

CITY OF BELLEVUE  
BELLEVUE PLANNING COMMISSION  
MEETING MINUTES

September 7, 2005  
7:00 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall  
City Council Conference Room

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chair Bonincontri, Vice-Chair Mathews, Commissioners Bach, Lynde, Orrico, Robertson, Sheffels

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Kathleen Burgess, Mary Kate Berens, Heidi Bedwell,  
Department of Planning and Community Development

GUEST SPEAKERS: None

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:07 p.m. by Chair Bonincontri who presided.

2. ROLL CALL

Upon the call of the roll, all Commissioners were present.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was approved by consensus.

4. STAFF REPORTS – None

5. PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Paul Sanders, 2680 169<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE, spoke on behalf of the architectural control committee for Beaumont Division 1. He said the committee just became aware of the critical areas ordinance and is very concerned about the impact it will have. Beaumont Division 1 has been taking care of itself for many years and has always acted to preserve views for the homeowners. The development does have slopes that fall under the definitions included in the critical areas ordinance, and the proposed ordinance will preclude the topping of trees on those slopes that is necessary in order to preserve views of Lake Sammamish and the Cascade mountains. The ordinance is long, very detailed, and difficult to understand. It appears to require vegetation plans and replanting when trees and vegetation are removed. Beaumont Division 1 would like to be exempted from the critical areas ordinance; the architectural control committee should be allowed to make the decisions concerning the vegetation and the topping of trees in order to preserve views. Instead of providing a service to its citizens, the city appears to be blocking property rights that have been enjoyed for many years.

Mr. Charles Klinge, 14104 SE 46<sup>th</sup> Street, suggested that most Bellevue citizens believe the discussion of critical areas is focused on protecting wetlands and streams. The proposed ordinance, however, goes far beyond that. No citizen will likely step up and volunteer to have their backyards turned into native growth protection areas, to be stopped from remodeling their

homes in order to obtain a marginal benefit from a critical area, or to prohibit the protection of views by not allowing tree topping and trimming. The Commission needs to be reminded what the citizens want, not just what staff wants. He suggested that city ordinances should not be allowed to trump covenants, especially in light of the decision handed down in the Viking property case in which it was found that the Growth Management Act does not trump covenants. The destroying of valuable views by city ordinance could be interpreted to be a taking issue.

Mr. Robert Kaiser, a resident of Lake Crest Division 2, said he also serves on the architectural control committee. He said he purchased his property with a full understanding of what the covenants were. One of those covenants involves a prohibition on allowing trees to grow tall enough to block a neighbor's view, which is reasonable. The property owners in the development have all agreed to be bound by the covenants; no one would want anything else. The primary means of retaining the views has been the topping and trimming of trees over the years. There is language in the proposed critical areas ordinance that calls for allowing the reasonable use of private property, and that language should be cited in favor of allowing the topping of trees to preserve views in accord with the established covenants.

Mr. Van Landing, 2416 169<sup>th</sup> Place SE, noted that he also serves on the architectural control committee and as an officer of the homeowners association. He said his property borders Llewona Park and has wonderful views toward the Cascade mountains and Lake Sammamish. There are covenants in place that enforce the preservation of views among other things. The property owners do not want to be told by the city that critical areas will trump the long-established covenants. He said if the ordinance is approved without change, he will consider selling his home and moving elsewhere. The portions of the ordinance aimed at preserving Bellevue's natural resources should be adopted, but language changes are needed in order to preserve property rights and values.

Ms. Maxine Page, a resident of Beaumont Division 1, said the architectural control committee exists in part to preserve views, which have great value. Attorneys have reviewed the covenants and have concluded that they are valid. She said she cannot understand how the Planning Commission can act to take away the covenants the neighborhood abides by. The ordinance should be changed to allow for the preservation of views by trimming trees.

Mr. Tony Schuler, 4716 142<sup>nd</sup> Place SE, said he understands the interest of the city in preventing erosion and controlling drainage in ways that will keep hillsides stabilized. At the same time, passage of the critical areas ordinance should be viewed as an opportunity for the city to work in closer partnership with the citizens to find common sense solutions, giving the city what it needs while protecting the views property owners desire to maintain. The approach taken should not be one that will keep the citizens from even trying to talk to the city for fear that nothing they say will be agreed to, or for fear that the permitting requirements for a simple tree topping will be too onerous and expensive. There is no language in the proposed ordinance that speaks to the development of such partnerships.

