

CITY OF BELLEVUE
BELLEVUE PLANNING COMMISSION
STUDY SESSION MINUTES

October 8, 2008
6:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
City Council Conference Room 1E-113

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chair Orrico, Commissioners Ferris, Hamlin, Lai, Mathews, Robertson, Sheffels

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Paul Inghram, Nicholas Matz, Department of Planning and Community Development

GUEST SPEAKERS: None

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:32 p.m. by Chair Orrico who presided. Upon the call of the roll, all Commissioners were present.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Mike McCorkle, Executive Director for Sambica Camp and Conference Center, 4114 West Lake Sammamish Parkway SE, said he has been in close communication with the staff and is in agreement with the recommendation for the Sambica Comprehensive Plan amendment.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was approved by consensus.

4. COMMUNICATIONS FROM CITY COUNCIL, COMMUNITY COUNCILS, BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS – None

5. STAFF REPORTS

Comprehensive Planning Manager Paul Inghram made available to the Commissioners copies of the ULI report on Bel-Red.

6. STUDY SESSION: 2008 Comprehensive Plan Amendments

A. Sambica

Mr. Inghram reminded the Commissioners that the Council forwarded for Final Review two of the Comprehensive Plan amendment applications. For a third, staff has been directed to develop a work plan.

Senior Planner Nicholas Matz said the Sambica application was one of the two approved for Final Review by the Council on September 15. He reminded the Commissioners that the

language of the Sambica amendment application sought from the city the most appropriate solution for the camp and conference center site. The existing uses include summer youth camps, year-round before- and after-school facilities, conference meeting facilities, kitchen and short-term camp and conference stay facilities, camp and conference staff offices and housing, shorefront facilities on a property shared with Strandvik that is not part of the application, and other indoor and outdoor recreational facilities along with accessory parking. Sambica came to the Comprehensive Plan amendment process needing a more predictable way to plan for the future. The site currently has three different Comprehensive Plan designations, three different zonings, with three different buckets of potential uses. In many cases there are conflicts between the zoning and the existing uses ranging from dimensional issues to allowed uses and lot lines.

In moving the amendment forward, the Council directed finding solutions that will work for Sambica's long-term future on the site and the surrounding residential community.

Mr. Matz explained that action in 2001 to annex the Sambica site set up the issue. Two policies were adopted which direct dealing with the issue holistically while supporting the current mix of land uses and redevelopment. The boundaries drawn for Planning District A included the shorefront area and the Tonnemaker property.

The city's objectives for this Comprehensive Plan amendment include allowing the historic use to continue while maintaining compatibility with the surrounding residential uses. The city also intends to avoid code changes that could result in unintentional impacts in other parts of the city, and to avoid redevelopment of the site with new, different or more intense uses that are less compatible with the neighborhood and shoreline environment. The resulting process should assure predictability for Sambica and the surrounding community, create a Comprehensive Plan framework that supports the subsequent code revisions and zoning, and assure that master planning for the site will include appropriate performance standards.

The staff proposal is to create a new Comprehensive Plan designation for the Sambica group of parcels that will allow for continuation of the proposed camp and conference center use. The use could be applied elsewhere in the city, including at the St. Mary's site in Enatai that may be facing similar issues. The recommendation includes a proposal to amend the Comprehensive Plan text for the existing policies that talk about Sambica to more clearly articulate the intended uses and review process for redevelopment.

Following adoption of the proposed Comprehensive Plan designation, the next step would be to look at a rezone to establish a new land use district in the Land Use Code. The camp and conference center use would include performance standards relating to building height, setbacks, parking and impervious surfaces. The city has an existing regulatory tool that would allow Sambica to enter into a master planning effort and thereby ignore existing lot lines for purposes of campus-wide redevelopment.

Mr. Matz noted that the Shoreline Management Act applies to waterfront properties extending 200 feet landward of the ordinary high water mark. That will have some effect on Sambica. It is likely that the subsequent rezone and master plan agreement would be subject to Shoreline Management Act provisions that will be adopted in 2010 as part of the major update to the Shoreline Management Act.

Commissioner Sheffels asked what exists along the shoreline currently. Mr. Matz said there is a property owned by the Strandvik Community Association. There is an agreement in place under which Sambica can use the western two-thirds of the property for camp activities, including a boathouse and dock, a fire pit and an amphitheater. The Strandvik Community Association uses

the eastern portion of the site and they also have a dock. The site is currently zoned R-5 and the proposal does not contemplate any changes to it.

