

City of Lake Forest Park - Planning Commission
Special Meeting Minutes: December 2, 2019
17425 Ballinger Way NE—Council Chambers

Planning Commissioners present: Chair Joel Paisner, Richard Saunders, Steve Morris, Mark Withers, Rachel Katz, Jon Lebo, TJ Fudge

Staff and others present: Tom French, Councilmember; Steve Bennett, Planning Director; Nick Holland, Senior Planner; Mandy Roberts, Otak consultant

Members of the Public: Mike Dee; Jack Tonkin, Ruth Mead, Jim Mead, Kathy Comeen, Aaron Fore

Planning Commissioners absent: Ira Gross, Vice Chair Maddy Larson

Call to order: 7:02 PM

Approval of Agenda:

Mr. Withers moved to approve the agenda. Mr. Lebo seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Cmr. Saunders proposed to amend the agenda to add discussion of the November 12, 2019 letter to the Commission from Jack Tonkin. It was decided that the item would be added to the agenda under old business.

Public Comment:

Mike Dee said that Commission meeting materials are located in different places on the website, which could be confusing to some members of the public.

Approval of Minutes:

November 12, 2019 Planning Commission regular meeting minutes

Mr. Lebo moved to approve the November 12, 2019 Planning Commission regular meeting minutes, Mr. Saunders seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Meeting Dates

Next meeting is scheduled for December 17, 2019, which would be a special meeting. Cmr. Withers indicated that he would not be able to attend that meeting. Chair Paisner asked about January meetings and Director Bennett indicated that the regular meeting in January would be the first meeting in 2020, at which time additional meeting dates for 2020 can be discussed and scheduled.

Old Business

Implementation of Town Center Vision

Structured Parking Regulations and Guidelines

Mr. Lebo stated that he is an employee of Sound Transit and that he would recuse himself from conversations about the parking garage at this meeting and in future meetings. He left the table and took a seat in the audience.

Director Bennett introduced the draft freestanding and structured parking regulations. He indicated that it would be helpful to get Commission input on façade modulations and façade protrusions and what types of guidance Commissioners would like to see regarding architectural features as they relate to parking structures. He also asked the Commission for input regarding a potential height exemption for features that may be included in the design such as elevator shafts and stairwell columns. Director Bennett commented on the

1 proposed minimum parking stall dimensions and he asked the Commission for their feedback on those
2 criteria as well. Cmr. Saunders asked about the bulk of the structure, and how the regulations would limit it.
3 Director Bennett replied that a limit on building size can be included in the new code. Cmr. Saunders
4 indicated that color variations in the façade could be effective in limiting bulk, and suggested that such a
5 treatment be included as a specific design guideline.

6
7 Chair Paisner paused the discussion and wanted to be sure the meeting was heading in a direction that would
8 result in progress.
9

10 Cmr. Fudge arrived at 7:20pm.
11

12 Director Bennett continued the latest draft of the proposed code and spoke about the new definitions for
13 “free standing parking structure” and “solar infrastructure.” He also talked about the proximity of proposed
14 structures to City Hall. Cmr. Morris suggested that bump-outs that include commercial space could be
15 allowed to protrude further south of City Hall. Cmr. Katz agreed. Ms. Roberts suggested that the standard
16 of a 60-foot commercial space depth be further analyzed to determine how that might occur. Director
17 Bennett also suggested a setback from Lyon Creek and reminded Commissioners that the the existing parking
18 lot area are grandfathered in. Cmr. Morris said that the requirements should not dictate the location of the
19 garage.
20

21 Ms. Roberts introduced a series of site plan sketches which included designs of potential parking garages
22 adjacent to City Hall. She presented a design that included some public space between the current Bank of
23 America site and the proposed garage. She suggested that the Commissioners look at the parking structure at
24 Bellevue Square as something that works well. She presented a slide which illustrated a floor plan of a four
25 story garage design. All of the designs included level parking plates and inclined non-parking ramps. Cmr.
26 Withers asked about adapting level floor plate buildings for future uses. He asked if the ramps can also be
27 used for alternative uses in the future. Ms. Roberts said that an engineer or architect would need to answer
28 his question regarding utilizing the structure for future uses. She reemphasized that 60 feet is the minimum
29 for useable commercial depth. A discussion occurred regarding how much of the garage should be space that
30 is occupied by uses other than parking.
31

