CITY OF BELLEVUE
BELLEVUE PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES

April 8, 2015
6:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
City Council Conference Room 1E-113

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:	Chair Laing, Commissioners Carlson, Hamlin, Tebelius, deVadoss, Walter
COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:	Commissioner Hilhorst
STAFF PRESENT:	Paul Inghram, Nicholas Matz, Department of Planning and Community Development
COUNCIL LIAISON:	Councilmember Stokes
GUEST SPEAKERS:	None
RECORDING SECRETARY:	Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:38 p.m. by Chair Laing who presided.

2. ROLL CALL

Upon the call of the roll, all Commissioners were present with the exception of Commissioner Hilhorst, who was excused.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT – None

4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion to approve the agenda was made by Commissioner Walter. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Hamlin and it carried unanimously.

5. COMMUNICATIONS FROM CITY COUNCIL, COMMUNITY COUNCILS, BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

Councilmember Stokes praised Chair Laing and the chairs of the other boards and commissions for their excellent presentations to the City Council on April 6 regarding the Comprehensive Plan update. He noted that the body of work was well received by the Council. The process of updating the Comprehensive Plan certainly benefitted from having the city's boards and commissions meet jointly on occasion.

Councilmember Stokes said he was pleased to see the Commission will soon be taking up downtown livability.

Chair Laing said the Council on March 30 took up the proposed final ordinance on single family

room rentals and passed it unanimously after thoughtful consideration.

Answering a question asked by Chair Laing, Councilmember Stokes said there is no plan to bring the marijuana regulations back before the Commission. Currently the Council is waiting to see what the legislature does with regard to taxes and any changes that might need to be addressed. The hope is that another extension of the interim ordinance will not be necessary.

6. STAFF REPORTS

Comprehensive Planning Manager Paul Inghram thanked Chair Laing for doing an excellent job of presenting the Comprehensive Plan update to the City Council.

Commissioner Walter said she attended the meeting and was pleased to see how well the document was received and to hear the positive comments.

7. PUBLIC HEARING

A. St. Luke's Lutheran Church Annual Comprehensive Plan Amendment - Threshold Review

Senior Planner Nicholas Matz explained that the Comprehensive Plan amendment process is the tool used to consider proposals to amend the Comprehensive Plan, an action that is by state law limited to once per year. The two-part process produces proposed amendments that are fed into the annual work program which is established by the Council. At the threshold review stage a determination is made relative to whether or not proposed amendments should be carried forward; the merits of each proposal are considered during the final review.

Mr. Matz noted that the state has mandated that the Comprehensive Plan update must be completed by June 30. Because the Growth Management Act allows the Comprehensive Plan to be amended only once per year, the schedule for reviewing and acting on the proposed Comprehensive Plan amendments will need to be ramped up to coincide without compromising the steps necessary for public review and for applicants to have a fair opportunity to address their requests. He recommended scheduling a public hearing for May 13 ahead of transmitting a recommendation to the Council prior to the anticipated action the Council will take in June on the overall Comprehensive Plan update.

Mr. Matz explained that the proposed submitted by St. Luke's Lutheran Church seeks a map change from Single Family-Medium to Multifamily-Medium on its 4.3-acre site on Bellevue Way NE. He said the recommendation of staff was to include the proposal in the work program without expanding the geographic scope. The Public Storage application seeks a map change from Office Limited Business to Light Industrial on a 2.9-acre site on 118th Avenue SE. He said the recommendation of staff was to include the proposal in the work program and to expand the geographic scope.

A motion to open the public hearing was made by Commissioner Tebelius. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Hamlin and it carried unanimously.