Commissioner Lai asked if the camp and conference center designation could be appropriately applied to the shoreline parcel at some future time. Mr. Matz said it certainly could be considered in a future Comprehensive Plan action, but suggested it would be premature to say just how that might go given the unknowns associated with the update to the Shoreline Management Act.

Commissioner Robertson asked if the suggested changes would allow Sambica to maintain their current density limits while allowing them to move things around without regard to lot lines. Mr. Matz said the single site agreement, which should be required, contemplates allowing Sambica to treat the site as a single palette. The regulatory definition of camp and conference center would, however, include some teeth with regard to performance-based limits. The existing underlying uses would help inform that process. Mr. Inghram added that ultimately the build-out could result in bigger buildings than what currently exist, but the new zoning would maintain the existing level of intensity and manage it better.

Chair Orrico said the laundry list of potential uses under the proposal could include amusement park, giant water slides and major sports fields. She asked how those types of uses can be prevented from happening in the future. Mr. Inghram said staff are asking themselves that same question. It will be necessary to find measurements that can be delineated in code language. Size and scale will certainly be factors, along with possibly limits on number of lodging spaces, hours of operation for outdoor activities, and restrictions on outdoor lighting.

Commissioner Ferris raised the scenario of Sambica at some point in the future deciding to sell the camp and asked how the city could prevent a future owner from being allowed to have some of the same uses, such as a restaurant. Mr. Inghram suggested that under the camp and conference center use, it is likely there would be a dining facility. The facility would not, however, have signage out on the street and other characteristics of a retail restaurant. The details would all be part of the performance standards, and should a future owner want to operate something similar, it would potentially be allowed. A retail/commercial type restaurant would not be permitted without a rezone. This may first require a revisiting of the Comprehensive Plan amendment process.

Commissioner Ferris said it was his understanding that an R-5 designation would underlie everything that would rule if someone were to buy the land and not want to run a camp and conference center. Mr. Inghram said that would not be the case. The proposal would change the underlying designation to Camp and Conference Center. It would take a Comprehensive Plan amendment to change it back to something else.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Lai, Bill Stalzer, a planner who has been working with Sambica, said the properties on which the five single family homes are located used to be part of the Sambica holdings. For some reason, those properties were sold off and the homes were constructed; all but one of the homes are relatively new. Under the proposal, those properties would not be included. Additionally, Sambica does not plan to locate high-activity uses near the residential uses. There are some residential uses on-site for staff, and there is temporary lodging for camp guests. There is also a gymnasium on the property, though ultimately Sambica would like to see that use moved closer to the ball fields.

Commissioner Orrico pointed out the need to be cognizant of how the new designation could be applied in other areas of the city. Commissioner Ferris agreed and stressed the need to include

provisions that would prevent conversion to commercial purposes in the case of a sale of a camp and conference center use.

Chair Orrico observed that the Sambica site is made up of several individual parcels and asked what would happen in the event a single parcel was sold off. Mr. Matz said under a single site agreement it would not be possible for Sambica to separately develop those individual parcels. The master plan process allows the property owner to ignore the lot lines for review, but the obligation is they must consider all of the property as one. To sell off a single parcel may require revisiting the single site agreement and a Comprehensive Plan amendment.

Mr. Inghram allowed that before the rezoning occurs, the existing zoning will be in place, so it is conceivable that a parcel could be sold between the time the Comprehensive Plan amendment is approved and the time the rezone is accomplished. The length of the process does create that risk, but it is no greater risk than what exists currently.

Commissioner Lai asked if Sambica could operate an Herb Farm-type restaurant on the site. Mr. Inghram said one issue staff has struggled with is how to distinguish between a camp and conference center like Sambica currently operates and an intense hotel/conference center with a large number of rooms and commercial restaurants. Simply calling the use a camp and conference center will not provide the needed protections. That is why specific performance standards will be needed at the regulatory level. The Land Use Code provisions will be directive with regard to height, setbacks and the like.

B. Coal Creek

Mr. Matz said the proposal is to include the city-owned and unincorporated portions of the Coal Creek Park Natural Area property entirely within the urban area and establish P/SF-M as the Comprehensive Plan designation for it so the site can be annexed and zoned. The property was obtained from King County through an interlocal agreement. King County is working concurrently to move the Urban Growth Boundary accordingly.

