CITY OF LYNNWOOD
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
March 12, 2015 Meeting

Commissioners Present:        Staff Present:
Chad Braithwaite, Vice Chair   Corbitt Loch, Dep. Director Comm. Devt.
George Hurst, Second Vice Chair Gloria Rivera, Senior Planner
Robert Larsen
Maria Ambalada
Doug Jones
Michael Wojack

Commissioners Absent:         Other:
Richard Wright, Chair         Councilmember Van AuBuchon

Call to Order
The meeting was called to order by Vice Chair Braithwaite at 7:00 p.m.

Approval of Minutes
1. Approval of minutes of the February 26, 2015 Meeting

   Motion made by Commissioner Ambalada, seconded by Commissioner Jones, to approve the minutes as presented. Motion passed unanimously (6-0).

Citizen Comments
Ted Hikel, 2810 – 191st Place SW, Lynnwood, WA 98036, said he would like to provide comment on the proposed neighborhood map on the meeting’s agenda. Vice Chair Braithwaite invited him to speak after the staff report on that agenda item.

Public Hearing
None.

Work Session
1. Comprehensive Plan: Generalized neighborhood map

   Deputy Director Corbitt Loch introduced the topic. Staff has prepared a draft neighborhood map for the Planning Commission’s review and input. He explained that if this item were to go forward there would be outreach to as many citizens, advisory boards, and others as possible to help ensure that the
neighborhood boundaries are appropriate and that there is as much consensus as possible. He noted that there have been initiatives in the past to develop such a map, but for reasons not fully known, the City has not adopted a neighborhood map for Lynnwood.

Deputy Director Loch indicated that the draft map utilized “soft”, overlapping neighborhood boundaries as a starting point for community discussion. Staff is asking the Planning Commission if there should be a map of individual neighborhoods. If the answer is yes, he asked if the proposed map is anything close to what they envision.

Commission Comments and Questions:

Commissioner Jones asked if these neighborhoods are already identified for the tax assessor records. Deputy Director Loch replied that the map was created internally by staff. It isn’t tied to analytical information at this time. He replied that the names on the assessor’s records are probably subdivision names.

Vice Chair Braithwaite noted that the description on the assessors records are from when the land was originally platted and many of those plats date back to the late 19th century or early 20th century.

Commissioner Ambalada said she thinks neighborhoods now are stagnate and not engaged. She thinks this is because there are too many neighborhoods. She recommended characterizing the neighborhoods and doing outreach to get them involved. She does not think the problem is a racial one, but it is that people have lost respect for law enforcement. She thinks the time is coming for law enforcement to be tested, and we need to be prepared to do that we have to revitalize our neighborhoods and get them engaged in the government of the City.

Commissioner Wojack asked Deputy Director Loch what scope or purpose he envisions for the neighborhood map. Deputy Director Loch replied that this was not produced for a particular outcome; but was a discussion worth having. He pointed out that many desirable communities have organized neighborhood groups that help serve as a conduit between residents, businesses and city hall. For example, if neighbors want to make improvements to a park or street or pursue projects such as traffic calming or new street lights, a neighborhood organization would be helpful. Also, as the City disseminates information, being able to communicate through these neighborhood groups would be useful. As far as the Planning Commission’s role in future neighborhood projects, he was not sure about that. However, as groups get organized they would likely be interested in land use issues and would probably be more likely to interact with the Planning Commission.
Commissioner Hurst noted that there used to be a paid position in the city related to neighborhoods and diversity prior to the recession. He asked if that person left any information that would help in this effort. Deputy Director Loch replied that they did not. He understood that the team’s focus was more toward diversity than individual neighborhoods.

Commissioner Larsen said that during his employment with the City of Everett, he enjoyed seeing people join neighborhood organizations and increasing their civic involvement and awareness. An upside of this type of organization of neighborhoods is watching citizens become leaders of their communities. He noted, however, that neighborhood coordination required a lot of staff time and therefore required a commitment from the Mayor and City Council. He recommended starting out with fewer divisions (such as quadrants) than shown on the draft map to keep the initial endeavor manageable. He suggested that Highway 99 is more of a boundary than I-5. He recommended doing a mailing and seeing who shows up. He pointed out that the future of land use may be linear along I-5 or Highway 99. Commissioner Larsen cautioned that once neighborhoods form and activists become involved, there is often an expectation that their concerns will go straight to Council and that Council will act consistent with their wishes. He saw a lot of this in his work for the City of Everett. To address this he recommended having a set of rules that they would all work by.

