



**MINUTES
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 28, 2020
VIA ZOOM MEETINGS**

Call to Order:

Chairman Palmer called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and welcomed attendees.

Attendance:

Present: Chairman Palmer, Vice-Chair Maier, Commissioners Townsend, Mealer, and Smith. Council Liaison Alvarez, Planning Manager Stevens, Marketing Specialist Wallner, and Permit Technician Ghbein were also present.

Approval of Agenda:

Chairman Palmer presented the meeting agenda for approval.

COMMISSIONER MAIER MOVED AND COMMISSIONER TOWNSEND SECONDED THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE OCTOBER 28, 2020 MEETING AGENDA AS WRITTEN. MOTION CARRIED 5-0.

Approval of Minutes:

Chairman Palmer presented the minutes of the October 14th special meeting for approval.

COMMISSIONER MAIER MOTIONED AND COMMISSIONER SMITH SECONDED THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER 14, 2020 SPECIAL MEETING AS WRITTEN. THE MOTION PASSED 5-0.

Public Hearing Explanation

Chairman Palmer asked the recorder to read the public hearing explanation.

New Business:

CPA2020-101 – 2020 Comprehensive Plan Amendments

Chair Palmer asked if all public notice requirements were met. Mr. Stevens confirmed they were met.

Chair Palmer recognized Planning Manager Stevens to present the staff report.

Mr. Stevens outlined the 2020 Comprehensive Plan Amendment Docket, which consisted of two applications to change the comprehensive land use designations and zoning designations upon lands located north of State Route 240 near the northwestern boundary of the City of Richland. The first application package was submitted by Greg Markel/Vantage Way Properties, and was assigned project file numbers CPA2020-102 and Z2020-101. The second was submitted by the City of Richland's Economic Development Department, and was assigned project file numbers CPA2020-103 and Z2020-102. Mr. Stevens noted that comments were received. He went over the comprehensive plan amendment timeline for 2020. He highlighted the requests of each application. He spoke of growth and development in the Horn Rapids area, both commercial and residential. He advised that a recommendation from the Planning Commission would need to go forward to City Council.

At the conclusion of Mr. Stevens' presentation, **Chairman Palmer** opened the public hearing at 6:17 p.m. to the applicants and those registered to speak on this item of business.

Keith Goldsmith of Goldsmith Land Development Services, 11400 SE 8th St., Suite 450, Bellevue, WA 98004, spoke on behalf of his client, Mr. Greg Markel. He concurred with the staff report and staff's recommendations. He noted a few typos in the staff report regarding land use designation and current zoning. Regarding Mr. Markel's application, he said that the proposed change to residential land use would assist with increasing residential capacity in the comprehensive plan. He stated that the proposed change to commercial would go along with the increase of residential in the Horn Rapids area.

Ms. Wallner represented the City of Richland's Economic Development Department and spoke regarding their submitted application. She said that the business center has sold out of one acre lots, and that they are needing to prepare for the next phase. She said that their proposal would provide more development opportunities within the City. She stated that their goal would be to have more retail commercial uses there rather than warehouse or industrial uses.

Patrick Paulson, 2253 Davison Ave, Richland, WA 99354, spoke in opposition to Mr. Markel's application. He said that changing the comprehensive plan without full community involvement doesn't seem right. He stated some of the differences between the current comprehensive plan and the proposed amendments. He said that the proposed amendments would increase the City's exposure to wildfires. He referenced a document he prepared that was provided to the Planning Commission. From that document, he read policies from the current comprehensive plan. See attached for document.

Laurie Ness, 2253 Davison Ave, Richland, WA 99354, spoke in opposition to Mr. Markel's application. She referenced the written comment she provided, which included a link to a video on the Almeda wildfire in Oregon. She said the land specified in Mr. Markel's

application had burned before. She was concerned that a wildfire similar to the Almeda fire in Oregon could occur on the subject property owned by Mr. Markel.

Chair Palmer asked Mr. Goldsmith and Ms. Clements if they would like to address the comments provided by Mr. Paulson and Ms. Ness.

Mr. Goldsmith stated that they received a copy of the comment letters submitted by Mr. Paulson and Ms. Ness. He said that one of the premises behind the proposed residential capacity was that the current comprehensive plan indicates a shortage of residential land capacity. Regarding the current designation as Parks & Public Facilities on the land use map, he stated that it was likely designated that way because of the previous ownership by Washington State University.

With no further comments from the applicants or public, **Chair Palmer** closed the public testimony period at 6:35 p.m. He opened the item for Commission questions and discussion.

