

City of Lake Forest Park - Planning Commission  
Meeting Minutes: June 11, 2019  
17425 Ballinger Way NE—EOC Room

**Planning Commissioners present:** Chair Joel Paisner, Vice Chair Maddy Larson, Richard Saunders, Ira Gross, Jon Lebo, TJ Fudge

**Staff and others present:** Steve Bennett, Planning Director; Nick Holland, Senior Planner; Mandi Roberts and Christina Haworth, Otak Consultants; Tom French, Councilmember

**Members of the Public:** Mike Dee; Julian Andersen

**Planning Commissioners absent:** Rachael Katz, Mark Withers, Steve Morris

**Call to order: 7:03 PM**

Chair Paisner began the meeting with a statement regarding maintaining order at meetings, respect for others opinions, and his appreciation of staff's hard work.

### Approval of Agenda:

Mr. Larson moved to approve the agenda as presented. Mr. Saunders seconded motion and it was approved unanimously.

## Public Comments:

Mike Dee: Annual report drafted, copy available; documents are available on Town Center process webpage; reference to 6-3-19 Planning Commission meeting on Town Center page.

## Approval of Minutes:

April 23<sup>rd</sup>

Mr. Larson indicated that she found some typos. Director Bennett mentioned that non-substantive edits like typos could be corrected later. Mr. Larson agreed to forward the typos she found to staff. Mr. Saunders also referenced some typos in the content of the minutes.

A motion was made by Cmr. Gross to approve the April 23<sup>rd</sup> 2019 Planning Commission meeting minutes as amended, Cmr. Fudge seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

May 14<sup>th</sup>

Cmr. Larson suggested that the Commission also review and approve the May 14<sup>th</sup> 2019 minutes. Director Bennett suggested that the meeting agenda be amended to add that item. All Commissioners confirmed they reviewed the May 14<sup>th</sup> 2019 minutes and wanted to add it to the agenda.

Cmr. Saunders suggested a correction to the May 14<sup>th</sup> 2019 minutes on page 2 lines 14 and 15.

Cmr. Larson moved to approve the May 14<sup>th</sup> 2019 minutes and Cmr. Gross seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

## Meeting Dates:

Upcoming meetings are scheduled for June 25, 2019 and July 9, 2019

1  
2 **Old Business:**  
3

4 Implementation of Town Center Vision

5 *Discussion of May 21<sup>st</sup> Joint Meeting with City Council*

6 Director Bennett suggested that Commissioners who were at the 5-21-19 Committee Of the  
7 Whole (COW) meeting could share their impressions of the meeting.

8 Cmr. Larson didn't feel that fundamentals were discussed. Council seems to be going ahead  
9 with a districting approach and she didn't feel that Planning Commission were able to  
10 influence direction of Council. She said she still remains frustrated by the lack of consistent  
11 process and a clear and transparent schedule. She feels that the district approach is  
confusing.

12 Mandi Roberts said she understands the frustration about process. Her group is still  
13 responding to comments from DEIS. Tonight is the first chance to get back to talking about  
14 code amendments. She apologize for the June 10th COW being canceled due to her not  
15 being able to attend. The district segregation came up at a Council retreat in an effort to  
16 retain scale and character.

17 Cmr. Larson indicated she plans to read the Vision documents and Comprehensive Plan to  
18 keep ideas fresh. She is having a hard time reconciling a 4 over 1 format when a 45% lot  
19 coverage limitation is in the code. Director Bennett explained how the current Town Center  
20 regulations are applied. LFPMC Ch. 18.42.150(A) states that the current Town Center design  
21 guidelines can supersede the other regulations in 18.42. Mandi Roberts noted that draft  
22 codes updates are intended to reduce the confusing language found in the current  
23 regulations.