Mr. Bill Nelson, 2604 168<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE, said he purchased his home in 1973 primarily because of the view it has. The short trees that were growing there then have over the years grown up and have had to be topped to retain the view. Several smaller trees and other vegetation have been planted to help control soil erosion without impinging on the views. He agreed that the city should work in partnership with its citizens in keeping the trees topped to preserve the views.

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

7. STUDY SESSION

A. Land Use Code Amendment  
– Critical Areas

Legal Planner Mary Kate Berens noted that the public comments received during the August break were included in the Commission packets along with staff responses. She commented that under the existing city code the removal of vegetation on steep slopes is prohibited regardless of what private covenants are in place. The city does work with property owners when there are hazardous trees that need to be removed, and works with property owners to develop a thinning and pruning plan that will not harm existing trees. The package of amendments collectively addressing critical areas does not change the city's position on covenants, but it does increase the city's flexibility to work with property owners to manage vegetation, particularly on steep slopes. The vegetation management plan provision was included in the proposed code specifically to address issues such as those voiced during Public Comments. The vegetation management plan allows for the removal of hazardous trees and allows for neighborhood associations, or individual property owners, to put together plans for their areas that involve periodic pruning and trimming of trees; the provision also allows for the removal of some trees, provided they are replaced with lower growing vegetation that will protect views while protecting slope stability and habitat.

Commissioner Orrico asked about tree topping, and Ms. Berens said under the current code topping is not generally allowed on steep slopes, though removal of hazard trees is allowed, and the city has recently started working with owners or groups on management plans that may allow pruning. Trees that are not topped or pruned properly can die, leaving slopes vulnerable. The city willingly will work with neighborhood associations and other groups interested in developing a vegetation plan. The vegetation management plan section of the proposed ordinance covers a number of circumstances. It allows for the removal of invasive vegetation without any permit; allows for the removal of hazardous trees based on the opinion of a certified arborist; allows for the removal of trees where there is disease or an insect infestation; allows for the removal of trees for fire safety reasons; permits routine maintenance in connection with allowed uses within a critical area; and permits select pruning and replacement of vegetation in neighborhoods that may be interested in views. In all cases, the impact of vegetation removal on habitat must be taken into account.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Orrico, Ms. Berens said the city does not enforce private covenants, though it does enforce restrictions on the face of a plat. The city is not party to private covenants and has no enforcement role. The city cannot issue permits for the removal of vegetation from critical areas because the current code does not allow it. The flexibility written into the proposed code will allow for it with a vegetation management plan. It is the city's position that it is not compelled by private covenants to issue permits for something that is not otherwise permitted by code.

Commissioner Lynde asked if an approved vegetation management plan will have to include the identification of every single tree that may one day need to be trimmed or pruned. Ms. Berens allowed that as written that would be required. Commissioner Lynde proposed crafting the language more broadly to avoid such onerous specificity. She suggested language highlighting trees that block views in violation of covenants, providing that any pruning activity is done in a way that will not kill the tree, and provided that any vegetation removed must be replaced with a lower growing species. Ms. Berens said that change could be made. Focusing on page 19 of 75 of the draft ordinance, Commissioner Lynde said in paragraph viii the word "characterization" should be used in place of "identification."

Commissioner Bach asked about the Viking case and Commissioner Orrico explained that the

case involved a neighborhood in Shoreline that had a racial restriction covenant coupled with a density covenant. A property owner sued to overturn both of the covenants. The state supreme court separated the two issues, overturned the racial covenant, and concluded that the Growth Management Hearings Board had exceeded its authority under the bright line rule with regard to the density covenant; they held that the density covenant is not contrary to the Growth Management Act. Ms. Berens said the Viking case does not address the issue of whether or not a city can issue a permit for an action that is in violation of its codes.

Commissioner Robertson asked how costly it is to hire a certified arborist to develop a vegetation management plan. Ms. Berens said she does not know. Commissioner Robertson said it is her understanding that trees can be topped without damaging their root systems and the stability of slopes. Ms. Berens agreed that it all depends on how the work is accomplished. She said staff had at one time considered allowing for the pruning of trees in critical areas if hand equipment is used, but the decision was made to have property owners come in and talk to the city first to discuss the options. That approach could still be incorporated.