Commissioner Maier said she appreciated the comments from Mr. Paulson and Ms. Ness. In reference to the proposed comprehensive plan amendments, she stated that most residential growth is in South Richland, many miles away from the Hanford site. Based on incoming construction permits, she stated an apparent desire that many people have to be closer to Hanford. She listed the positive aspects of having people living closer to the Hanford site, where they may work. If these comprehensive plan amendments are approved, she said it could help to create a neighborhood center in Horn Rapids. She stated the importance of safe pedestrian trails and crossings. She acknowledged the change of ownership from Washington State University to Mr. Markel. She stated that the proposed changes seem very favorable for the subject area. She asked Mr. Stevens how these proposed comprehensive plan amendments could impact Richland School District.

Mr. Stevens stated that the school district is made aware of new subdivision proposals, and have the opportunity to provide comments. He said that the comprehensive plan addresses educational facilities. The school district is required to have their own comprehensive plan, and that information gets added to the City's comprehensive plan. The school district did not provide comments on these proposed comprehensive plan amendments. He said that they actively look for new school sites, and they are planning 15-20 years down the road. Mr. Stevens said that the school district has been an active contributor to the overall comprehensive plan process.

Commissioner Townsend stated his agreement with Commissioner Maier's comments. He said that the proposed amendments are not incompatible with the current comprehensive plan. He liked the proposed mix of land uses. In regard to Ms. Ness' comments, he said the fire risk is real and understood. He stated that a new fire department response center is being built near the subject area. He asked Mr. Stevens how the proposed amendments fit in with utilities planning.

Mr. Stevens said he'd had utility discussions with the Public Works Department, and

that the water and sewer facilities have capacity to serve the subject areas and future development. He said that it's a developer's responsibility to bring water and sewer to their development site, and it is the City's responsibility to ensure there is capacity.

Commissioner Smith stated his agreement with Commissioner Maier's comments. He asked Mr. Stevens if there are any other comparably sized undeveloped parcels within city limits that could serve the mixed use or higher-density residential goals of the proposed comprehensive plan amendments.

Mr. Stevens said there is vacant land left in the Badger Mountain South area, with much of that reserved for residential and commercial development. He said there is also land on the south side of SR 240 and northwest of Twin Bridges Rd that is in urban reserve for future comprehensive plan changes. He stated that legislature allows for yearly amendments to the City's comprehensive plan, as they realize things do change. He said that ownership is an important factor to consider. He also said that many public facilities are allowed in the other zoning districts. Mr. Stevens stated that there are many parcels in Richland that have differing comprehensive plan designations vs. zoning districts.

Commissioner Smith asked about safer or elevated crossings, as the proposed changes and future development are along SR 240.

Mr. Stevens said it is a state highway, so any proposals would have to get approval from the state highway department. He said there could be options in the future, possibly a capital facilities type project or conditions of approval for future development.

Commissioner Townsend stated that there should be a way to designate green space as a required set aside for future residential communities. He would really like the city to encourage such amendments to the zoning regulations.

Commissioner Maier addressed Ms. Ness' comments regarding wildfires. She said the fire hazard is real, and she would like to encourage the city to be much more transparent regarding emergency evacuation planning so that residents understand the best way to evacuate.

COMMISSIONER MAIER MOVED AND COMMISSIONER TOWNSEND SECONDED THE MOTION TO RECOMMEND THE 2020 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AND DEVELOPMENT REGULATION AMENDMENTS TO COUNCIL AS PROPOSED IN THE STAFF REPORT. MOTION PASSED 5-0.

Commissioner Smith clarified that both applications were included in the motion.

Chairman Palmer confirmed.

Communications:

Mr. Stevens shared that the focus of the Planning Commission workshop scheduled for November 18th is to go over the proposed Shoreline Master Program update. The workshop will be the only Planning Commission meeting in November.

Councilman Alvarez complimented Commission members on their deliberative process and dedication to asking questions of staff before moving forward with a recommendation. He said their voices are definitely heard.

Commissioner Townsend wished everyone a safe and enjoyable Thanksgiving.

Vice-Chair Maier thanked Ms. Ness and Mr. Paulson for their input. She said that the proposed comprehensive plan amendments will benefit the City.

Chairman Palmer said he hopes everyone stays safe and has a nice holiday.

Adjournment:

Chairman Palmer adjourned the meeting at 7:04 PM.

PREPARED BY: Briana Ghbein, Permit Technician

REVIEWED BY: Mike Stevens, Planning Manager