Mr. Matz said the church site at 3030 Bellevue Way NE consists of two parcels. The proposed map change to Multifamily-Medium is, according to the stated purpose of the applicant, intended to increase opportunities for affordable housing to serve and practice inclusivity for all people,

and to seek partnerships to encourage and build economic diversity. The site is currently developed with a church, a building for associated uses, parking, detention areas, and open space. Staff sees the proposal as being directly responsive to Comprehensive Plan policy implementing infill development in Bellevue. Those policies seek to assure that redevelopment will fit with existing neighborhoods and will maintain and enhance the shared qualities of stability, maintenance and healthy levels of reinvestment. The intent to provide affordable housing is also consistent with general policies of the Comprehensive Plan.

Mr. Matz said policy continues to evolve in addressing the various roles that religious institutions seek, such as affordable and special needs housing, and the circumstance is not anticipated by the Comprehensive Plan, thus the standard for significantly changed conditions is met. It will be worthwhile to test each site-specific proposal against the existing land use and subarea policies. The lack of policy regarding the appropriate role of religious institution sites in a land use context, and the changes related to the St. Luke's proposal, suggest implication of a magnitude that need to be addressed for the Comprehensive Plan to function as a whole.

The St. Luke's site is bordered by Multifamily-Medium on the south, east and north. There is Office Limited Business to the south as well, and to the west of Bellevue Way is primarily single family. A Multifamily-Medium designation corresponds to a zoning of R-20, whereas the current Single Family-Medium designation corresponds to a zoning of R-3.5. If the proposed Comprehensive Plan amendment is approved, a rezone would be needed as well, and a concurrent rezone action has been filed.

Mr. Matz reiterated the recommendation of staff to include the proposal in the work program without expanding the geographic scope.

Commissioner Carlson asked if the recommendation to move the proposed amendment forward represents a change in staff's position. Mr. Matz said the issue has been fleshed out and the conclusion reached was that the issues facing changes in properties face religious institutions as well. Infill development was not intended to deal with infill of only a particular type of land use but rather all allowed land uses.

Commissioner Tebelius asked if the position of the staff would be the same if the proposal were to infill with market-rate housing. Mr. Matz said one benefit of a Comprehensive Plan amendment is the ability to look at all of the allowed uses. If included in the work program, the merits of the application will be addressed in the final review stage; the review will include what the applicant wants to do in addition to what a change in the designation and subsequent rezone would permit a property owner to do.

Mr. Tom Kidd, 3030 Bellevue Way NE, commented that the church has always sought to involve the community in its decisions, and to that end for over 25 years the church has had an active conversation with the Northtowne Community Association regarding a variety of programs. The church's involvement in homelessness goes back to the 1980s and a program called Project Hope organized by the Red Cross in which hoteliers made rooms available for homeless men. In 1992 St. Luke's established a vision statement focused on Refuge, Renewal and Reach. A conversation ensued with the Eastside Interfaith Social Concerns Council and from that was born Congregations for the Homeless. Bellevue is one of many jurisdictions that generously helps to fund the coalition. St. Luke's has on a couple of occasions hosted Tent City and involved the community and neighborhood in that process. The church is currently in its third year of hosting Sophia Way, a program for women, and the women's drop-in center on the

Eastside. The church has a clear history of working with homeless men and homeless women but has a desire to also make a difference in the lives of families. That brought the church into partnership with Imagine Housing and the notion of using the church property on which to develop affordable housing. When people work in community with differences and with diversity, everyone is blessed.

Ms. Cybil Glasby, director of housing development for Imagine Housing, 10604 NE 38th Place, Kirkland, said the organization has a 26-year history of providing affordable housing choices in Eastside communities, including Bellevue. She said the organization has been working with SMR Architects, which specializes in advocating for affordable housing, to create a feasibility plan to develop affordable housing at St. Luke's. The parking lot has been identified as the best location to create housing. Once developed, Imagine Housing would own the housing as part of private non-profit partnership. Developing affordable housing on the site will be in keeping with the policies of the Comprehensive Plan.