Chair Orrico said it was her understanding that the P/SF-M designation is representative of how all of the city's parks are currently designated. Mr. Matz said that is true because the city does not use a specific parks zoning category.

Mr. Matz informed the Commissioners that the interlocal agreement between the city and King County requires the property to be maintained as open space. There is clear policy language in the Parks and Open Space System Plan and the Parks and Recreation Element of the Comprehensive Plan supporting it to that end.

Commissioner Mathews asked why the city does not have a zoning for parks. Mr. Matz said action to amend the Comprehensive Plan to include the "P" and "PF" prefix designations occurred several years ago. These prefixes are used in conjunction with the underlying Plan designation, which is representative of the zoning. The concern with having a park zone was that it might unfairly limit uses on existing or potential park sites but more so might send the wrong message about how parks are integrated into their surrounding communities. Parks and schools are part of their local communities, and the city has held over the years it would make more sense not to add a zoning that might distinguish them from the local community.

Commissioner Hamlin asked why it was necessary to move the Urban Growth Boundary. Mr. Matz said the city has some longstanding park and open space preservation goals that are realized by not only owning the Coal Creek Park property but also exercising land use authority over it as

part of the park system. It is difficult for Parks to implement those goals for properties that are not on the urban side of the boundary.

Commissioner Robertson asked if the proposed action will add the park land to the Buildable Lands inventory. Mr. Matz said it will not because parks acreages are separately identified and not counted in the city's housing capacity.

Mr. Inghram said the next step will be to schedule a public hearing. He proposed November 12, with a potential follow-up session on November 19. He clarified that staff was proposing to hold the public hearing for Sambica and the ped-bike plan on November 12 as well.

C. Deconstruction

Commissioner Robertson said upon her return from the national planning conference she was jazzed about trying to green the code, starting with deconstruction over demolition. She said she told staff she would like to ask the Council to add the issue to the Commission's workplan for 2009 as something that could be done right away and thereby add another level of sustainability to the city code. She asked the Commissioners their level of interest relative to moving forward with the topic.

Commissioner Robertson explained that there are other ways to green the code as well, including incentives for LEED certification, and the use of building materials that dramatically improve energy efficiency.

Commissioner Lai said his understanding was that Seattle recently adopted rules regarding deconstruction that include permitting deconstruction before having in hand an approved permit for how the site is to be rebuilt.

Chair Orrico pointed out that the Council has been guarded recently in adding anything new to the Commission's work program given their sensitivity to the overall load. She said she would support adding the issue to the list provided staff believes it would fit with all of the other objectives. Mr. Inghram noted that there are several Council initiatives that have staff time programmed already; one of those is a sustainability initiative. Staff is also compiling a list of Land Use Code amendments that are needed based on development review activity over the last couple of years; some of those might be related to sustainability.

Chair Orrico asked if deconstruction could simply be added to the sustainability initiative without having to seek permission from Council. Mr. Inghram said that could potentially occur depending on how code-type issues are slated to be addressed. He said staff would not object to sending the Council a memo highlighting deconstruction as an issue that could fit with the sustainability initiative.

Commissioner Ferris said he would prefer to see deconstruction taken up as a part of the larger sustainability scheme. Chair Robertson agreed that deconstruction is one element of the larger sustainability issue. She said she would like to see the Commission heavily involved in the whole notion of greening the code.

Mr. Inghram said he would do some basic research into how the issue might fit with the staff work program and report back to the Commission before the Commission makes a final determination about drafting a memo to the Council.

7. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. July 16, 2008

Motion to approve the minutes as submitted was made by Commissioner Robertson. Second was by Commissioner Mathews and the motion carried without dissent; Commissioner Hamlin abstained from voting.

8. PUBLIC COMMENT – None

9. NEXT PLANNING COMMISSION MEETINGS

The Commissioners discussed the topics to be covered during upcoming meetings.

Mr. Inghram reported that staff met with the subcommittee of the Chamber of Commerce regarding the Eastgate study and received some good input from them. Staff also met with the property managers of the Lincoln Office Center which is located to the east of the Eastgate park and ride lot. A meeting will be scheduled soon with the Bellevue Community College administration. A work program proposal for the study will be forwarded to the Council in either December or January.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Orrico adjourned the meeting at 7:51 p.m.



Staff to the Planning Commission

11/19/08
Date



Chair of the Planning Commission

11/19/08
Date