32 Ms. Roberts described how the parapet of the garage will be integrated within the overall structure. Cmr.
33 Saunders asked about where the farmer’s market would go if a parking structure was built in its current
34 location. Chair Paisner suggested that Cmr. Saunders question be discussed after the current discussion is
35 complete. Ms. Roberts continued presenting an elevation drawing of a three level parking structure with
36 different styles of parapets. She presented several angles of the elevation drawing, all of which illustrated
37 designs with interior parking ramps. She then presented an elevation drawing of a four level parking garage.
38 She mentioned that the four level version can accommodate Sound Transit’s needs and some additional stalls
39 for other uses. She presented options for elevator shaft treatments, and explained how architectural style can
40 be used to take advantage of those elements. She then presented an elevation drawing of a five level parking
41 garage and said that this design would have a capacity beyond the 300 stalls needed by Sound Transit, so a
42 joint venture would have to occur in order for that version to be developed.
43

44 Cmr. Morris said that the two story, with parking on roof is what Sound Transit needs and said he was in
45 favor of that design.
46

47 Director Bennett presented a sketch provided by Sound Transit recently that responds to some of the
48 comments that the City made on an earlier design by the agency. He said that the footprint is smaller, and
49 pointed out a building section diagram that showed the 66-foot structure in relation to City Hall. Ms. Roberts
50 pointed out that the drawing did not accurately take into account the change in grade. Director Bennett said
51 that the maximum ramp grade for vehicle travel is 20%. He added that the drawing illustrates how to get to
52 300 stalls with a smaller footprint.

1 Chair Paisner said that he would be more comfortable with a longer building, in exchange for less bulk and
2 height. He said that the idea of additional parking for other uses is a good idea and added that he would like
3 to see commercial space included in the design. Cmr. Saunders said he agreed with the statement about
4 reducing bulk and height. He asked about where the 300 stall number came from and if it can be reduced.
5 Director Bennett responded that the 300 stall number correlates to the demand that Sound Transit
6 anticipates. Cmr. Withers said that he would like to move the surface parking in front of City Hall to the
7 garage and use that area for open space. Cmr. Katz agreed. She also said that she is comfortable with a
8 higher garage, if the grade is used to offset bulk. She also said that keeping the structure as far from the lake
9 as possible is important.
10

11 Cmr. Saunders asked about the height of a 4 level garage. Ms. Roberts responded that the top parking level
12 would be 35-39 feet tall, including the parapet height. In comparing the height to City Hall, Ms. Roberts said
13 that there could be transparency within the parapet feature. General discussion on how to architecturally
14 treat the front façade occurred. Cmr. Withers said that he doesn't want a hideous structure and that he favors
15 architectural treatment with differing materials.
16

17 Director Bennett referred to a section of the draft code regarding parapet wall treatments which stated that
18 50% of a proposed parapet should be transparent. He asked the Commission if they wanted the parapet and
19 the elevator tower to match the building in a cohesive manner. Cmr. Withers asked about the transparency
20 requirement. Director Bennett suggested that the 50% transparency could be reduced in order to encourage
21 its integration into the overall design. Cmr. Katz agreed and noted that the bump-out question (south of City
22 Hall) had been skipped. Chair Paisner said he thought that the Commission was flexible on the amount and
23 size of façade bump-outs, as long as incentives were offered to encourage additional commercial space
24 beyond the required minimum. Discussion on options for façade modulation and bump-out criteria
25 continued.
26

27 Cmr. Withers asked if the requirement of commercial space is an absolute and questioned what constituted
28 incentive space. Director Bennett clarified that a 60 foot deep commercial space on the ground floor is the
29 baseline and that additional depth or floors could be incentivized. Chair Paisner summarized his
30 understanding of the meeting with the Town Center property owner and wondered what to require regarding
31 commercial space. Director Bennett indicated that staff would prepare some options for the Commission to
32 consider regarding the commercial space issue.
33

34 Cmr. Paisner directed the discussion back to parapet walls. Cmr. Saunders agreed that the developer should
35 be creative with this feature.
36

37 Director Bennett highlighted the draft language pertaining to stories and height. He suggested that height in
38 feet be used as the defining criteria. He suggested a 55-foot height limit, with potential exceptions. Cmr.
39 Katz proposed that the list of incentives be given a more appropriate name. Director Bennett agreed that
40 incentives are in the form of height increases for the developer but the list might be better titled as public or
41 community benefits.
42

43 Director Bennett explained the language on architectural styles and suggested that images be included in the
44 guidelines, so written criteria regarding architectural features does not have to be overly detailed.
45

46 There was discussion about landscaping and lighting standards. Cmr. Morris said that there may not be
47 enough room to accommodate much landscaping.
48 Chair Paisner asked for a time check and suggested to other Commissioners that they get through the draft
49 regulations. Director Bennett presented additional amendments and summarized the discussion on the
50 regulations to this point. He asked for feedback on the stall size criteria and bicycle parking. Chair Paisner
51

1 said he thought keeping the footprint of the structure as small as possible was a higher priority than
2 establishing a minimum stall size.

