

City of Lake Forest Park - Planning Commission
Meeting Minutes: April 23, 2019
17425 Ballinger Way NE—EOC Room

Planning Commissioners present: Chair Joel Paisner, Vice Chair Maddy Larson, Richard Saunders, Ira Gross, TJ Fudge, Steve Morris, Jon Lebo, Rachael Katz

Staff and others present: Steve Bennett, Planning Director; Lauren Hoerr, Assistant Planner; Mandi Roberts, Otak Consultants; Tom French, Councilmember

Members of the Public: Mike Dee; Donna Hawkey

Planning Commissioners absent: Mark Withers

Call to order: 7:00 PM

Approval of Agenda: Cmr. Gross moved to approve agenda. Cmr. Lebo seconded. Approved unanimously.

Public Comments:

Mike Dee

Mr. Dee stated his appreciation for public comment sections at both the beginning and end of the meeting. He said that the 2018 Town Center Vision document is controversial in the community, including the process of how the Town Center Vision was created.

Donna Hawkey

Ms. Hawkey said an article about the founding of Lake Forest Park will be in the Shoreline Area News soon.

Approval of Minutes:

February 26th

Mr. Bennett explained the format of the draft minutes with the proposed edits by Cmr. Larson and Cmr. Fudge. Chair Paisner stated his preference for minutes to keep to the bare minimum facts and decisions. He said he understood the need for more detail in this specific context, but reminded Commissioners to resist the effort to rewrite the minutes. Cmr. Larson said she respectfully disagreed and that what goes on public records should be detailed for those that miss meetings. Cmr. Larson said that she does not expect that all of her edits would be incorporated. Mr. Bennett said that staff can handle a 2-4 page minutes and passed out a copy of page 5 from the Commissioners' Handbook that states; "the purpose of notes is to record important decisions and recommendations." He continued that he understood Commissioners' need for educational minutes. Cmr. Larson agreed there should be a happy medium and it is reasonable to provide corrections in reviewing what is presented. Chair Paisner agreed that minutes within the public record should correctly represent what happens at a meeting.

Cmr. Fudge said he believes the minutes should reflect what was said but the current language leaves an inaccurate impression. Cmr. Fudge started explaining his proposed edits to the draft minutes. Chaire Paisner suggested that a motion should be made before discussing the edits further. Cmr. Larson moved to approve the minutes. Cmr. Gross seconded. Cmr. Fudge continued to explain his proposed change for pg. 5, lines 40-42. He disagreed that Ms. Roberts “provided an explanation” because he believed the information she gave was incorrect. Mr. Bennett said minutes should capture what is said, but they are not necessarily a record of the validity or accuracy of what was

1 said. After discussion, Chair Paisner reiterated that the minutes are not about the validity of
2 information presented but it is about what is said and the audio can provide further details. Cmr.
3 Fudge moved to edit pg 5 lines 40-42 to say “she attempted an explanation” and “she stated that the
4 current code could allow...”. Cmr. Saunders seconded the motion so that it could be further
5 discussed. After discussion, the motion was amended to only change line 41 to “she stated that the
6 current code could allow...”. There were no other proposed changes to the minutes. The motion
7 was approved seven to one, with Cmr. Fudge in opposition. The motion of accepting the minutes as
8 amended was unanimously approved.
9

10 **Meeting Dates**

11 It was noted that the next two meetings were scheduled for May 14th and May 28th, 2019. Chair
12 Paisner and Cmr. Saunders said they would not be present on the 28th and Commissioners decided
13 to confirm availability via email.
14

15 **Old Business:**

16 Implementation of Town Center Vision

17 *Review/Discuss City Council memo to Planning Commission*

18 Chair Paisner said that he and Cmr. Larson met with the Deputy Mayor to discuss agendas and
19 future goals. For this meeting, the goal is to step back and confirm major principles and to keep in
20 mind past documents such as the Legacy Plan and the Comprehensive Plan.
21

