Planning Commission Minutes

November 16, 2017

City Hall Council Chambers

CALL TO ORDER
The regular meeting of the Planning Commission was called to order at 6:35 p.m. by Chair Dimmett.

MEMBERS PRESENT
Chele Dimmett, Jennifer Gilbert-Smith, Jonathan Ingram, Paul Max, David Caudle, Elizabeth Porter, and Murray Williams

MEMBERS ABSENT- None

STAFF PRESENT
Richard Hart, Community Development Director
Ann Mueller, Senior Planner
Kelly Thompson, Planning Commission Secretary

APPROVAL OF MINUTES AND AGENDA

C1. Commissioner Max moved and Commissioner Porter seconded to approve the November 2, 2017 minutes and meeting agenda for November 16, 2017. Motion carried 7-0.

CITIZEN COMMENTS - None

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Final Discussion and Recommendation on the 2018 Work Program
Community Development Director, Richard Hart shared that staff has incorporated feedback from the Planning Commission provided at the November 2, 2017 meeting, adjusted some of the hours allocated to tasks, and the order of priorities.

A supplemental memo has been provided to the Planning Commission regarding two additional proposed work plan items.

The first item is a proposal to amend the code to provide bicycle amenities within multi-family developments. There is a lack of current park facilities close to the
Polaris apartments. The city is currently working to acquire more land for a future park on the southeast side of Wax Road (So-Co Park).

The second item proposes to amend the code to allow homeless encampments and over-night car camping as an approved land use with a temporary use permit for a term of 120 days. Smaller suburban communities are receiving requests to assist the homeless community. Under RCW 35.21.195, the city must approve this type of request, but may place conditions upon the approval related to public health and safety. Currently, a temporary use permit is valid for 60 days. St. John the Baptist Church intends to request a zoning code amendment to allow for a term of 120 days. Staff is preparing to process the code amendment.

Commissioner Ingram shared that he proposed the request for bicycle amenities within multi-family developments. Polaris has no safe place for children to ride their bikes which is essential to a healthy lifestyle.

Chair Dimmott asked about traffic calming measures specifically related to pedestrians crossing from Covington Community Park to the middle school.

Mr. Hart responded that traffic calming measures are addressed in the policies of the Transportation Element of the Comprehensive Plan. Traffic calming measures can also be reviewed within the zoning districts in the zoning code for any standards that could be placed on specific uses. The Public Works department has open houses and public hearings related to traffic improvement plans where input can be provided.

In response to Commissioner Ingram’s request to add bicycle facilities, Mr. Hart shared that providing a trail system on a private development has the potential to use a significant portion of land. Most communities provide amenities such as bike trails on a neighborhood basis through capital projects. The city recently adopted a park impact fee which will be used for land acquisition for future parks. When Lakepointe develops, the developer will tie into a regional trail system and build an on-site trail system. When the school district decides to sell the current Covington Elementary School property, there may be some additional development opportunity in the town center. Otherwise, there is not a lot of available land for new multi-family development. Mr. Hart also noted that there is an outdoor play area at the Polaris apartments. It may not be in the most advantageous location, but they do meet the current requirement for on-site recreation.

Ms. Mueller added that staff could look at the city’s policies on circulation and tot lots. This may be something we can look at with other jurisdiction’s policies as well.
Commissioner Ingram would like this topic added as a future work plan item.

Chair Dimmett requested that the code change for the Temporary Use Permit related to car camping be raised to a higher priority because we have a pending application. She suggests adding this item as number 12 and reallocating hours from other task items.

Mr. Hart shared that staff will research other cities for ideas and language to incorporate as the draft code is written. Catholic Community Services will conduct background checks on the individual applicants for St. John the Baptist Church along with providing referrals to counseling and social services. He also explained that once the 120 day term is up, the applicant can re-apply for another 120 day term in the next calendar year.

In response to a question from Commissioner Caudle regarding the number of hours spent on code amendments, Mr. Hart responded that the hours allocated represent legal noticing, allowing the opportunity for public comment, SEPA noticing, appeal periods, the public hearing before the Planning Commission and the City Council.

Commissioner Caudle asked about the possibility of banning fireworks as many neighboring cities have related to item 19 of the future work plan items.

Mr. Hart responded the issue of fireworks is separate from the typical noise provisions in the Noise Ordinance. The city council has declined to outlaw fireworks. From a police issue, unless the police are on the property and see the person light the device, there is nothing they can do.

Commissioner Porter asked whether items 16 and 17 were critical? She would like to see mobile food vendors as a higher priority over cleaning up old code.

Mr. Hart responded that the reason that work item number 14 (Title 19 Definitions) is a priority, as they are used for every project, every day. Staff also spends a considerable amount of time on pre-application meetings under work plan item number 16. The medium priority items will save staff time in the long run and will be completed during down time between higher priorities.

Commissioner Ingram wants the code amendments related to bicycle facilities in multi-family developments moved up the list of priorities if an application is submitted. Ms. Mueller explained the applicant is vested to the code once an application is submitted.
Commissioner Ingram moved, Commissioner Max seconded to recommend the Community Development and Planning Commission Work Program Items for 2018, adding a new number 12 for Code Amendments to Temporary Use Permits related to Homeless Encampments and adding a new number 26 for Code Amendments relating Bicycle Amenities for Multi-Family Apartments to the City Council. Motion Carried 7-0.

PUBLIC HEARING - None

NEW BUSINESS - None

ATTENDANCE VOTE - None

PUBLIC COMMENTS - None

COMMENTS AND COMMUNICATIONS FROM STAFF AND COMMISSIONERS

Mr. Hart shared that we will have the regularly scheduled Planning Commission on December 21, 2017.

Commissioner Caudle thanked staff for efforts on the 2018 Work Program and the Comprehensive Plan.

Commissioner Porter shared that Saturday, November 18, 2017 there is coffee chat scheduled with the Covington Police Department regarding safety and fireworks from noon to 1:00 p.m. at the Covington Library.

ADJOURN
The November 16, 2017, Planning Commission Meeting adjourned at 7:37 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kelly Thompson, Planning Commission Secretary