Mr. Demian Miniarez, SMR Architects, 911 Western Avenue, Suite 200, Seattle, said the context of the neighborhood can be maintained. The church site sits on an island in the midst of Multifamily-Medium zoning, making it a natural fit for an upzone. The proposal would be consistent with the adjacent land use patterns and built environment, and it would expand the supply of multifamily housing. The proposal will truly benefit the city by providing housing opportunities, and by promoting a diversity of housing stock within a subarea that is linked to neighborhood amenities and public transit. The housing units most likely will be occupied by residents who do not have cars. Approval of the amendment will allow the church to collaborate with appropriate development constituents and work programs that promote housing affordability for the longest term possible, and will assist the city in assuring the affordable housing opportunities are not concentrated but rather dispersed throughout the city. In meetings with the planning department, the viability of the project has been demonstrated. The site can accommodate between 56 and 58 units on what is now parking. The development site does not face Bellevue Way, it is set back and there is topography hiding it from the street. The units would not overwhelm the existing church building in any way.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Tebelius, Ms. Glasby explained that Imagine Housing would actually purchase the land and then would own and operate the housing units. Income from the sale of the land would be used by the church to recreate the space lost to the development and the improve the overall site.

Commissioner deVadoss asked if Imagine Housing has operated under similar relationships. Ms. Glasby said the organization had a similar relationship with St. Margaret's church in Factoria. The Andrew's Glen community was developed in collaboration with that church on land the church was not using for church purposes. The community has been very successful and is quite attractive. Imagine Housing purchased the land and owns and operates the housing units.

Ms. Glasby said the intent is to provide a mix of two- and three-bedroom units in an attempt to serve families. The units offer permanent housing for residents who must sign a six- to twelve-month lease when they move in.

Commissioner Carlson commented that affordable housing means different things to different people. Ms. Glasby said Imagine Housing provides housing for people with a range of incomes. A one-bedroom apartment could rent for potentially $400 per month, which would be affordable to a single person earning less than $18,000 per year, or 30 percent of area median income. That

same unit could be rented to an individual earning 60 percent of the median income, or approximately $38,000, and that person would then pay a rent of about $900 per month. All residents pass through a screening process that prevents some from renting the units. Imagine Housing works closely with the design team in implementing crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED), and the result is a community with good visibility, lots of eyes on the street, and spaces that are safe.

Commissioner Tebelius asked where Imagine Housing gets its funding. Ms. Glasby said the primary source is nine percent low-income housing tax credits. Entities such as banks and insurance companies purchase tax credits and invest the funds in affordable housing. Funding is also received from local jurisdictions, including ARCH. The properties also typically carry some private debt which is paid for by the proceeds of the rents.

Commissioner Walter asked what kinds of services are offered on-site to the residents. Ms. Glasby said Imagine Housing provides a resident services coordinator. The anticipation is that housing at St. Luke's will accommodate a lot of children, so there will be a focus on after-school programming, homework clubs, study groups, and other children's activities.

Commissioner Walter asked if consideration was given to leasing the land to Imagine Housing rather than selling it. Ms. Glasby said that is not an option. Imagine Housing would find it very difficult to secure the funding needed to build the units if it did not own the land.

Mr. Bob Knox, address not given, pointed out that Andrew's Glen at St. Margaret's was accomplished through a Comprehensive Plan amendment. With regard to significantly changed conditions, he stated that in the past religious institutions were used for religious services and were zoned residential as a conditional use. In recent years congregations have sought to further their community-based mission by filling voids that exist in social services. Issues around the appropriate role of religious institutions within a land use context have become apparent since the last update of the Comprehensive Plan in 2004. Site-specific amendments for properties that are similar to St. Luke's have allowed the flexibility necessary to meet the needs of the community. The utilization of sites for community-based issues like affordable housing demonstrate a significantly changed condition that was not contemplated during earlier planning periods.

Ms. Leslie Scofield, 3030 Bellevue Way, urged the Commission to consider the proposal as a worthy endeavor and move it into the work program. St. Luke's wants to be part of the solution for affordable housing. It is important for people to be able to live where they work. Those who will live in the units once they are constructed will become contributing members of the community.