22 Chair Paisner opened discussion on Council’s memo. Cmr. Saunders said it seemed to be laying out
23 the major components within the preferred alternative (PA) that Planning Commission should focus
24 on. Cmr. Katz said she assumes the final line on the second page is correlated with the previously
25 created table for Council that described which assumptions the Commission would need
26 clarification on. Ms. Roberts clarified that Council reviewed tables 2.1 and 2.2 in the DEIS at last
27 night’s meeting. At next Monday’s Council Committee of the Whole meeting, the Council will work
28 on the preferred alternative with the goal of providing guidance to the Commission for the May 14th
29 meeting. She said the preferred alternative is just a study and is not intended to be an adopted
30 document. The code discussion would follow the FEIS. Ms. Roberts clarified that, while Council did
31 say last night that Alternative 3 is not the preferred alternative, discussion of it will stay in the FEIS
32 document, but the document will state that Alternative 3 is not the preferred alternative.
33

34 Cmr. Fudge asked how implementation works with the no action alternative (Alternative 1) versus
35 the PA. Cmr. Lebo said Alternative 1 reflects current code and does not represent a preference.
36 Cmr. Katz said PA will lead to code changes whereas Alternative 1 would not. Cmr. Fudge said
37 Alternative 1 includes citizen-based task force approval of new development, which seems unlikely.
38 Ms. Roberts said that while Alternative 1’s process is cumbersome, EIS analysis has to assume it
39 could be implemented. Cmr. Fudge worried that if the PA ends up being a lower end density
40 scenario than Alternative 1, traffic and other impact analysis will not be accurate. After discussion,
41 Ms. Roberts noted the FEIS will clarify assumptions of Alternative 1 and describe currently planned
42 CIP projects that are intended to serve redevelopment scenarios allowed by existing code
43 conditions. Mr. Bennett said the CIP assumes the City would pay for these projects, but the City can
44 require developers pay for projects as mitigation and the FEIS will provide details on this process.
45 Chair Paisner asked why the City does not have impact fees. Mr. Bennett responded that impact fees
46 are usually used in larger cities with more undeveloped land. LFP can still seek mitigation at a project
47 level through the SEPA process.
48

1 Cmr. Larson asked about the assumption of commercial square footage shrinking in Alternatives 1
2 and 2. Ms. Roberts confirmed Alternatives 1 and 2 look at reduced commercial space and
3 Alternative 3 looks at increases. She added that the numbers were suggested by Merlone Geier in
4 letters based on market trend analyses. Ms. Roberts noted the PA could look at a different scenario.
5 Cmr. Larson stated that she thought the traffic impact analysis could get tricky when some
6 alternatives have commercial space shrinking and residential space increasing.
7

8 Cmr. Paisner asked how the code would regulate residential square footage. Ms. Roberts said it
9 could describe a range of units or a maximum cap of units or describe a combination of form
10 (height, square feet) and uses while allowing flexibility for the market. Councilmember French
11 warned about prescribing too much and limiting adaptability. He went on to suggest focusing on
12 shaping the development process in a way that balances community feedback with staff and
13 consultant feedback. Cmr. Katz mentioned the discussion of sub-zones of the Town Center in terms
14 of residential/commercial/mixed use in Council's retreat minutes.
15

16 Cmr. Saunders said the current 2005 framework talks about ideal locations for certain zones
17 conceptually. Councilmember French said that the retreat was an aspirational thinking exercise but
18 agreed with Cmr. Katz that sub-zones are one way to influence development. Cmr. Larson said she
19 interpreted from last night's discussion that the 2005 code was somewhat prescriptive in maximums.
20 She heard Mr. Gwilliam say that it is important to maximize building height and not be constrained
21 to wedding cake design and density requirements. She said if we know Merlone Geier is incentivized
22 by maximum height, we can lease space from them for some public amenities. Councilmember
23 French said that 2005 code does have challenges in terms of meeting community desires. Cmr.
24 Saunders said he thinks the task force seems like a key component of the 2005 code intended to
25 ensure community wants are addressed.
26

