and Policies
39

40 Director Bennett provided information on the comprehensive plan update cycle and the housing element.
41 He said that infrastructure was emphasized during the last cycle and that the upcoming update could be an
42 opportunity to emphasize housing policy. He encouraged the Commission to think about the current policies
43 and goals and public outreach that could occur to garner feedback from the community. He noted that there
44 were many policies that support a diversity of housing types and that address the 'missing middle' issue.
45 Chair Larson said that the review of the policies was a great reminder. Cmr. Cranmer asked if other
46 communities have been studied. Director Bennett responded that public engagement might be a better place
47 to start so the community can provide background on what their concerns are. There was discussion about
48 the original zoning code and past housing policies, as well as, codes that support the current policies. Director
49 Bennett mentioned a possible amendment for consideration might be allowing for detached structures in the
50 front yard.
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Councilmember French provided his perspective on the past and current housing policies and how codes can change to support current housing demand. Cmr. Fudge said that there are a lot of goals and policies within the comprehensive plan and mentioned neighborhood character as a policy that will need to be given equal priority with respect to the other policies and added that comprehensive plan policies can often conflict. Cmr. Kleweno provided his perspective on housing and emphasized the framework for housing conversations and the need to clarify how the group moves forward. Cmr. Larson asked Director Bennett what the Commission's obligations are for housing policy. Director Bennett said that it is important for all Commissioners to be familiar with all the elements of the comprehensive plan which is available on the website. He provided background on how the content of the staff memo came together and noted that the memorandum is not exhaustive regarding the Comp Plan's housing-related policy.

• Relevant State Legislation

Director Bennett alluded to the model ADU regulations adopted in the 90s, which the LFP codes reflect. He talked about the most recent state legislation on ADUs and said that prohibiting a requirement for owner occupation in one of the units is something that cities are opposed to. He talked about the upcoming comp plan update and the urban growth capacity study. He said that LFP has been designated a high-capacity transit city in the County's growth target process and added that the designation results in job and housing targets being slightly higher than if they would be without the Sound Transit bus rapid transit line. He said that LFP only needs to demonstrate the capacity for accommodating the housing units and job growth to anticipate the growth targets. Councilmember French mentioned market forces and said that available capacity does not necessarily mean that the capacity needs to meet any increased targets. Cmr. Larson provided her perspective on the capacity and related zoning regulations and asked if zoning laws can meet the required demand. Cmr. Morris said that the height limit in southern gateway, town center, and residential capacity numbers in single family zones may be able to meet the growth capacity, but that the diversity in housing may not be able to be achieved. Cmr. Katz said that the GMA targets are good to have for information purposes but may not speak to affordability. She explained how the numbers were derived and provided information about the process in adjacent counties. She said that the City should not underestimate the scope of the challenge of providing affordable units. Director Bennett provided information on the obligations on communities and their responsibilities for providing affordable housing. Cmr. Lee asked if the town center numbers accounted for the growth target numbers. Director Bennett said that the new town center regulations did play a factor in the growth target study. He said that the new regulations make it clear that there is a 275 unit capacity in town center and emphasized that there is plenty of residential capacity in the rest of the City. Director Bennett said that the job targets are most challenging.

Cmr. Lee asked what the City wants to decide in terms of housing policy. She said she was trying to understand the City's policy relative to State policy and direction. Cmr. Larson provided context to the Commission's plan in exploring alternative housing methods. There was discussion about how the data for the capacity study was calculated. Director Bennett stated some of the practical uses of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) for analyzing housing types. He said that he would recommend that Commissioners hear from people who wanted but were unable to build ADUs on their property, so that they can understand what prevents some from doing so. Chair Larson said that it will be important to understand what the community wants before exploring housing policy. Cmr. Kleweno asked what the impact of the State bill could be on LFP. Director Bennett responded that the owner occupancy requirement could be prohibited. Cmr. Morris said that social issues of affordability should be addressed and that there is value in the Planning Commission preparing the public for that debate. Chair Larson asked where the group can go to understand City policy and Director Bennett said that the comprehensive plan policy section (Volume 1) is a good place to start as well as the appendices of the plan. He said that the comp plan is a snapshot of a community's perspective which may become outdated fairly rapidly.

Cmr. Saunders offered his perspective on the planning process and arriving at solutions to complex problems. He said that working with a group like the Commission can be a good exercise and that the work can be exciting and rewarding.

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2 Cmr. Larson asked how the content of this meeting can fit with the annual work plan. Director Bennett said
3 that the housing issue doesn't necessarily have a set of steps, but that the Commission should think about
4 what the next steps should be. He said that additional community input can be sought an approach to solicit
5 additional community input could be discussed. He said that the SMP is a priority as well, but that additional
6 work is needed on that topic before it can be brought back to the Commission. Cmr. Larson asked about
7 how the Commission would like to proceed. Cmr. Kleweno asked the Commission what they want to
8 accomplish regarding housing policy. Cmr. Fudge said he agrees with statements made and said that housing
9 policy should reflect current housing needs. He said that the community likely feels differently regarding
10 housing policy and that transparency on housing policy should be a priority to involve the community. He
11 said community support is key. Cmr. Saunders suggested studying the work from the citizen presentation in
12 February. He also agreed with Cmr. Kleweno. He said he values the input from the new Commission
13 members. Cmr. Katz said that everyone should contribute to the next steps.
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15 **Reports and Announcements**

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17 Director Bennett mentioned a neighborhood meeting held by the Town Center owner and that a subdivision
18 application could be filed after a pre application meeting.
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20 **Additional Citizen Comments**

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22 Don Fiene said that he was a new Councilmember when the current ADU ordinance was adopted and that
23 the goal was for the ordinance not to allow any ADU development. He said that they drafted an ordinance
24 that was close to what the State was going to pass. He mentioned various details of the ordinance. He said
25 he agreed with Cmr. Katz's comments. He said that the term affordable should be used carefully.
26

27 Councilmember Bodi thanked all Commissioners and said that the City has housing capacity to meet the
28 established targets. She said that the Council adopted affordable housing requirements and incentives for
29 multi-family housing within the town center. She talked about recent community involvement levels.
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31 Deputy Mayor Kassover thanked all for their efforts. She spoke to the conversation regarding defining a
32 problem and said that defining problems can often make clear the action that is needed. She said that
33 conversations regarding ADUs have been occurring over several years, but that the LFP situation needs
34 diversity to meet community needs. She said that we need housing for every generation. She said that the
35 community character should be maintained, which is important. She said that Council is motivated to solve
36 the ADU limitations.
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38 **Agenda for Next Meeting:**

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40 Chair Larson said she would work with Director Bennett to plan the agenda for next meeting based on the
41 discussion tonight.
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43 **Adjournment:**

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45 Cmr. Katz moved to adjourn the meeting and Cmr. Fudge seconded. The meeting adjourned at 9:08pm.
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APPROVED:

Madlyn Larson

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Maddy Larson, Chair