Ms. Hester Winn, 6529 SE Cougar Mountain Way, said she has lived on the Eastside for 30 years, the last 19 of which have been in Bellevue. She said she has seen how expensive it is to live in Bellevue. It is clear there is a need for more housing in Bellevue that is affordable. Being able to live and work in the same community means less time commuting and more time spent with families. Having a safe and affordable place to live sets the foundation for success in life. St. Luke's should be applauded for their effort to turn a parking lot into affordable housing.

Ms. Janet Jelleff, 10620 NE 28th Place, said her home is near St. Luke's Lutheran Church and noted that she is part of the Northtowne Neighborhood Association. She said the Association does not disagree with the proposal but does not have concerns which have been submitted to the

city in writing. The Association is working to make Northtowne a safer place and until certain issues are resolved the proposal should not be allowed to move ahead. The signal for the crosswalk at NE 17th Street and Bellevue Way is unsafe in that it does not allow enough time to cross the road and drivers are not stopping. There is no crossing of Bellevue Way at all near the Northtowne QFC where a number of new housing units have been constructed. St. Luke's has been a very good neighbor and there have been no problems associated with the women's shelter the church hosts. Those women, however, are having to cross Bellevue Way without the benefit of a crosswalk in order to access transit.

A motion to close the public hearing was made by Commissioner Hamlin. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Carlson and it carried unanimously.

B. Public Storage Annual Comprehensive Plan Amendment - Threshold Review

Mr. Matz said the 2.9-acre site at 1111 118th Avenue SE is currently designated Office Limited Business and the proposal is to change to Light Industrial. He reiterated the recommendation of the staff to include the amendment in the work program and expanding the geographic scope. The site is bounded to the north by Office Limited Business, by Light Industrial to the east, and by Office and Single Family-Medium to the south. The site is within the Richards Valley subarea which has a mix of OLB, LI and multifamily land use designations. In several cases, including the subject property, the current uses are not consistent with the Comprehensive Plan land use designation. The use and expansion of the existing storage site would be allowed under the Land Use Code through a conditional use permit, but resolving the broader mix of the land use designations across the larger area would be more appropriately addressed through an upcoming subarea plan update. The requested LI designation would give the Public Storage landowners more relaxed dimensional standards. The application meets all the threshold criteria, thus it is appropriate to address the designation of the site through the site-specific Comprehensive Plan amendment process.

Mr. Matz said while the LI and GC designations allow for storage uses, it is not clear yet whether LI would be the most appropriate designation for the site given its adjacency to Mercer Slough, the Bellefield Office Park, and the freeway interchange. The specific impacts can be teased out at the final review stage.

The application addresses significantly changed conditions. The current use is not what was originally intended by the Comprehensive Plan. The mix of uses and designations can be resolved in several different levels, including site-specific and area or subarea reviews. The site is bordered by properties facing similar situations, none of which was anticipated by the Comprehensive Plan when established in 1981. The application is consistent with the Richards Valley subarea policies that attempt to balance the light industrial uses in the area with the need to ensure the qualities of residential areas and natural features remain at a high level.

Mr. Matz recommended expanding the geographic scope to include the three properties to the north that are similarly situated in that they have uses that are inconsistent with their current OLB zoning.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner deVadoss, Mr. Inghram said the issues facing the subject property could be addressed through an update to the subarea plan. There is not, however, a set time for when the subarea plan will be revisited. While taking the wider view may be the best overall approach, there is a question of fairness for the applicant, thus the site-

specific approach makes the most sense.

A motion to open the public hearing was made by Commissioner Tebelius. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Carlson and it carried unanimously.

Mr. Mitch Johnson, 105 NE 25th Street, said he is the applicant. He said the proposal is to change the zoning of the property to LI. The long-term plan is to remodel the building to a contemporary storage property that is self-contained with conditioned space. Being allowed to do so will make the use more competitive and more compatible with customer needs. Every attempt will be made to integrate the local architecture as a way of being compatible.

