City of Lynnwood
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
March 27, 2008

Commissioners Present: Richard Wright, Chair
                       Maria Ambalada
                       Jeff Davies
                       Tia Peycheff
                       Michael Wojack

Commissioners Absent: Ted Hikel, City Council Liaison
                       Elisa Elliott

Staff Present: Lauren Balisky, Assistant Planner
              Shay Davidson, Administrative Assistant
              Kevin Garrett, Planning Manager
              Paul Krauss, Comm. Dev. Director

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chair Wright at 7:00 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

None

COUNCIL LIAISON REPORT

Councilmember Hikel reported that the City Council held a hearing on March 10 regarding the Planned Unit Development of the Lynnwood Skate and Bowl property. The Council heard testimony and continued the hearing to March 24 where the Council approved the PUD with several conditions concerning the parking and the signage. The Council also began a discussion on Monday on whether the City should establish mandatory garbage collection. That discussion will be continued in the coming weeks. The Council also has the question of residential property upkeep at next Monday’s work session.

CITIZEN COMMENTS

None

PUBLIC HEARINGS

None
WORK SESSION

1. Accessory Dwelling Units

Planning Manager Kevin Garrett gave a brief staff report stating that this is one of the code amendments that had been initiated by Council action a couple years ago. Assistant Planner Lauren Balisky, the lead planner on this item, explained that the State Growth Management Act and the Housing Act both require that cities have regulations for Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs). Lynnwood’s first set of code amendments for that passed in 1996. Since that time there have been approximately five ADUs approved. Staff has determined that our regulations are extremely restrictive. Ms. Balisky explained that an ADU is a dwelling unit that is subordinate to the main home and provides many benefits to homeowners such as extra rental income, providing room for live-in help, and allowing for the changing needs of the family. There are also many concerns in neighborhoods about how this affects the character of the neighborhood such as more traffic, appearance of the houses, and character of the neighborhood. She explained that they looked at almost thirty other jurisdictions’ codes in determining what Lynnwood really values in its communities.

Ms. Balisky highlighted some of the proposed changes:

- Lot size – Currently there is a 10,000 square foot lot minimum size. The proposed change is 7,200 square feet for RS7 or 8,400 square feet for RS8.
- Detached units – Currently these are not allowed at all. Staff is proposing allowing detached units with a 10,000 square foot minimum lot-size requirement.
- Parking – Currently two additional parking spaces are required. Staff is proposing reducing this requirement to one space for a smaller ADU, but keeping the two-space requirement for larger ADUs.

Commissioner Davies expressed concern about the reduced parking requirement resulting in more on-street parking. Ms. Balisky discussed the current parking requirements. She stated that it is required to be within the setback.

Commissioner Wojack commended the work done on this item. He asked if the ADU would fall under the same laws as the main home. Ms. Balisky stated that ADUs are considered part of the primary home. There was discussion about how ADUs might allow live-in caretakers to have their own apartment and take care of an elderly homeowner.

Commissioner Wojack asked about the requirement of continuous six-month occupation for the owner. Ms. Balisky stated that they do not foresee this being a problem, but wanted to provide code enforcement with a way to respond to complaints if needed. Planning Manager Garrett added that this requirement helps to ensure that the owner is living on the property and that it is not a duplex situation. Ms. Balisky noted that during the application and once it is approved, the owner has to record a document with the county. This makes it clear to them that they are expected to live there six months a year.

Commissioner Davies thought this was great, but wondered if there would be a public outreach or education plan as part of this. He remarked that there are many of these types of situations that are kept secret. Planning Manager Garrett concurred.
He discussed safety issues associated with unofficial ADUs. Staff is anticipating having a sort of amnesty for ADUs that have existed for a period of time. They would have an opportunity to legitimize it by having it inspected and making any adjustments that are needed for life/safety issues.

Chair Wright commended staff on this revised code. He pointed out a typo on page 4 or 14, G-5, paragraph B, and subparagraph V. He then asked about the fence requirements on page 5 of 14, G-5, sub-item 4. Ms. Balisky explained that this section was taken from the City’s multi-family code and was intended to buffer different uses from each other.

Commissioner Peycheff asked for further clarification about the fence requirements. Staff responded to her question.

Commissioner Wojack asked if manufactured homes were allowed in R7 and R8 zones in Lynnwood. Director Krauss replied that they are allowed under state law. Planning Manager Krauss added that manufactured homes brought into a single-family lot are required to be treated the same way as stick-built homes.

There was consensus to schedule a public hearing as soon as notice requirements could be fulfilled.

Councilmember Ted Hikel asked Director Krauss about grandfathering existing units in even if they do not meet the code requirements. Director Krauss explained that they were proposing an amnesty program where a unit that existed prior to 1995 could be legitimized as long as they brought it up to life/safety requirements. Councilmember Hikel expressed concerns about how this would affect the neighborhoods if the ADUs do not meet the codes. Director Krauss explained that they know these units are already out there, but this provides a way to improve safety.

2. 2008 Docket of Comprehensive Plan Amendments

Planning Manager Garrett reviewed the process for the 2008 Docket of Comprehensive Plan Amendments. He explained that this year they received no suggested amendments or amendment applications from the public. This is the first year that that has happened. All of the items on the list have been generated by staff. He reviewed those items.

- Clean up item – no policy implications
- MUGA – Land Use Plan
- MUGA – Perimeter Boundary - There was significant discussion about consideration of annexation of the Lake Stickney area. Pros and cons of the area were noted.
- Land Use Map Change – between Highway 99 and city center
- Land Use Map Change – Highway 99 Corridor
- Transportation Element – Consideration of traffic impact fees on a citywide basis and other items.
- Parks, Recreation and Cultural Arts – annual update, no policy implications
- Sustainability Element – This is a result of a grant the City received from the State Department of Community Trade and Economic Development a couple years ago to do an energy plan and an energy element. In putting this together, sustainability was recognized as the essential issue in this arena.
9. Economic Development Element – Goes along with Highway 99 Revitalization Study
10. Cultural and Historic Resources – The Historical Commission wants to clarify the recognition of the historic resources.
11. Annual Update of Implementation
12. Policy Language relating to the Healthy Communities Program – Planning Manager Garrett explained how some of the goals are related to land use. Director Krauss further discussed the purpose of Healthy Communities and invited the Planning Commission to attend a Healthy Communities meeting on Tuesday, May 13 at 7:00 p.m. in the Council chambers. Part of the meeting will be on the Healthy Communities program and the recommendations. The other part will relate to the City’s recreation center renovation.

OTHER BUSINESS

None

DIRECTOR’S REPORT & INFORMATION:

Planning Manager Garrett invited the Planning Commission to a Volunteer Appreciation Dinner on Tuesday, April 15.

Maple Precinct/Perrinville Outreach meeting will be held on April 9 at St. Thomas More at 7:00 p.m. There was discussion about the State’s one-time only tax incentive to encourage annexations. There will be a series of outreach meetings in the areas where the City intends to annex.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion made by Commissioner Wojack seconded by Commissioner Peycheff to adjourn the meeting. Motion passed unanimously (5-0). The meeting was adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

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Richard Wright, Chair