Citizen Comments:

Ted Hikel, 3820 – 191st Place SW, Lynnwood, WA 98036, stated he has been a member of a neighborhood organization for the last 35 years. He commented that the draft map did not depict too many divisions; it actually is not enough. He referred to Area 7 on the map and noted that it represents approximately 8 voting precincts or 25% of all the precincts in the City. Area 7 represents a huge population area, which is too many for people to be heard. On the other hand, Area 12 at the south end of the map contains very few people at all. His neighborhood group has been organized for many years and has already decided their geographic boundaries, which are from 188th to 194th and from 36th to 44th. That area contains two voting precincts and a couple hundred houses. He commented that they don’t have the money to mail to everybody, but with a smaller area they are able to go door-to-door. He added that the people that live closer to Highway 99 will have much different concerns than his neighborhood, which is mainly concerned with the City Center and the Transition Area. He hopes this kind of practicality will be considered. He suggested asking citizens what they consider their neighborhood area to be. He thinks the people will be able to tell staff where the lines should be.

Commissioner Ambalada asked if the purpose of neighborhood divisions is to benefit the neighborhoods or to benefit the city government. She recommended starting to poll a couple areas to see what they consider their neighborhood to
be. She spoke of the importance of transparency and accountability with the
neighborhoods.

Commissioner Wojack suggested that this would be a great topic for the city
newsletter since that mailing already goes out to everyone. Ask people questions
such as:
- Would you like to be part of a neighborhood group?
- What neighborhood group do you see yourself as?
- How big is your neighborhood group?

Deputy Director Loch asked if the Comprehensive Plan should have a map of
this type. If so, should Staff try to work further on the boundaries? Whether that
can be done as part of the 2015 Comprehensive Plan update is doubtful since it
will probably take more time than we have before the June 30, 2015 deadline.

Vice Chair Braithwaite said he didn’t think it was wise to include a map like this in
the Comprehensive Plan. He wasn't sure how the definitions of those
neighborhoods would interact with what really happens in those neighborhoods.
On the other hand he thinks it would be valuable to identify neighborhoods.

Vice Chair Braithwaite asked the Commission their general opinions about
including neighborhoods in the Comprehensive Plan.
- Commissioner Larsen commented that since they are doing a
  Comprehensive Plan Update right now, identifying future issues and
  objectives is a good idea. He recommended doing a placeholder in the
  Comprehensive Plan, without a map, that says that at some point in time
  neighborhoods will be discussed and agreed on. Then a Comprehensive
  Plan amendment can be done at a later time.
- Commissioner Hurst agreed with Commissioner Larsen.
- Commissioner Ambalada asked staff if it is feasible to do it as part of this
  Comprehensive Plan update. Deputy Director Loch replied that due to the
  scope of community involvement recommended it would not be possible in
  the time available for the 2015 Update. Commissioner Ambalada
  suggested asking the police department for their input on neighborhood
  boundaries. Deputy Director Loch concurred.

2. Comprehensive Plan & Zoning Code: College District

Senior Planner Gloria Rivera reviewed the proposal to extend the Mixed
Use designation near the college further to the north and to the east and
eliminate the other comprehensive plan designations in that area. The
proposal would also eliminate the College District Overlay Zone from the
Comprehensive Plan. It would expand the College District Mixed Use
Zone and redraft it to incorporate some of the College District Overlay
components. Ms. Rivera reviewed proposed text amendments as
contained on pages 18 and 19 of the packet.
Commissioner Comments and Questions:

Commissioner Ambalada said she was confused about the map. She asked if there could be a more simplified zoning.

Commissioner Larsen asked about the need to coordinate with the college. He then referred to the area between 196th Street SW and Gold Park, and asked why Staff considered this area to be affiliated with the college. He suggested referring to the zone as CDMU instead of CDM to be consistent and to clearly identify it as mixed use. In the last section on public sidewalks, he suggested changing “are provided” to “shall be provided.”

Commissioner Wojack referred to the areas zoned Planned Unit Development (PUD) on the zoning map and asked if those were for the college. Senior Planner Rivera reviewed those existing land uses. Commissioner Wojack inquired about tandem parking. Ms. Rivera explained it has been used in multifamily zoning in the past and allows required off-street parking spaces to be located one behind the other.

Regarding the area north of Gold Park referred to by Commissioner Larsen, Ms. Rivera commented that the zoning regulations it would not only be for the college, but also a neighborhood for the whole community. Having a mixed use development near the bus lines on 196th would be convenient.

Commissioner Wojack said he has learned the college will be constructing a second dorm. He asked if those dorms were both on college land. Ms. Rivera stated that the existing dorm (Rainier Hall) is on land owned by the EdCC Foundation, but was uncertain about the future dorm. Commissioner Wojack asked about the land requirements for dorms. Ms. Rivera said it hasn’t been defined well yet. Commissioner Wojack commended Ms. Rivera for consolidating the zoning.

Commissioner Jones echoed Commissioner Larsen’s comments. He also asked if the City would be meeting with the college to hear from them. Ms. Rivera replied that the community college would receive notice of the public hearing and EdCC will be encouraged to participate. Staff has met with EdCC representatives to review the proposed regulatory changes. Ms. Rivera indicated that EdCC was pleased with the proposed changes.

Commissioner Jones then suggested renaming the college to Lynnwood Community College since it actually is in Lynnwood city limits.

Commissioner Jones asked if the EdCC may pushing single family residents out of the area. Ms. Rivera did not think that was the intention.
As written, the proposed amendments would re-establish single family residences as a permitted land use.