27 Cmr. Lebo asked if Commissioners were feeling like the community would need to give up too
28 much in order to get what we want as a community; for example allowing increased height limits in
29 return for more public space. He noted shopping mall redevelopment (Aurora Village, Northgate,
30 Totem Lake) today reflects changing surrounding communities and that maybe what we are looking
31 for will be more available at a future time in the market. He said we don't want to create something
32 today that we don't want to live with for 50 years. Doing nothing may be the best course of action.
33

34 Cmr. Lebo when on to say that, if the community wants a town square, there are different models
35 that can determine the size ratio of the square with the form of the surrounding buildings and the
36 dimensions of the square. The EIS study is just a means to inform us of what alternatives are
37 possible and what consequences would result. He said he feels too much focus is on the EIS, and
38 the focus should be what we want the Town Center to be and how to write it into our code.
39

40 Chair Paisner said he appreciated Cmr. Lebo's clarity on setting priorities and what the end result
41 should be. Chair Pasiner asked how to structure future meetings in anticipation of Council providing
42 a Preferred Alternative (PA) by the May 14th meeting. He suggested asking, in light of Legacy Plan
43 and Comprehensive Plan, does the PA address the things it should address in order to maintain the
44 character of Lake Forest Park? Cmr. Morris said the Council memo suggested that the Council is
45 making major decisions about all of those elements and what should be prioritized. Cmr. Larson said
46 the highest and best use of our time is to ensure we understand the Legacy Plan and the
47 Comprehensive Plan as a way to prepare to analyze Council's PA. Cmr. Saunders said that we
48 should focus on what Council suggests as the priorities of the PA, noting that the Plans will have

1 good information, but there won't be a silver bullet. Cmr. Paisner said that the Comprehensive Plan
2 and Legacy Plan reflect strong themes from listening to the community over time.
3

4 Cmr. Lebo said the goal of code should be to lead developers to create desirable spaces. The code
5 needs to address the numbers of people do we want the space to accommodate and what kind of
6 events take place in them. Cmr. Larson said Merlone Geier's Shoreline Place is using a phased
7 approach and planning for four phases over 15-20 years. She said that depending on the market, the
8 public space may not be built until the 3rd or 4th phase, 10-20 years out from the start of
9 redevelopment. Cmr. Larson said in terms of trading, we need to make sure we have short-term
10 benefits as well as long-term benefits. Ms. Roberts said she heard Merlone Geier say last night that
11 the 4-over-1 building type currently allowed in Town Center is difficult to work with, and they don't
12 like grid pattern for walkways. Cmr. Saunders asked if Commissioners could see the letters and lists
13 from Merlone Geier that Ms. Roberts was referencing. Ms. Roberts said she would make sure that
14 all past communication from Merlone Geier to the consultants was provided to the Commissioners.
15

16 Cmr. Katz said the biggest missing piece of current code is comprehensive design guidelines to
17 encourage more aesthetically pleasing design. Cmr. Larson said the best way to address gaps in code
18 might be slight code amendments with a more focused effort on the design guidelines. Chair Paisner
19 and others agreed there will be clearer guidance once the PA is available to analyze and determine
20 next steps. Councilmember French said that in his personal opinion, redevelopment under current
21 code would not reflect community character, so there is an opportunity to improve upon existing
22 code. Ms. Roberts reminded Commissioners that quite a bit of work has been done on the code and
23 that developing clear and detailed code will be highly beneficial in encouraging development to meet
24 community wants. Chair Paisner said looking at foundational documents has somewhat clarified the
25 confusion around the EIS process.
26

27 *Discussion: Questions and answers on meeting materials, revisit how the proposed code fits in with key planning
28 documents, and use our existing code regarding Open Space as a test case*