Commissioner Robertson suggested that a property owner wanting to prune or top a tree should not have to incur the costs of developing a vegetation management plan. She proposed adding to the noxious species section on page 18 of the critical areas ordinance language something like “The trimming of trees is allowed provided that it is done without the use of heavy equipment and carried out in a manner that will preserve the tree.” Ms. Berens said the language could read “...in accordance with pruning specifications developed by the Director...” to avoid having to define in the code what the various terms mean. The city could develop a handout to indicate what kind of pruning and trimming is permitted and how it should be done. Commissioner Robertson concurred.

Ms. Berens asked if there should be a limit on the number of trees that can be pruned or trimmed, and Commissioner Robertson said provided the work is done according to the specifications developed by the Director, there should be no such limits. Ms. Berens said there could be some potential habitat impacts if too many trees in a given area are cut back.

Commissioner Mathews allowed that there is more at stake than simply preserving soil stability. Trees offer habitat to protected species and species of local importance. It should not be a difficult thing to identify in a vegetation management plan which trees are in need of trimming since the trees in question will be those blocking the views. There should also be professional input provided so the homeowners will know how to do it properly. Bellevue prides itself as a city in a park, and the wholesale removal or topping of trees does not fit with that image. Vegetation should be managed, and the city should bend over backwards to work with property owners and neighborhood associations to preserve views while at the same time preserving trees.

Commissioner Sheffels pointed out that for many who live in Bellevue, trees are their view. Those who do not live on view properties or on steep slopes will not want to see trees massacred by being topped. It will be very important to include in the ordinance standardized methods for trimming and pruning trees that will preserve the life of the trees, protect slopes, and preserve habitat. Improper trimming can make trees look horrible, and more often than not they will simply die as a result. Having a guide everyone must follow would be a very good idea indeed.

Commissioner Lynde said she lives in a neighborhood in which for many years there have been covenants in place which are aimed at preserving views by requiring the trimming and topping of trees. The trees that grow there have been topped repeatedly over the years; they are no longer beautiful, and in truth should never have been planted there in the first place when other species would not have grown as tall and would not have needed to be topped to preserve the views. The city should take the necessary steps to educate residents regarding the importance of

vegetation on steep slopes, but the code must include flexibility for the areas where there have not been big trees for many years.

Commissioner Mathews pointed out that the proposed ordinance language allows for the removal of certain trees provided they are replaced with species that will not grow as tall and need trimming. Those trees will still provide habitat functions without blocking views.

Chair Bonincontri commented that absent complete mapping it is not possible to know how much of any given subdivision involves steep slopes. Having a tree management plan for each subdivision would be a good idea, and the city should step up with assistance in developing the plans and doing a better job of mapping. Ms. Berens said the city has worked over the years with many neighborhood associations because under the current code there are restrictions on trimming and pruning trees. Accordingly, for many areas the city has a very good idea of what the conditions are.

Commissioner Robertson pointed out that the proposed critical areas ordinance includes restrictions for slopes between 15 and 40 percent if they are considered to be landslide hazards. A property owner with a slope of 20 percent may have to figure out if they have a critical area or not. The code language, as proposed, essentially means anyone with a slope of between 15 and 40 percent will have to hire a geotechnical engineer to determine if they have a landslide hazard situation. If they do, then they must develop a vegetation management plan in order to top their trees, all of which seems like it might be quite expensive.

Commissioner Orrico suggested that the city should have some trust in the ability of its citizens to be good stewards of the environment. Ordinance language that adds flexibility will be empty if the required approach is so onerous that property owners would rather just go around the law or have to spend a great deal of money to get to where they should have been able to go in the first place. She agreed with the suggestion offered by Commissioner Robertson to allow trimming and pruning.

There was agreement to modify the noxious species section of the code to read:

i. Noxious Species. The removal of the following vegetation with hand labor and hand-operated equipment from a critical area buffer, or from a [geologic hazard area critical area](#), is allowed without requiring a critical areas land use permit or a Vegetation Management Plan:

- (A) Invasive and noxious weeds;
- (B) English Ivy (*Hedera helix*);
- (C) Himalayan blackberry (*Rubus discolor*, *R. procerus*); and
- (D) Evergreen blackberry (*Rubus laciniatus*);

A clearing and grading permit, BCC Ch. 23.76 and SEPA review may be required.

