

City of Lake Forest Park - Planning Commission meeting with Council Committee of the Whole
Meeting Notes: July 10, 2018
17425 Ballinger Way NE—Council Chambers

Planning Commissioners present: Chair Jon Lebo; Richard Saunders; Steve Morris; Ira Gross; Mark Withers; Maddy Runburg (via Skype); TJ Fudge

Councilmembers Present: Deputy Mayor Catherine Stanford; Mark Phillips; John Resha; Semra Riddle; John Wright

Staff and others present: Phillip Hill, City Administrator; Steve Bennett, Planning Director; Evelyn Jahed, City Clerk; Lauren Hoerr, Assistant Planner; Mandi Roberts, Otak Consultants; DJ Baxter, SOJ Consultants

Members of the Public: Mike Dee, resident; Gail Gross, resident; Nancy Bradburn-Johnson, resident; Brian L. Johnson, resident; Ron Ricker, resident; Don Fiene, resident; Jack Tonkin, resident; John Foy, resident

Planning Commissioners absent: Vice-Chair Joel Paisner; Rachael Katz

Call to order: 7:03 PM

Deputy Mayor Catherine Stanford called the meeting to order and noted that there would be no public comment or discussion of items other than the Town Center Vision.

New Business: Joint Discussion by the Council Committee of the Whole and Planning Commission Regarding Implementation of Town Center Vision

Introductions

Councilmembers and Planning Commissioners introduced themselves, along with the consultants present. Catherine Stanford summarized the purpose of the meeting and the agenda.

Proposed Process Ahead for the Town Center

Consultant Roberts summarized the next steps for the Town Center and how the Planning Commission will be involved. A non-project environmental impact statement (EIS) will be conducted to determine what impacts need to be mitigated to facilitate future development in the Town Center. Consultant Roberts went on to layout the objectives for the next several meetings.

The objective of the July 24th Special Planning Commission Meeting will be to review current regulatory frameworks applicable to Town Center, potential topics for revisions to the Zoning Code, and discussion of the non-project EIS.

The objective of the August 14th Regular Planning Commission Meeting will be to draft potential redevelopment concepts for Town Center (based on Merlone Geier plans), review potential options for Sound Transit facilities, to look at ways to transform these concepts and options into alternatives for analysis in the non-project EIS and to inform Zoning Code amendments/revisions.

The objective of the August 28th Joint Meeting of Planning Commission and the Council Committee of the Whole will be to review redevelopment alternatives under analysis, outline the zoning code amendments/revisions, and plan the October community event.

The objective of the September 11th regular Planning Commission meeting will be to review the first draft of Zoning Code amendments/revisions.

Councilmember Phillips and Councilmember Wright expressed their eagerness for Merlone Geier to coordinate with Otak to have some idea of next steps available.

1 Update on Sound Transit BRT Project and Process

2 DJ Baxter from S.O.J., a consultant representing the City, stated that the goal is to work closely with Sound
3 Transit to ensure they keep the goals of Lake Forest Park residents in mind that have been expressed through
4 the Town Center Vision as they move forward. Meetings with Sound Transit have been encouraging and they
5 recognize the benefit of working together closely with all stakeholders.

6
7 Deputy Mayor Stanford said that Consultant Baxter and S.O.J are helping facilitate communication between
8 all parties.

9
10 Councilmember Kassover said that, in the Town Center Vision, we've stated that we encourage public private
11 partnership. Does Sound Transit's new TOD provisions support that? Mr. Baxter said it does.

12
13 Councilmember Wright asked about the ability for Sound Transit to add other amenities besides the parking
14 garage. Consultant Baxter said that he is not sure they have enough room in their public.

15
16 Commissioner Withers asked what degree of certainty is there that Sound Transit will place garage here. Mr.
17 Baxter said that Sound Transit will evaluate all options this summer and fall, and then at the end they will
18 determine what site is best. In the representative project publicized in the bond was showing the garage being
19 here at Town Center. Ms. Roberts said that even if the Sound Transit garage is not sited here, there will likely
20 be some type of parking structure added in the future at some point.

21
22 Chair Lebo announced to the public that he is an employee of Sound Transit but his position works on
23 construction in Bellevue and he does not think that would be a conflict of interest but would be willing to
24 excuse himself if the Council thinks that is best.

25
26 Update on Merlone Geier's Consideration of Potential Redevelopment Opportunities

27 Mr. Baxter provided an update on how the meetings were going between Merlone Geier and the City.
28 Merlone Geier conducted its own outreach process. Merlone Geier is going to great lengths to respond to the
29 input from the community in terms of approaching different ways to invest in the Town Center.

