

SULTAN PLANNING BOARD AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

ITEM NO: D-2

DATE: February 3, 2009

SUBJECT: Design Review Board
Sultan Municipal Code Chapter 2.20

CONTACT PERSON: Robert Martin, Community Development Director

ISSUE:

Vacancy of Design Review Board positions. Discussion of Planning Board's potential role in Design Review Board Function.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the Planning Board consider the above options and any others that arise, and direct Staff concerning future Planning Board involvement in the Design Review Board functions.

DISCUSSION:

The Sultan Municipal Code (SMC) at Chapter 2.20 provides for a Design Review Board to review development in the Urban Center Zone, the Highway-Oriented Development Zone, and the Economic Development Zone.

The purpose of the Design Review Board is provided by SMC Section 2.20.050 (See Attachment A for full text of SMC 2.20). In summary the function is to assure that development within the zones listed above meets the standards of the City of Sultan Urban Design Standards.

Members are appointed by the Mayor in similar fashion to the appointment process for Planning Board Members. The Code at 2.20.010 calls for one member of the Design Review Board to be a downtown business owner. Desired qualifications include expertise in fields such as architecture, landscape architecture, graphic design, history, and similar areas of interest.

The Design Review Board has been infrequently assembled due to low levels of activity in the zones where the process is applied. For this and other reasons, the Design Review Board is inactive, and all members have resigned.

The current inactive status of the Board could potentially hinder timely and appropriate action on an application for development in one of the applicable zones. If the Design Review Board function is continued, it is crucial that it be in a configuration that allows for prompt assembly of the Board and completion of reviews and recommendations within appropriate time lines.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Make a concerted effort to fill vacancies on the Design Review Board and attempt to keep the Board involved whether or not there are development applications that are under its jurisdiction.
2. Amend the SMC at Chapter 2.20 and other locations as appropriate to abolish the Design Review Board. This would be a relatively easy Code Amendment procedure from a technical standpoint. Community perception may be that the City no longer cares about the design and aesthetic issues of Community Development. Design Standards can be addressed by Staff as a normal part of the development application, but the lack of citizen involvement can be seen as an issue when the Community's appearance is involved.
3. Vest responsibilities of the Design Review Board in a group partially or wholly made up of Planning Board Members. Staff believes that this option would work best if two or three members of the Planning Board would also be appointed to the Design Review Board function. One additional person from the Community with architectural or similar background could be appointed to provide that perspective.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment A: Sultan Municipal Code Chapter 2.20, Design Review Board and Process