

## CITY OF SULTAN JOINT COUNCIL AND PLANING BOARD MEETING – January 19, 2010

The joint Council and Planning Board meeting of the Sultan City Council was called to order in the Sultan Community Center by Mayor Eslick. Councilmembers present: Pinson, Wiediger, Slawson, Flower, Beeler, Blair and Davenport-Smith

Planning Board present: Chair Linth; Knox, Knuckey and Harris

Staff: Laura Koenig, Bob Martin, Deborah Knight, Connie Dunn and Donna Murphy

### **PLANNING BOARD COMMENTS**

**Knuckey:** Looks forward to a great and progressive new year. Thanks for opportunity to serve.

### **COUNCILMEMBER COMMENTS**

**Beeler:** Is glad to see Deborah Knight, City Administrator, in charge of the comprehensive plan. It should be done right this time.

**Blair:** Advised that she is working on a planning board handbook for new members. The goal is to produce a document to help citizens understand the planning process.

**Mayor Eslick:** Thanked Councilmember Blair for taking on the job of the planning handbook.

### **ACTION ITEMS:**

**Minute Approval:** On a motion by Planning Board member Knox, seconded by Planning Board member Knuckey, the minutes of the January 5, 2010 meeting were approved as presented. All ayes.

### **DISCUSSION ITEMS:**

#### **Update on Permit Streamlining:**

Kurt Latimore provided a presentation on status of Council-mandated permit streamlining and integration of permit intake into existing financial management system (Springbrook). The Council adopted goals for 2009 that included a significant direction to staff to pursue simplification/clarification of the land use permit process, and a determination of the adaptability of the city's main financial management program (Springbrook) to the task of taking in application fees for land use projects. This project was directed and funded by the Council to provide better customer service, (ie. understandable applications, efficient application intake, on-line application tracking, faster permit review, and better records access) to individual citizens and developers doing business in the community. Staff has pursued this project as a major effort throughout 2009.

The project is essentially complete. The status of project components is as follows:

1. Filing System for staff and customer access to land use and related records: Complete
2. Digital permit tracking system for staff and customer on-line access to current project status: Complete
3. Development of application packets for each application type with customer assistance components such as sample site plans and project descriptions. Complete
4. Front counter application intake system based on project-specific checklists allowing immediate acceptance and issuance of certain application types, and certainty in resubmittal if required. Complete
5. Affirmative determination that Springbrook is capable of handling land use fee intake and direct entry of land use fees into financial management system. Complete
6. Using Springbrook Permit Module to take fees directly into the finance management computer system and to process the application through to completion. 90% Complete

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7. Full integration and public access to new application packets in hard copy and on-line (City's website access) formats. 80% Complete, 100% by January 31, 2010.

Samples packets for different types of permits were submitted for review. The checklists are based on those used by Snohomish County.

Brief discussion was held regarding the types of permits; processing and permit tracking and on line access to permit tracking.

**Planning Board Roles:**

The issue is to review and discuss the Planning Board roles, functions, and procedures. For the last few months, the Board has discussed and searched for specifics on its role and responsibilities. The Board has expressed an interest in further definition of the roles of the Board, Council, staff, and the public in the planning process at this joint meeting with the City Council. The Board is seeking guidance from the Council as to how it should proceed to define its role and responsibilities.

**Planning Board Comments:**

Frank Linth: Advised he was stepping down as chair to address the boards. The city repealed the prior code regarding Planning Commissions and rewrote it to create a Planning Board. They have a well qualified group on the Board who want to do a good job for the community. They are struggling to define their roles and responsibilities and do not always agree with staff. This has caused friction between the Board and staff. The Board would like to define the relationship between the Board, the Council and staff. The consensus of the Board is they are the principal recommending body for land use, the comp plan and policy. They want to be involved in outreach to the community and have the public know who is on the Board. The Board also needs procedures and bi-laws so they know how to operate and there is consistency when staff and Board members change. They would also like to work independently and set their own work plan.

Bob Knuckey: He is a new board member and has been in construction his entire life. He was shocked over the lack of direction for the board. He did not receive a copy of the comp plan for three months. The Board needs more information and the code needs to be clear so they have direction on their jobs.

Jerry Knox: His background is in management of large multi organizations and he found the key to success was to establish credibility. An organization needs a clear understanding of what is expected of them and the proper guidelines to produce results. There is a lack of knowledge and the Board is in a learning curve. They want to benefit the community and establish that they are a creditable board. The comp plan is a large task that is very tedious but the outcome will be a long term benefit to the community. The Board can do the job and they are not looking for others to write bi laws and procedures for them. They want to be able to make recommendations to the council and have the Council have the confidence the Board is doing a good job. Staff understood they want a handbook and the Board understood they wanted procedures. The best way for the Board to learn is to immerse themselves in writing the rules and handbooks.