It was further agreed to add two new subsections as follows:

vi. Select vegetation pruning. Pruning of existing trees and vegetation in a critical area buffer, or within a geologic hazard area critical area, with hand labor and hand-operated equipment in accordance with this subsection is allowed without requiring a critical areas land use permit or a Vegetation Management Plan. A clearing and grading permit, BCC Ch. 23.76, and SEPA review may be required. Such pruning shall be performed in

accordance with guidelines established by the Director, and may include pruning, crown thinning, windowing, limbing and other techniques approved by the Director in a manner that ensures continued survival of the vegetation.

In no event may a tree or vegetation which is an active nest site for a species of local importance be removed pursuant to this subsection.

vii. Select vegetation replacement. The Director may approve proposals for vegetation replacement in a critical area buffer, or within a [geologic hazard area critical area](#), pursuant to a Vegetation Management Plan. The Vegetation Management Plan shall satisfy the requirements of subsection v.B above, except that the following replaces subsection (8):

(8) Short and long-term management prescriptions, including identification of trees and vegetation to be removed, and restoration and revegetation plans with native species, including native species with a lower growth habit.

Trees and vegetation may not be removed pursuant to this subsection if removal would result in a significant impact to habitat associated with species of local importance, unless the impacted function can be replaced elsewhere within the management area subject to the plan. In no event may a tree or vegetation which is an active nest site for a species of local importance be removed pursuant to this subsection.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Mathews, Ms. Berens said the city could take enforcement action if a property owner elects to top or prune trees in a manner inconsistent with the code. The enforcement action most likely would involve the creation of a vegetation management plan and the replacement of any trees damaged as a result of the pruning.

Commissioner Lynde highlighted the need for the city to develop a template for the vegetation management plans. She said the issue should be mentioned in the transmittal memo as a critical part of the off-ramp approach.

Commissioner Sheffels asked if the Department of Parks and Community Services employs or contracts with a certified arborist whose professional services might be made available to homeowner associations to assist in developing vegetation management plans. Ms. Berens said the city does employ a certified arborist. There would be staffing issues involved, but his expertise could certainly be drawn on when vegetation management plans are submitted to the city for review and acceptance. It is possible the arborist could be tasked with working to develop template plans.

Ms. Berens highlighted the changes made to the ordinances since the last Commission study session in July, beginning with 20.25H.030.B where language was added to make sure modifications allowed by the city to critical areas with specific mitigation actions are recorded on title, and to make sure the city is allowed to enter a property to investigate the condition of the critical area. It was agreed to add the phrase “with reasonable notice.”

Ms. Berens said she revised the chart in 20.25H.035 under the heading “Habitat for Species of Local Importance” to change “Habitat species of local importance” to read “Habitat associated with species of local importance.”

The Commissioners were informed that throughout the report, starting with 20.25H.040, the specific provisions that will not be permitted to be modified with a critical areas report have been made clear. They include the density calculations, the uses allowed in critical areas, and the

provisions for coal mine hazards.

Ms. Berens said the allowed uses and activities chart under 20.25H.055.B has been substantially reorganized for purposes of clarification and ease of use. [Commissioner Robertson pointed out that the “Existing Landscape Maintenance” section of the chart should have a “sub 2” on it.](#)

Ms. Berens called attention to page 17 and noted that the draft ordinance previously included a provision for private non-motorized trails directed at recreational trails in multifamily developments. She said the revision to the section makes it clear that single family property owners are also allowed access to their critical areas with soft-surface trails.

Ms. Berens noted that a reference to subsection B was added to paragraph (v) on page 20. She commented that many of the provisions about existing primary structures were removed because of the change to draw the buffer boundary around the footprint.

The Commissioners were informed that a definition of “stream” was added to 20.25H.075 to make it clear that manmade ditches are not included unless they have salmonids or unless they connect natural streams. Commissioner Robertson proposed revising paragraph (A) to read “An aquatic area where surface water produces a channel, not including a wholly artificial channel, unless the artificial channel is....”