30
31 Richard Saunders asked if Merlone Geier's plans are tied to the plans for the Sound Transit garage. James
32 Gwilliams, Vice President of Development for Merlone Geier, answered that the Sound Transit garage was a
33 catalyst for development and bringing traffic to the Town Center. They understand from the community that
34 there are shortcomings in the current Town Center and they will be evaluating that feedback and doing more
35 outreach to help people see Merlone Geier's input into the process. Merlone Geier works on a 10 year
36 horizon based on the lease timelines of the tenants.

37
38 Councilmember Kassover asked about other Merlone Geier properties and if any of them have seen or been
39 through something similar related to transit. He clarified that there are 33 other properties in the region and
40 that other sites have not had something like this. Lynwood properties and Federal Way properties near transit
41 centers that he also works on and he is in communication with Sound Transit on various issues there.

42
43 Planning Commission Responsibilities

44 Deputy Mayor Stanford said that she hoped that some of the Commissioners were able to watch the Short
45 Course videos. Mandi Roberts summarized the general responsibilities of Planning Commissioners. The
46 importance of the Appearance of Fairness doctrine in the Planning Commission's role to represent the views
47 of the community as a whole. It's important to use the Town Center Vision as a touchstone because we've
48 received a lot of public feedback.

49
50 Deputy Mayor Stanford emphasized that the Planning Commissioner's role is very important in this
51 upcoming project.

1
2 City Council Role

3 The Town Center Vision goals and policies will be correlated with those that are in the Comprehensive Plan.
4 The City Council will be able to review these goals and policies and capital facilities planning as well as any
5 feedback from the Planning Commission. Capital facility planning will be addressed through the EIS process
6 by helping outside agencies that provide school services, and other such public services become aware of
7 future development.
8

9 Councilmember Resha asked whether the EIS will address the impacts of development that is allowable
10 under the current code about the Town Center. Ms. Roberts responded that it will look at the net impacts,
11 not starting from a blank slate.
12

13 Councilmember Kassover wanted to clarify role of City Council during the review of three alternatives in
14 August joint meeting. Ms. Roberts explained three alternatives include no action and two redevelopment
15 scenarios (moderate and a full-build out). The moderate scenario may show us the level of development that
16 would happen in ten years. Build-out may show the level of development that would happen in twenty years.
17 That is why it is important to work with Merlone Geier to ensure the alternatives are realistic.
18

19 In response to a question about housing types from Councilmember Kassover, Deputy Mayor Stanford
20 stated that the RCWs really emphasize that the Planning Commission should bring recommendations to the
21 table. It is the role of the liaison to make sure that the Commission and Council is on the same page.
22 Councilmember Resha suggested that the Commission check in with the Council sooner rather than later to
23 ensure they are both on the same page.
24

25 Chair Lebo said that hearing a wide range of opinions from Council is helpful and that implementing the
26 Town Center involve a lot of change that could be perceived as can either be positive or negative, so the
27 Commission would benefit from hearing Council comments.
28

29 Councilmember Phillips asked if the Zoning Code would change if there is a desire for housing. Planning
30 Director Bennett clarified that housing is currently allowed in the Town Center. There is currently a
31 maximum set at 250 units which should be evaluated as to whether that still makes sense. He also clarified
32 that text amendments to the code for the Town Center just require a non-project SEPA action.
33

34 Commissioner Saunders echoed Chair Lebo's request for early feedback from Council regarding the goals and
35 policies for the Town Center.
36

37 Chair Lebo asked Ms. Roberts about the typology of buildings for mixed use that are seen in places like
38 Bothell and South Lake Union. Ms. Roberts responded that the studies would look at what kind of densities
39 would be necessary to support a stronger commercial center. Five-over-two construction is prevalent in these
40 areas and usually involves two stories commercial/retail with five stories of residential above. Building
41 typology would be addressed through the code revisions and the design guidelines. Deputy Mayor Stanford
42 said that, with regard to design guidelines, the Council worked really hard on the Southern Gateway design
43 guidelines and they have been successful. Ms. Roberts emphasized the importance of having high standards
44 and be consistent but do not be so prescriptive that it is not realistic from a development perspective.
45

46 City Council Timeline

47 Deputy Mayor Stanford emphasized that it is important that we meet the deadlines that are outlined so that if
48 more meetings are necessary, we will have the flexible add additional meetings. Ms. Roberts said we want to
49 make sure our code is ready for their development process.
50

51 Deputy Mayor Stanford also mentioned the importance of providing the community with News Flashes as
52 the joint meetings take place with updates.

1
2 Deputy Mayor Stanford reminded the group of the August 28th joint meeting and Chair Lebo reminded
3 Commissioners that the next Planning Commission meeting would be on July 24th.
4

5 Deputy Mayor Stanford adjourned the meeting at 8:18 PM
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9 APPROVED:
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11 _____
12 Jon Lebo, Chair