29 Ms. Roberts reminded Commissioners that the Town Center Vision (TCV) should serve as a big
30 piece of the Town Center Plan that gets adopted. People feel the TCV represents community wants
31 and that there were concerns that the alternatives studied within the EIS did not align with the TCV,
32 so don't forget to review the TCV as you review foundational documents like the Legacy Plan and
33 Comprehensive Plan.
34

35 Ms. Roberts said that community members felt DEIS didn't reflect goals of open space, especially
36 quality interior open space that is connected to other spaces, such as green spaces or a place for
37 children to play. She directed attention to her presentation on open space and PROS-T Plan findings
38 and analysis that included information about parks that are within walking distance to Town Center.
39 With this in mind, she asked what additional open space is needed in Town Center to serve demand.
40 Ms. Roberts explained the handout on defining requirements for open space by use categories. Cmr.
41 Morris asked how open space is defined in this analysis. Ms. Roberts said we have the opportunity
42 to define it and the ability to adjust formulas, noting that Table B shows how much open space
43 would be required using the formula under each studied alternative. Cmr. Fudge noted that private
44 open space is included in the far-right column. Ms. Roberts said that the formulas were based off of
45 the City of Bothell code. Cmr. Fudge voiced his concern about the way the analysis was done, how it
46 is being used, and that this is being distributed to the public. Cmr. Katz noted that the handout was
47 just for the purpose of discussion.
48

1 Cmr. Saunders suggested it may be helpful to have separate numbers on existing private, existing
2 public, new private, and new public open space. Ms. Roberts suggested that the question to ask with
3 the analysis is: is this amount of public space enough and is this how we want to define open space?
4 Cmr. Katz said the idea of one contiguous space is not included in other cities' code, noting
5 community comments are geared towards an overall number but spliced areas are not going to have
6 the same effect as one contiguous space. Mr. Bennett noted it may be useful to add dimensional
7 requirements so that the open space is not provided in less usable shapes.

8
9 Cmr. Paisner noted that it was nearing 9:00pm and asked whether Commissioners wanted to
10 continue beyond that time. Ms. Roberts said she would do calculations that extract out private space
11 and research whether or not other codes call for contiguous open space. Cmr. Saunders and other
12 commissioners agreed it will be important to define open space. Cmr. Fudge said there is tension
13 between whether people want interior open spaces vs. edges in terms of creek use and bike lanes
14 and it is unclear as to where the community stands. Cmr. Larson said the draft Vision document
15 may offer insight on this. Ms. Roberts said Council will ask PC to determine the formula for open
16 space. Ms. Roberts passed out a National Recreational and Park Association handout.

17
18 **New Business:** None.

19 **Reports and Announcements:** None.

20 **Agenda for Next Meeting:** Chair Paisner noted the next meeting would likely focus on reviewing
21 the Preferred Alternative.

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23 **Public Comments**

24 Mike Dee

25 Mr. Dee stated several options Commissioners could consider in terms of their earlier minutes
26 discussion. He suggested putting Draft watermark on minutes to clarify when documents are
27 received from a public records request. He noted that audio recordings are now on Town Center
28 page but not Planning Commission page and recommended putting it on both pages. Mr. Dee asked
29 if the Planning Commission could implement a website notification system for when documents are
30 posted. He reminded staff to provide handouts on the website since they are not on Dropbox
31 anymore. Mr. Dee stated his preference to delay action on EIS rather than delay FEIS release, and
32 noted his concern of doubling meetings and cost of meetings. He noted that the fire station and
33 King County Library will need redevelopment at some point and should be considered.

34
35 Cmr. Saunders asked if staff can look into the website change. Mr. Bennett confirmed that they
36 would. Cmr. Paisner said handouts should be posted on website to be publicly available. Cmr. Fudge
37 asked if Dropbox is being used anymore. Mr. Bennett noted that everything from this meeting will
38 be on the Town Center page.

39
40 Cmr. Katz moved to adjourn. Cmr. Gross seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

41 **Adjournment:** 9:03PM

42 APPROVED:
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Joel Paisner, Vice Chair