Harris: The role of the board is not to run the staff or vice versa. They are coming up with guidelines and rules for the board. Not looking to do anything different, trying to work together.

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### Council Comments:

Flower: There were frictions between the last planning board and they became dysfunctional. Building creditability takes time and the last commission had none. This board is going in the right direction to help build creditability. Agrees they are capable of writing procedures and he would look forward to reviewing the work. In the future the board recommendations will carry weight.

Slawson: He did not receive books to help do his job but he asked for the information. The current code and some bi-laws would help the Board with their job.

Blair: The Planning Board members can by code adopt their own rules and regulations. Those rules are not in the code due to the process to change the code. The board should look at adopting by-laws and procedures. They would also benefit from a handbook and she is willing to help put the handbook together. The role of the Board is to research issues, hold public hearings on code issues and the comp plan. The role of the Board is to understand the issue at hand and the role of the chair is to keep the meeting on track and monitor the work plan. The feedback she hears from community is that this board has creditability and they are not associated with the prior board.

Pinson: Ask the Board to be specific on what lack of authority they have. The code seems to do a good job of defining roles and the RCW is clear.

Beeler: Amending the code is not what the Council is looking to do and the process to change the code is time consuming. Ask if the Board is confused about what they are doing or are they looking to provide information to new members. Do other cities have a manual or book they can use?

### Discussion:

Discussion was held on the need to adopt procedures and by-laws; the role of the Planning Board; development of handbook and guidelines; prior issues with the Planning Commission; the need for public outreach on planning issues; the relationship between the Planning Board and staff; the role the Planning Board wants to take in researching issues and the need for better communication between all the parties.

The consensus of the Council was to leave Title 2.17 as it is and have the Planning Board write procedures and bylaws to help them function. The creation of a Handbook is a great idea.

### **Planning Board Work Plan 2010-11:**

In September of 2008, the Board adopted a Prioritized Work Topic List. The list has been reviewed and periodically items have been added by Board or Council direction since September 2008.

The Board chose to present the list in prioritized fashion to help guide scheduling of immediate and or critical projects first.

The Board has made great progress in the 14 months since adoption of the Task List.

The next tasks of significant size are Long Term – High Priority:

- Long Term – High Priority Task 1: Revision of the Zoning Code, Title 16 and Other Land Use Code, Title 21; and

- Long Term – High Priority Task 2: 2011 Comprehensive Plan Update

In addition to these originally scheduled tasks, the Board and Council have added two specific tasks which are under way at this time:

- Short Term – High Priority Task 6: Removal of Accessory Dwelling Unit provisions from SMC Title 16; and
- Mid Term – Mid Priority Task 1: Removal of Planned Unit Development provisions from Title 16, and replacement with a Lot Averaging provision.

The Council requested the Planning Board provide periodic updates on the work plan to make sure the board is not overwhelmed with too much work while they are working on the comp plan.

**Comprehensive Plan Update:**

The issue before the city council and planning board is to review the city's progress in updating the 2004 comprehensive plan (Plan) as required by state law and direct staff to areas of concern.

There are two parts to the discussion – Is the process to update the Plan working and how to address issues where there isn't consensus?

The city is about half-way through Phase II (Drafting Plan Policies) of the 2011 comprehensive plan update. Phase III (Existing Conditions and Trends) has just started with approval of contracts with RH2 and PMC. The city will issue a request of qualifications (RFQ) for the remaining technical support in February.

This is an opportunity for the council and planning board to assess progress and make changes to the city's approach.

Discussion was held regarding the Planning Boards desire to take more leadership role in the process and they did that at the last meeting; staff responsibility for written changes to the goals and policies; role of the Council in the process; knowledge of legal requirements for the update process; methods to increase community input and ways to provide an outreach program.

**Stop the clock:** On a motion by Planning Board member Knuckey, seconded by Planning Board member Harris the clock was stopped at 10:00 PM. All ayes

**SUMMARY:**

There will be an additional outreach programs for the comprehensive plan. In regard to the Planning Board roles – SMC 2.17 does not need to be change; bylaws will be drafted by the board; and a planning board handbook will be constructed by the board with help from Councilmember Blair.

**Adjournment:** On a motion by Planning Board member Harris, seconded by Planning Board member Knuckey, the meeting adjourned at 10:15 PM. All ayes.

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Frank Linth, Chair

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Carolyn Eslick, Mayor

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Laura J. Koenig, City Clerk