

CITY OF BELLEVUE
BELLEVUE PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES

November 3, 2004
7:00 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
City Council Conference Room

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Vice-Chair Bonincontri, Commissioners Bach, Maggi, Mathews, Orrico

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Chair Lynde, Commissioner Robertson

STAFF PRESENT: Kathleen Burgess, Mary Kate Berens, Patti Wilma, Department of Planning and Community Development

GUEST SPEAKERS: None

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 p.m. by Vice Chair Bonincontri who presided.

2. ROLL CALL

Upon the call of the roll, all Commissioners were present with the exception of Commissioner Bach, who arrived at 7:05 p.m.; and Chair Lynde and Commissioner Robertson, both of whom were excused.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was approved by consensus.

4. STAFF REPORTS – None

5. PUBLIC COMMENT – None

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

7. STUDY SESSION

- A. Land Use Code Amendment
– Downtown

Legal Planner Mary Kate Berens shared with the Commissioners the changes made to the ordinance since the last review. She noted that one additional study session will be needed prior to the public hearing. The Commission should be able to wrap up its work on the amendment before the end of the year, and the Council will take up the issue in early January.

Ms. Berens said the first change is to Section 20.25A.020.A and is related to the idea of the Major Public Open Space (MPOS). The ordinance includes amendments to some of the

provisions about the bonuses that can be earned by constructing a MPOS. Because of the relocation of City Hall to the Downtown, staff was looking to make changes to how the MPOS is constructed along the Pedestrian Corridor and bulking up the amount of MPOS required near City Hall, and the amount that can earn a bonus. In turn, the area in which the bonus can be transferred would be expanded east toward the freeway. To effect the change, footnotes must be added to the Downtown Dimensional Chart.

Ms. Berens said the change to Section 20.25A.020.B is a staff suggestion tied to the notion of restructuring how the footnotes and exceptions work for the Dimensional Chart. Several footnotes have been identified as being more like exceptions to the Dimensional Chart, and the proposal is to move them to that section, then reorganize the section by category.

Commissioner Orrico said the proposal makes a lot of sense and will make the code easier to read and use. Commissioner Bonincontri concurred.

The change to Section 20.25A.030 involves revisions to the “Heights in Core Design District” map. Ms. Berens said the proposal is to amend the map to show the expansion of the area to which the MPOS bonuses can be transferred, and the potential “up to” heights. The existing height limits from the Dimensional Chart are proposed for deletion. A note will be added to clarify how height is measured, including mechanical equipment.

The change to Section 20.25A.040 relates to establishing a prohibition against chain link fences in the Downtown. The reference was incorrectly listed in the previous ordinance.

The changes to Section 20.25A.060 have to do with walkways and sidewalks and implementing the idea of auto-biased streets from the Downtown Implementation Plan. The code currently requires street trees and tree grates for all streets in the Downtown; certain streets are required to have 12-foot sidewalk/planter areas, and others are required to have eight-foot sidewalk/planter areas. The current regulations regarding 112th call for an eight-foot sidewalk, and the thinking is that adding a planter to the auto-biased street will make things feel crowded, thus a full planter strip should not be required on 112th.

Commissioner Orrico called attention to Section 20.25A.060.C.4.a and asked for clarification with regard to who the applicant is. Ms. Berens said the reference is to an applicant for design review. The regulations do not apply to properties unable to provide a midblock connection.

Land Use Planning Manager, Patti Wilma, explained that the Land Use Code used to have a separate section dealing with Old Bellevue. It included requirements regarding street trees, sidewalks, frontage improvements and the like. Now that the specific Old Bellevue criteria are being moved to other categories, the old wording does not always read clearly. She allowed that the language could be tweaked with regard to whom the section applies.

Commissioner Orrico pointed out that in Section 20.25A.060.B.4 the word “shrubery” is misspelled.

Ms. Berens said the changes to Section 20.25A.065 deal with the Civic Center Design District. She said some of the changes are intended to recognize that City Hall will be moving to the Civic Center Design District of the Downtown. Within that district there are special allowances which recognize that certain kinds of uses require larger floor plates. The proposal is to add city government facilities as a use for which a larger floor plate is allowed, subject to the overall FAR limitations.

The changes to Section 20.25A.110.A, the general design review criteria that apply to all Downtown projects, are intended to provide clarity in the language addressing how vehicular and pedestrian connections and access should work together.

Commissioner Orrico asked if the design criteria relating to interesting roofs includes green roofs. Ms. Berens answered that there are no specific rules for green roofs anywhere in the Code. The issue is being looked at as part of the critical areas update as a low-impact development incentive. Commissioner Orrico proposed that if a developer is to be offered incentives for including interesting roof designs, green roofs should be one of the incentives.