Commissioner Jones referred to LMC 21.57.400 (B) where taverns, brew pubs, clubs or restaurants that serve alcohol were struck out. He asked if these are allowed within the district. Senior Planner Rivera said such uses are currently are allowed if they don't serve alcohol. Commissioner Jones indicated that allowing establishments in this vicinity to serve alcohol could help to discourage driving under the influence. This would also bring more tax revenue into the City.

Commissioner Ambalada asked for more information about the relationship between the Foundation and Edmonds Community College. Commissioner Ambalada also asked about the college's long-term plans. Ms. Rivera replied that the college has a draft plan which was distributed to the City last month. Since they drafted that plan, the college has purchased a number of properties and is in the process of updating their plan. As far as the Foundation, Ms. Rivera said she didn’t know that much about it, but understood the EdCC Foundation was formed to assist the college in amassing funds needed to build the existing dorm. Commissioner Ambalada asked who it is that comes to the City to make the College’s wishes known. Ms. Rivera stated that staff has been working with the Facilities Administrator. She explained that the College has been expanding because they are getting tight on building space and land. They are building a 70,000-square-foot science building which will attract more students, and there is already a shortage of housing for students.

Commissioner Ambalada asked how far the partnership with the City of Lynnwood is going. Deputy Director Loch suggested inviting representatives from the college to come and speak for themselves and tell the Commission the status of their master planning.

Vice Chair Braithwaite referred to the density for multi-family dwellings as described in LMC 21.57.400, items 10 a through c, and asked if there is a formula elsewhere in city codes that comes up with this. Ms. Rivera explained that the maximum of 20 and the minimum of 12 dwellings per acre is actually the single-family zoning in that neighborhood. She added that there isn’t a formula, just language that is in the code. Vice Chair Braithwaite suggested adding language describing what would trigger it. He then referred to item 18 regarding inns with a maximum of 20 guest rooms and said he didn’t think this was practical. He referred to LMC 21.57.500 regarding architectural consistency with the surroundings and pointed out that there really isn’t an architectural style within the area. Ms. Rivera noted that is carryover language from the current code. Vice Chair Braithwaite suggested revising that language.
Vice Chair Braithwaite referred to LMC 21.57.500 D.4 and asked if any commissioners had comments about signs. Commissioner Wojack spoke against allowing monument signs in that area. Commissioner Ambalada said she thought that people that live around the college should have a say about the signs. Vice Chair Braithwaite added that he was a little reluctant about having residences immediately adjacent to busy streets such as 196th St SW.

Vice Chair Braithwaite noted that with the retail uses and the reduction in parking, the parking ratio for restaurants is much higher than for other types of retail uses.

3. Comprehensive Plan & Zoning Map: Mixed Use Designation at Alderwood Mall Blvd. & I-5

Senior Planner Rivera gave the staff report. She explained staff's proposal to change the future land use designation of the Mixed Use properties at Alderwood Mall Blvd. & I-5 to Regional Commercial to make it consistent with the surrounding area, and also to change the zoning of those properties from MU to PCD. She explained that one difference is that Mixed Use would allow parking garages and accessory filling stations. The PCD zone allows several uses that the Mixed Use zone does not allow, such as auto-oriented uses, business and professional offices, higher education, amusement centers, health clubs, dance halls, cold storage lockers, printing/publishing, and self-service storage facilities (with a Conditional Use Permit). The proposed changes would make everything consistent in the area with both the Comprehensive Plan and then Zoning Map.

Commissioner Jones commented that it looks like nothing is really changing except the zoning designation. He spoke in support of the proposed amendments.

Commissioner Larsen referred to residential areas to the east of this area and recommended that the City develop standard language that says something like, “X number of feet away from a residentially-zoned property, you shall not do the following things,” such as filling stations so that when the commercial property develops, the people who live nearby have some kind of buffer and consideration.

There were no further comments or questions.

Other Business

Council Liaison Report
Councilmember AuBuchon had the following comments:

- He stated that he has been involved in several meetings with people from the college. He reported that the college has every intention of eventually expanding from 208th Street to 196th and from the golf course to Highway 99. He referred to the new entrance that the college has built at 196th Street and 168th. They are currently redoing the south 204th/208th Street entrance. There will be aroundabout built at 204th Street and 68th to accommodate that. The college is definitely intending to grow as part of the state’s mandate for education. He concurred with Commissioners Larsen and Jones that the City needs to get the input from the college. He believes this should be part of any future discussion on this matter. He noted that he was a member of the first classes of Edmonds Community College in 1968.

- He thanked staff and the Planning Commission for their work on the Comprehensive Plan.

**Director’s Report**

Deputy Director Loch had no further comments.

**Commissioners’ Comments**

Commissioner Wojack suggested a sign saying, “Edmonds Community College – Lynnwood Campus” or “Edmonds Community College in Lynnwood.”

**Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:34 p.m.

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Chad Braithwaite, Vice Chair