Ms. Berens indicated that language was added to 20.25H.075.C.1.e. She said under the current ordinance there is a way for specific property owners to get the setback on their streams modified through a site-specific study. Two property owners have applied for such a change, and if their requests are completed before the new ordinance goes into effect the site-specific determined setbacks will continue to apply to their properties. The new language is intended to make that clear.

With regard to 20.25H.080.B, Ms. Berens said there is an assumption under the current code that open streams cannot be piped and rerouted. Language was added to the ordinance to clarify the circumstances under which the practice might be considered. In all such cases, a critical areas report may be required and any impacts must be mitigated.

Ms. Berens pointed out that the buffer mitigation ratio shown in 20.25H.085.B was changed from 2:1 to 1:1 which is in line with what other jurisdictions require.

Ms. Berens said the new language added to 20.25H.090 allows for the potential that currently piped streams may one day be reopened. Under the current approach, there is no setback required for piped streams. Where a critical areas report determines that there would be no value to reopening a piped stream, the language allows for the elimination of the required setback. If it is feasible to reopen a piped stream, the critical areas report must address the impacts of precluding the opportunity by eliminating the setback.

With regard to 20.25H.140, the Commissioners were reminded of the proposal to eliminate the stream and wetland minimums that apply even with a critical areas report in favor of meeting the standards. Ms. Berens said in order to be consistent the language disallowing modification on steep slopes with more than 20 feet of rise should be eliminated as well if supported by a critical areas report.

Ms. Berens proposed revising 20.25H.200.A.1.b.ii to read “Density shall not exceed the density allowed under LUC 20.25H.045, and shall in no event be less than two units.” The Commissioners concurred.

Ms. Berens allowed that she will need to proofread the proposed critical areas ordinance to make sure all of the paragraph numbers and cross-references are correct.

Turning to the Land Use Code amendments, Ms. Berens commented that a change still needs to be made to the cross-reference in 20.50.012, the definition of “Buildable Area.” A bold heading for the definition of Wetlands in 20.50.054 also needs to be added.

Ms. Berens said a couple of changes needed to be made to the proposed shorelines ordinance. In the public hearing draft there are rigid size limits on docks associated with marinas; those limits are not reasonable. Many of the specific dimensional requirements for marinas have been eliminated. The requirements for grading and materials have been retained. The draft also limits instances in which new bulkheads can be created to protect existing structures and land area. Ms. Berens said she added to the list protections for existing parks uses and areas in addition to structures. Such bulkheads are still subject to the same hierarchy that puts natural stabilization approaches at the top.

Commissioner Robertson expressed concern about the provision in 20.25H.120 that sets forth the requirements for landslide areas. She said the proposal represents the first time the city has attempted to regulate slopes of less than 40 percent. Ms. Berens responded that the current approach regulates slopes between 15 and 40 percent that have colluvial deposits, something that can only be determined by taking bore samples. The best available science, however, indicates that that is not necessarily the only indicator of a landslide hazard. The current code also includes disturbance limits for properties with slopes of between 15 and 40 percent. The proposed code language loosens the city’s control over slopes within that range, though some work will still need to be done to determine if a landslide hazard exists.

Commissioner Robertson said her concern is that the average person seeking a permit for his or her property cannot know without hiring a geotechnical engineer if they have a landslide issue to contend with on their slope of between 15 and 40 percent. The city does not have all such areas fully mapped, and that puts the burden on the shoulders of the property owners to prove they are not in a critical area. During the development of the ordinance, staff made the comment that there are hardly ever landslides that occur on slopes of less than 40 percent, which leads to questions regarding the need for the proposed regulations.

Ms. Berens answered that 20.25H.120 outlines the indicators of landslide hazard areas as established by the best available science. She suggested that the transmittal memo to the Council could highlight the need for better mapping. Another alternative would be to eliminate slopes between 15 and 40 percent as critical areas, but staff believes there is a safety issue involved that must be addressed.

Reading a note she received from Mr. Klinge in the audience, Commissioner Robertson said his suggestion was to consider exempting existing single family homes from the requirement and

accepting landscape modifications. Ms. Berens said that essentially has been done by the determination to draw the buffer boundary around the footprint of existing residential structures. Landscape modifications have been similarly exempted to the extent they are in the buffer.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Robertson regarding the nonconforming uses listed under 20.25H.065, Ms. Berens said the entire section refers to accessory structures because the buffer boundary lines will be drawn around existing structures. The only structures that will be made nonconforming by the proposed language are those that are not primary structures. She agreed that the point should be clarified.