Ms. Wilma said green roofs could be added as a roof form eligible for the bonus. Such roofs are not precluded, but no developer has proposed one as yet. They are technically difficult and fairly expensive. She added that there must be a public benefit associated with a bonus: the public must be able to either see or use it. Landscaping on roofs is already allowed as a bonusable feature.

Commissioner Matthews pointed out that generally speaking the notion of interesting roofs is centered on various geometric angles and façades. Green roofs, on the other hand, are by their very nature flat.

Ms. Berens said the last change to the proposed ordinance is to Section 20.25A.110.B and is also related to the MPOS. She noted that the kinds of bonuses that can be earned from constructing the MPOS and Pedestrian Corridor parallel each other in many ways. What is different is the review process applicable to each, and the suggestion is to make them the same. The Pedestrian Corridor review process is more streamlined and is the process that should be used for the MPOS as well. If the change is made, the Council will not have to be involved in reviewing actual site design plans. Change to other parts of the code will need to be made as well.

Commissioner Bach noted that references to the Uniform Building Code need to be changed to International Building Code. Ms. Berens said that change will be made.

Ms. Berens said the work of the Commission will include review of a broader amendment focused on the more philosophical changes that came out of the Downtown Implementation Plan process, such as the idea of neighborhoods within the Downtown.

From the audience, Councilmember Degginger observed that the Bellevue Downtown Association was recently provided with a presentation on the results of the Downtown design charrette. He said the presentation was videotaped and would be of interest for the Commissioners to see.

Ms. Wilma called attention to the diagram on page 13 of the Commission packet showing the heights allowed in the Core Design District. She noted that the height shown for the DNTN-R district is believed to be a typographical error. The figure does not match anything on the dimensional chart.

B. Current Downtown Development

Ms. Wilma discussed with the Commissioners the 18 developments that are currently underway within the Downtown area. She allowed that several of the projects are in their early stages and will not begin construction right away.

| Project | Description |
|-------------------------------|--|
| 12th & Bellevue Way Townhomes | 51 dwelling units - design to reflect proximity to urban center |
| Palazzo | 126 condos, 11,000 square feet of retail, 16,000 square feet of office, and a mid-block connection |
| Fair-winds | 150 dwelling units - senior living and amenities |
| 1020 Tower | 175 condos with ground floor retail and a black-box theater |
| Ashwood Commons | 278 apartments with ground-floor commercial |
| Marriott Courtyard | 256 unit hotel with 11,000 square feet of commercial |
| Wasatch Block | Phased development with three residential towers along NE 10th Street, includes a hotel and office |
| BRE Development | 600 +/- apartments in three low-rise buildings |
| Bellevue Way Skybridge | Connecting second levels of Bellevue Square and Lincoln Square |
| Lincoln Square | 140 condos, 337 hotel rooms, 660,000 square feet of retail, 1675 parking stalls |
| Greenstreets | Schematic plans to provide landscaping on auto-biased downtown streets |
| Avalon on the Park | 330 apartments with 80,000 square feet of retail, including a new Safeway |
| Gregg's Cycle | New 11,000 square foot retail bike shop |
| Main Place | 30 apartments, two levels over two levels of commercial, including ground floor retail |
| Masins | 42 apartments, 32,000 square feet of retail |
| The Summit | Build-out of remaining floors of high-rise building |
| City Center II | 700,000 square feet of office, ground floor retail, a plaza, and 1,400 parking stalls |
| City Hall | 350,000 square foot major remodel with plaza and pavilion |

Commissioner Bach asked what is happening with the Tech Center development. Ms. Wilma said staff is hearing that someone is looking at the site with an eye on turning it into residential/hotel.

With regard to the performing arts center development, Ms. Wilma said there recently was a fairly successful fundraiser. There has as yet been no application made for a pre-application conference, in fact there has been no contact made with the city at all.

Ms. Wilma said staff expects the Schnitzer project to re-submit for design review in December. They are expecting to focus on office development by constructing the buildings to front on NE 8th Street first. The second-story retail design remains in the mix.

8. OLD BUSINESS

Ms. Burgess reviewed the calendar with the Commissioners. She noted that the final Council study session on the Comprehensive Plan update will be November 8, and that adoption is slated for November 22.

9. NEW BUSINESS – None

10. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS – None

11. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Bonincontri adjourned the meeting at 8:09 p.m.

Secretary to the Planning Commission

Date

Chair of the Planning Commission

Date