24 Chair Paisner expressed his desire to move from that topic.

25 Cmr. Lebo said that the Town Center code amendments initially were intended to address a  
26 Sound Transit parking garage. He drew contrast between Houston's lack of zoning and  
27 Carmel's (California) zoning, which are the extremes of regulations in terms of zoning. LFP  
28 is not either extreme, but community wants amenities from re-development of Town Center.  
29 The region has seen re-development. Bothell is an example; rental prices are different  
30 throughout community. He stated that he was watching the Merlone Geier representative  
31 during Committee of the Whole meeting and thought he wasn't supportive of the direction  
32 things were going. The Mithun Vision that was created 11 years ago was a cooperative effort.  
33 Redevelopment is economically based. It is not viable for owners to tear down uses that  
34 make money. Too many restrictions on developers prevent redevelopment. LFP has a high  
35 income level, but people shop online. The LFP Town Center may look the same in 20 years-  
36 mainly convenience shopping. The community does seem to want multifamily housing in the  
37 Town Center, but there is value in creating infrastructure that supports transit oriented  
38 development. Mr. Lebo said he has a conflicted opinion on the issue.

39 Cmr. Saunders thanked Cmr. Lebo for his comments and discussion ensued regarding the  
40 political atmosphere, community support, and the importance of timing for the property  
41 owner. Chair Paisner reminded Commissioners that they have no authority to the change

1 code. The Commission is only a recommending body. Cmr. Gross commented on Merlone  
2 Geier and their plans for redevelopment; basically it's not economically viable to redevelop.

3 Cmr. Lebo commented that one way to look at things would be to write a code for a  
4 development that the community and policy makers want and let the market catch up to the  
5 regulations. Additional discussion ensued regarding regional development projects.

6 Cmr. Saunders asked questions regarding what will be studied through FEIS. Mandi Roberts  
7 clarified that baseline and incentives would be studied. Cmr. Saunders asked if building step-  
8 back would be addressed in the EIS. Mandi Roberts indicated that it would be addressed in  
9 the code.

10 Mandi Roberts spoke about the proposed parking ratios for Town Center and transit-  
11 oriented development. The plan is to build in flexibility for parking regulations. This led to a  
12 discussion of the process to restrict parking in adjacent neighborhoods to Town Center.

13 Chair Paisner asked for a direction for the rest of the meeting; Director Bennett suggested  
14 that Ms. Roberts talk about the code amendments. Cmr. Saunders indicated his desire to  
15 finish the Town Center plan. Mandi Roberts spoke about how the planning process would  
16 work with regard to the Town Center plan. The current plan is for the Council to do the  
17 “heavy lifting” on the Town Center sub-area plan.

18 *Schedule and Review Workplan for Implementation of Town Center Vision and Update on the Preferred  
19 Alternative and FEIS*

20 Cmr. Larson explained her understanding of the deliverables that the Commission would be  
21 recommending on: code changes and design guidelines with editorial feedback on sub area  
22 plan. She then asked how all of this will be accomplished. Chair Paisner responded by  
23 outlining his understanding of the schedule. Cmr. Saunders commented that public  
24 involvement at this point is crucial

25 Mandi Roberts talked about the schedule and indicated that two workshops may be held  
26 prior to the sub-area plan being adopted. She then spoke to the purpose of the FEIS and the  
27 need for it to be published prior to getting additional community feedback.

28 Additional discussion occurred regarding the process, schedule, and public outreach. Cmr.  
29 Fudge commented on the potential for the EIS process and the preferred alternative to be a  
30 public outreach tool. Discussion ensued regarding Alternative 1 in the DEIS.

31 Cmr. Lebo suggested that the Planning Commission recommend to the Council that a public  
32 outreach forum be offered regarding the process, schedule, and code content, prior to  
33 publishing the FEIS. Cmr. Larson agreed.

34 Mandi Roberts commented on the need to publish the FEIS because it is beyond the  
35 timeline for publishing.

36 Cmr Lebo made a motion to have the Planning Commission recommend to the City Council  
37 that they have an open house to update citizens about where we are at in the process. Cmr.  
38 Larson seconded and discussion of the motion followed.

1 Councilmember French commented on the COW meetings where preferred alternative was  
2 discussed. He commented on the confusion in the community that the FEIS is a regulatory  
3 document and that is not the case. It's a tool for making decisions about regulations. He  
4 said he struggles with how to allocate time and resources at this point. The Sub-area plan  
5 should be very closely based on the town center vision. A Planning Commission  
6 recommendation should occur at the end of the summer by his estimation. He concluded by  
7 praising all involved for the good discussion tonight.