3
4 Cmr. Morris said that he does not want to mandate the percentage of floors within the structure. Cmr. Katz
5 agreed, along with Chair Paisner. Cmr. Saunders also said he would like to keep bulk down and Cmr. Withers
6 agreed. Ms. Roberts said that the active use side or commercial area should be level at the ground floor.

7
8 Director Bennett proposed that 8 foot 9 inches stall width be the standard and there was general agreement
9 with that dimension by Commissioners.

10
11 The discussion moved to bicycle parking standards. Chair Paisner asked if there is a difference between long
12 and short term bike parking. Cmr. Katz said that lockers and cages are long term and short term is usually
13 represented by bike racks. Cmr. Withers asked what percentages of bike parking should be considered and
14 Ms. Roberts said that she would get back to the Commission with more detail on the demand and suggested
15 numbers of bike stalls.

16
17 A discussion on the word and language choices for incentives occurred, and the term “public benefits” was
18 chosen as a working replacement. Solar technology was also discussed as a required feature. Cmr. Fudge said
19 that more height would be needed for solar systems. Chair Paisner said that we should ask Sound Transit
20 about the possibility of a solar element. Cmr. Saunders offered up language that would require solar, if the
21 footprint is increased.

22
23 Director Bennett asked about which public benefit features are wanted the most and which are wanted the
24 least. Cmr. Saunders said that all of the public benefits should be included, and that the City Council can
25 decide which ones to leave out of the actual adopted regulations. A discussion of a required open space as a
26 public benefit occurred. Director Bennett said that we should be specific about what we are requiring. He
27 asked the Commission what is most valuable. Cmr Withers said that a rooftop view would be a great feature.
28 Additional discussion occurred on which public benefits should be included as mandates for the garage, and
29 which should be included as incentives and trade-offs. Cmr. Katz indicated that a grade separated crossing of
30 SR 522 should be a top priority. Cmr. Withers offered language for the code on the grade separated crossing
31 feature. Cmr. Fudge said that an off-site grade separated crossing is not a proportionate requirement for a
32 parking garage project. Director Bennett suggested some language that included a bridge between the two
33 bus stops.

34
35 Chair Paisner moved the meeting along from the draft regulations.

36
37 Director Bennett indicated that the comments from the Commission regarding the draft regulations are
38 available on the website, on the town center page.

39
40 Cmr. Saunders spoke about the letter from Jack Tonkin presented at a previous meeting, and said that he has
41 not seen a project from Sound Transit that could be used as an example. Ms. Roberts suggested Bellevue
42 Square. Director Bennett suggested that everyone share pictures of examples. Cmr. Saunders said that it
43 would be good to have a comparable project to examine. Chair Paisner said that our garage is unique. Cmr.
44 Fudge asked how far Kemore and Bothell are in their process.

45
46 **New Business**

47
48 **2019-20 Work Plan**

49 Cmr. Morris moved to approve the 2019-2020 work plan, Cmr. Fudge seconded. Cmr. Withers indicated that
50 15% may be too much time for the SMP, but retracted his concern. The 2020 Planning Commission Work
51 Plan was approved unanimously.

52

1 **Reports and Announcements**

2 None.

5 **Public Comments**

6 Jim Mead said that he appreciates the Commission's effort. He feels that the garage project is for outside
7 commuters, and doesn't want the project. He said there is too much traffic. He suggests additional bike
8 parking. He said that access from the North could be a good idea. He said he thinks less stalls would be
9 better, and wants to keep the farmers market.

10 Jack Tonkin said that the Commission made a lot of progress. He said that after another meeting, good
11 decisions will be made. He recommends that the Commission ask Sound Transit be at the meeting to present
12 traffic data, because Sound Transit projections are heavy. He has not heard a good explanation for the 300
13 stall count. He would like to make a field trip to another site.

14 Mike Dee said that the 300 stalls comes from the Sound Transit study. He thanked the Commission for
15 talking about multi-modal transportation. He mentioned that solar panels can be implemented through the
16 King County climate. He talked about the past Planning Commission meeting minutes, and documents made
17 available online.

18 **Agenda for Next Meeting:** Similar to this agenda.

19 Cmr. Katz moved to adjourn the meeting, Cmr .Withers seconded, all agreed and motion passed unanimously

20 **Adjournment:** 9:09 pm

21 APPROVED:



22 Joel Paisner, Vice Chair