Commissioner Robertson asked what the average cost is for producing a critical areas report. Associate Planner Heidi Bedwell said a wetlands report can run between \$1500 and \$3000 depending on the scale of the site. Commissioner Lynde said the hourly rate for geotechnical experts is between \$65 and \$145.

Commissioner Robertson reiterated her desire to see revised the language regarding critical areas on slopes between 15 and 40 percent, or to include in the transmittal memo a strong call for complete mapping. Commissioner Lynde suggested that it is not unreasonable to require anyone choosing to purchase a property with a steep slope to obtain a geotechnical report proving the site is not a landslide hazard before being allowed to expand the developed area into the buffer area. While there are property rights issues involved, there is also a personal responsibility issue.

Ms. Berens noted that a new section had been added to the draft transmittal memo in which the issue of balance between city regulations and the city program alternative is reflected.

Commissioner Orrico proposed revising the language of the first paragraph on page 4 of the memo to emphasize the fact that the proposed approach allows for greater flexibility, within the bounds of best available science. Ms. Berens said she will move the idea into the first section of the memo since it is one of the founding principles.

Commissioner Sheffels pointed out that the memo refers in one place to Bellevue's population as being 120,000, and in another place the population is listed as 117,000. She suggested that the correct number should be used consistently.

Chair Bonincontri referred to page 4 of the memo and highlighted the need to update other codes, including the storm water code, and the possibility of the city investing in projects that will mitigate impacts such as erosion and water quality that have resulted from previous development activity.

Commissioner Lynde suggested the memo should highlight the fact that the changes made to the impervious surface requirements were the result of citizens commenting that those with critical areas should not be asked to bear the full burden of mitigation.

The Commissioners offered a few grammatical revisions to the memo.

Motion to approve the ordinance and code amendments as revised and forward them to the City Council was made by Commissioner Lynde. Second was by Commissioner Bach.

Commissioner Orrico said the Commission listened very carefully to the comments offered by the critical areas CAC and by the citizens who attended the open houses and Commission meetings. She said the regulations recognize that Bellevue is a developed city and include appropriate accommodations. The three-prong approach of education, flexibility and mitigation strikes the right balance for continuing proper stewardship of the environment in the city.

Chair Bonincontri concurred. She reiterated the need to stress in the transmittal memo to the Council the need for an education component and better mapping to make the overall approach work more effectively.

Commissioner Mathews said the package gives citizens more and better tools.

Commissioner Lynde said the recommendation that came out of the critical areas CAC represented a true compromise of vision and ideals.

Commissioner Robertson said her no vote on the motion will be based solely on the unfair burden the approach places on the shoulders of the owners of properties with slopes of between 15 and 40 percent. She noted, however, that overall the package is very good and is something the Commission should be proud of.

The motion carried 6-1, with Commissioner Robertson voting no.

Ms. Berens said the package will be presented to the City Council on October 3.

Commissioner Lynde thanked all the staff who put months of time and effort into the study and who will continue to do so in the months to come.

**\*\*BREAK\*\***

B. Comprehensive Plan Amendment  
– Crossroads Center Plan

Ms. Burgess informed the Commission that the Council included in the 2005 budget funding for the Crossroads Center Plan and in January approved the scope and public involvement program. In May the plan was added to the 2005 package of Comprehensive Plan amendments. A series of study sessions and community meetings are slated for the fall months; the hope is that the plan can be completed by the end of the year, along with any necessary Crossroads subarea policy revisions for adoption in early 2006.

Ms. Burgess said the primary study area incorporates the Crossroads Shopping Center and some of the surrounding properties; land use changes will be considered for the primary study area

only. The secondary study area is larger than the primary study area and is included for the purpose of improving pedestrian connections to the commercial areas and transit. All of the target area is currently designated Community Business (CB).

In the 1988 Crossroads subarea plan there was an emphasis placed on revitalizing the shopping center. That was because at that time the shopping center was experiencing a decline and many local residents were expressing concerns. The shopping center came under new ownership in the early 1990s and began a process of being revitalized; it is currently considered the town center of East Bellevue; some call the area Uptown Bellevue.