8 Cmr. Larson spoke to the motion and recommend it include the drafting of a memo stating  
9 that the public outreach should occur prior to publishing the FEIS. Cmr. Fudge added that,  
10 if policy makers want a constructive feedback from public, get them involved sooner.  
11 Additional discussion occurred regarding community feedback in relation to publishing the  
12 FEIS.

13 Chair Paisner offered a friendly amendment to Cmr. Lebo's motion, "the Planning  
14 Commission recommends to the City Council that it hold an open house to update the  
15 public on where we are in the process to develop a sub-area plan and related code  
16 amendments prior to release of the FEIS and further recommends that the City no longer  
17 refer to the alternative being evaluated as the Preferred Alternative but instead, refer to it as  
18 Alternative 4."

19 Cmr. Larson made a motion to accept the amendment to the motion, Cmr. Gross seconded  
20 it, and the motion passed unanimously.

21 Chair Paisner called for a vote on the main motion and it passed unanimously.

22 Mandi Roberts remarked on the process and the delay of further work on the code  
23 amendments.

24 Cmr. Larson said that, as a planning commissioner, she feels she should be a reliable source  
25 of information to the public and because of the changing information about the schedule  
26 she is finding it hard to be accountable to the community.

27 Councilmember French commented on the reasons why progress hasn't been achieved with  
28 the code amendments, design guidelines, and the subarea plan. He cannot speak for the  
29 entire Council. He expressed his desire to establish a set of dates and milestones for this  
30 process and stated that continued coordination with Planning Commission is crucial.

31 *Code Amendments Worksheet – updates based on EIS process and subsequent discussions*

32 Cmr. Larson suggested that the code amendments be put in an Excel spreadsheet to  
33 facilitate comments from Commissioners. She offered to work on getting the comments  
34 together. Director Bennett clarified that such an effort might constitute decisions being  
35 made outside of a public meeting. There was additional discussion about how to work  
36 through the suggested code worksheet and the need to identify the items in the current  
37 regulations that are problematic. Ms. Roberts clarified the current draft of the Town Center  
38 code update repeals and replaces the existing regulations.

1 The Planning Commission agreed to comment on proposed code amendments individually  
2 and come prepared to discuss them at a future meeting. Commissioner comments and  
3 questions regarding the proposed amendments can be directed to Director Bennett.

4 **New Business:** No new business.

5  
6 **Reports and Announcements:** None

7  
8 **Agenda for Next Meeting:** Similar to this agenda.

9  
10 Cmr. Fudge stated that he would like to discuss the Sound Transit parking garage and the need for a  
11 vision. Discussion occurred on how to incorporate parking garage elements into the draft code  
12 occurred. A request to get this language ahead of the next meeting was made.

13  
14 **Public Comments:**

15 Julian Andersen: He thought there was good discussion tonight. He proposed building step-back  
16 requirements and using the concept of angle of repose as a guideline. He challenged the City to  
17 redefine success during this process and spoke about preferred alternative and its influence on the  
18 next steps. Any 10 year plan should be reviewed every 5 years.

19  
20 Mike Dee: Requested that the City not schedule meetings on short notice and don't cancel meetings.  
21 Town Center business has taken one-half year while the work plan for 2019 has it requiring 20% of  
22 the Commission's time. FEIS publishing is overdue. LFPMC 18.42, Appendix 2 doesn't exist.  
23 Upcoming events newsflash did not include dates.

24  
25 Cmr. Larson clarified what Appendix 2 actually was and where it was located. Council member  
26 French stated that only one Town Center Design Framework appendix was adopted as a regulatory  
27 document.

28  
29 Cmr. Saunders moved to adjourn. Cmr. Lebo seconded the motion and it was unanimously  
30 approved.

31  
32 **Adjournment:** 9:14pm

33 APPROVED:  
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Joel Paisner, Chair