A motion to close the public hearing was made by Commissioner Carlson. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Hamlin and it carried unanimously.

8. STUDY SESSION

A. St. Luke's Lutheran Church Annual Comprehensive Plan Amendment - Threshold Review

A motion to recommend initiation of the Comprehensive Plan amendment application for the 2015 Annual Comprehensive Plan work program, and to not expand the geographic scoping, was made by Commissioner Carlson. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Hamlin.

Commissioner Hamlin agreed that the policy that encourages affordable housing is fairly new, particularly in regard to religious institutions. He said for that reason he agrees that the significantly changed condition criterion is met by the application. He referred to the Holy Cross Comprehensive Plan amendment application a few years ago where the conclusion was that the decision criteria had not been met. Newport Way serves as a demarcation line between multifamily and single family, and Holy Cross lies inside the single family area, thus approving the application would have triggered a land use change. That is not the case with St. Luke's. The demarcation line between multifamily and single family is Bellevue Way, but the church property sits on the multifamily side. He said he would vote to move forward with the proposal without expanding the geographic scoping.

Commissioner Carlson agreed with Commissioner Hamlin. He said tackling the issue of affordable housing in Bellevue will require active participation on the part of non-profit organizations and churches. The St. Luke's application could well serve as a model for others to follow. Imagine Housing is a highly respected entity that will make sure it is done right, and the church has made every attempt to involve the neighbors.

Chair Laing echoed the comments of both Commissioners Carlson and Hamlin and agreed that the application meets the threshold criteria. He said he appreciated the thoughtful presentation by the applicant.

Commissioner deVadoss commented that only sustainable long-term approach to addressing affordable housing will require leadership of the kind showed by the applicant.

The motion carried unanimously.

B. Public Storage Annual Comprehensive Plan Amendment - Threshold Review

A motion to recommend initiation of the Comprehensive Plan amendment application for the 2015 Annual Comprehensive Plan work program, and to expand the geographic scoping to include the three properties to the north, was made by Commissioner Tebelius. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Hamlin.

Commissioner Tebelius commented that moving the application forward is appropriate in light of the Commission's previous discussions and the presentation made by staff.

Commissioner Hamlin concurred. He said there are clearly significantly changed conditions in the area, and the application meets the other decision criteria as well. He agreed the geographic scoping should be expanded.

Commissioner deVadoss said the application is very straightforward. He stressed the need to update the Richards Valley subarea plan.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Walter, Mr. Matz said the storage use is allowed in LI as well as GC.

Commissioner Tebelius voiced support for retaining as much light industrial land in the city as possible.

The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Matz said the Comprehensive Plan amendments will be taken before the Council on April 27. A final review public hearing before the Commission will be slated for May 13.

9. OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Inghram briefly reviewed with the Commission the list of upcoming agenda items. There was agreement to conduct a walking tour of the downtown on April 22.

10. DRAFT MINUTES REVIEW

A. January 28, 2015

A motion to approve the minutes with corrections was made by Commissioner Hamlin. The motion was seconded was by Commissioner deVadoss and it carried unanimously.

B. February 11, 2015

A motion to approve the minutes with corrections was made by Commissioner Tebelius. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Walter and it carried unanimously.

C. February 25, 2015

A motion to approve the minutes was made by Commissioner Tebelius. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Hamlin and it carried unanimously.

D. March 4, 2015

A motion to approve the minutes was made by Commissioner Hamlin. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Walter and it carried unanimously.

E. March 11, 2015

A motion to approve the minutes with corrections was made by Commissioner Hamlin. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Tebelius and it carried unanimously.

11. PUBLIC COMMENT - None

12. ADJOURN

A motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Hamlin. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Walter and it carried unanimously.

Chair Laing adjourned the meeting at 8:20 p.m.

Paul Inghram
Staff to the Planning Commission

6/24/2015
Date

Aaron Laing
Chair of the Planning Commission

6/24/15
Date

* Approved May 13, 2015