Associate Planner Steve Cohn said the current owner of the Crossroads Shopping Center approached staff wanting to begin the process of looking into the future and the next round of improvements. Shopping centers must be updated periodically to keep them interesting and to keep up with changing economics. Staff has been working with the property owner and with a the consulting firm GGLO to develop options for consideration. Those options will be unveiled at the community meeting on September 13.

Ms. Burgess said the purpose of the Crossroads Center Plan is to create a long-term vision that will: explore the possibility of new uses and updated urban design to create a rich shopping, working, recreation and living environment; adapt the shopping areas to meet the changing needs of the marketplace and the community; create new and strengthen existing community gathering places; and improve the connections that link the community, the adjacent Crossroads Park and Crossroads Community Center, commercial areas and transit stops.

Since the beginning of the year, staff and the consultant has been working to involve the community in the project. There have been meetings with all of the major property owners to hear their views; there have been informal meetings with community leaders who are interested in the Crossroads area; there have been meetings in the target area with the Crossroads Community Center Advisory Board, the Latino Leadership Forum, the members of an ESL class and an advanced ESL or TalkTime class, the Tam O'Shanter Community Club, and the Sammamish High School Diversity Leadership Conference. The conversations were lively and were focused on how people currently use the area, what they like and do not like about it, and what they would like to see in the future. A survey questionnaire was developed and filled out by some 90 participants.

The people who frequent the Crossroads shopping areas like the area and go there often. The ideas tossed around for what the area should look like in the future include more shopping opportunities, more recreation, and more children's activities. The public involvement program to date has also included articles in *Neighborhood News* and *It's Your City*, as well as a webpage and displays at the Crossroads Mini City Hall. In addition, a paid advertisement has been purchased and will run in the Sunday, September 11, edition of the *King County Journal*.

Ms. Burgess said the Councilmembers have been invited to attend the September 13 community meeting to be held at the Crossroads Shopping Center. She encouraged the Commissioners to attend as well. The open house will run from 4:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m., and the presentations will

begin at 5:30 p.m. in the community room. The shopping center owner will attend and give a presentation, and the attendees will be engaged in a discussion about the three alternatives.

Mr. Cohn shared with the Commissioners some of the materials that will be presented at the open house.

Ms. Burgess said at the Commission's meeting on September 21 there will be a discussion regarding the input received at the community meeting. The issue is on the Commission's agenda again October 12 prior to the second community meeting, which is tentatively scheduled for October 18 or 19. The preferred alternative should be ready for presentation to the Commission in mid October. The public hearing will occur in November in conjunction with all of the 2005 Comprehensive Plan amendments.

There was consensus in favor of scheduling the second community meeting for October 19.

Commissioner Bach asked how many different property owners there are for the properties within the study area. Mr. Cohn said there are four major owners and several minor owners within the primary study area.

Chair Bonincontri asked what remodeling work is currently under way at the Crossroads Community Center. Ms. Burgess said the facility is the most heavily used community center in the city. A big meeting room is being added along with additional multipurpose use rooms. The center will be closed until after the first of the year.

8. NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Berens reported that she has agreed to take on a new job as Deputy City Attorney. She said a recruiting process is already under way to fill the legal planner position she will be vacating.

9. OLD BUSINESS – None

10. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. June 1, 2005

Commissioner Bach noted he was shown as being present at the meeting when in fact he was absent.

Motion to approve the minutes as amended was made by Commissioner Robertson. Second was by Commissioner Orrico and the motion carried without dissent; Commissioners Bach and Lynde abstained.

B. July 6, 2005

Motion to approve the minutes as submitted was made by Commissioner Lynde. Second was by Commissioner Bach and the motion carried without dissent; Commissioner Robertson abstained.

C. July 20, 2005

Motion to approve the minutes as submitted was made by Commissioner Bach. Second was by Commissioner Orrico and the motion carried without dissent; Commissioners Robertson and Sheffels abstained.

D. July 27, 2005

Motion to approve the minutes as submitted was made by Commissioner Robertson. Second was by Commissioner Bach and the motion carried without dissent; Commissioners Lynde and Sheffels abstained.

11. PUBLIC COMMENT – None

12. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Bonincontri adjourned the meeting at 10:03 p.m.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Staff to the Planning Commission

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chair to the Planning Commission

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date