MINUTES
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 24, 2021
VIA ZOOM MEETINGS
6:00 p.m.

Call to Order:

Chairwoman Maier called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and welcomed attendees.

Attendance:

Present: Chairwoman Maier, Vice-Chair Townsend, Commissioners Eadie, Mealer, Smith and Palmer. Council Liaison Alvarez, Director Jensen, Planning Manager Stevens and Administrative Assistant Follett were also present.

Approval of Agenda:

Chair Maier asked for a motion to approve the agenda.

VICE-CHAIR TOWNSEND MOVED AND COMMISSIONER EADIE SECONDED THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE MARCH 24, 2021 MEETING AGENDA AS WRITTEN. MOTION CARRIED 6-0.

Approval of Minutes:

Chair Maier presented the minutes for the February 24th meeting and March 10th workshop for approval.

COMMISSIONER PALMER MOTIONED AND COMMISSIONER SMITH SECONDED THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 24, 2021 MEETING AND MARCH 10TH WORKSHOP AS WRITTEN. THE MOTION PASSED 6-0.

Public Comments:

Chairwoman Maier asked for the public comment procedure to be read by the recorder and then opened the public comment period at 6:04 p.m. Having no public comments, Chair Maier closed the public comment period at 6:05 p.m.

Public Hearing Explanation

Chairwoman Maier asked Mrs. Follett to read the public hearing explanation.

New Business:

1. **CA2021-103 Compact Car Allowance**

Chairwoman Maier introduced the item and asked staff to present the staff report. Mr. Stevens outlined the request, noted that notice was provided as required and that all comments received were contained in the staff report. He further noted the RMC is silent on parking standards for compact cars at this time but city leadership is bringing this request forward to establish new standards.

Chair Maier opened the public hearing at 6:13 p.m. and asked if there was anyone present to speak on this item. Having no one request to speak, Chair Maier closed the public hearing at 6:14 p.m. and opened the item for Commission discussion.

Several commissioners shared comments supporting the code amendment. There was also discussion around the motivation for the proposed changes and how the changes may impact and benefit development within the city. Concerns were also voiced about the support for taking a more holistic view of parking standards throughout the city.

VICE CHAIR TOWNSEND MOVED AND COMMISSIONER MEALER SECONDED THE MOTION TO RECOMMEND THAT THE RICHLAND CITY COUNCIL APPROVE THE PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO RMC SECTION 23.42.210 (D) BASED UPON THE FINDINGS OF FACT AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW.

Mr. Stevens noted a typo in the staff report's recommended motion and stated that the correct RMC reference should be RMC Section 23.54.055. Commissioner Townsend amended his motion to the correct RMC reference.

MOTION PASSED 6-0 ON A ROLL CALL VOTE.

2. **CA2021-101 CBD ZONE MINIMUM DWELLING UNIT SIZE REQUIREMENTS**

Chairwoman Maier introduced the item and asked Mr. Stevens to give the staff report. Mr. Stevens outlined the request from Fortify Holdings, LLC to amend RMC Section 23.22.040 by removing the minimum dwelling unit size in the Central Business District. He noted several members from the applicant team were present and planning to offer testimony and answer questions from the commission. During his presentation he referred to goals in the City's Comprehensive Plan that support this change and noted staff could find no background on why the code contains the 500 square foot requirement.

Chair Maier opened the public hearing at 6:31 p.m. and invited the applicant representatives to make their presentation.

Mark Fickes, Senior Partner and Real Estate Attorney at Halverson Northwest Law in Spokane, spoke first on behalf of the applicant, Fortify Holdings. He shared their plans for investing in the Central Business District by redeveloping an older hotel into micro apartments. He shared his thoughts on how this request is in line with the Comprehensive Plan.

Mr. Robert Johnson, Consultant for the applicant, spoke about the supplemental materials he provided regarding the requested change to the code. He stressed the statistics that support redevelopment of stressed hotels and shared his thoughts on the benefits to the community.

Mr. Ziad Elsahili, President of Fortify Holdings, thanked the Commission for considering the code amendment and provided background on his company and their interest in investing in affordable housing in Richland.

Chairwoman Maier closed the public hearing 6:47 p.m. and opened the floor for commission discussion.

Commissioners asked questions of staff and Mr. Johnson and discussed the merits of the proposed changes. Although commissioners contemplated the removal of dwelling unit size requirements across all zones, the general consensus was to remain focused on the specific application before the commission.

COMMISSIONER PALMER MOVED AND COMMISSIONER EADIE SECONDED THE MOTION TO DIRECT STAFF TO DEVELOP AND FORWARD FAVORABLE FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS FOR THE CODE AMENDMENT TO SECTION 23.22.040 OF THE CODE TO REMOVE THE 500 SQUARE FOOT MINIMUM ON DWELLING UNIT SIZE WITHIN THE CBD. COMMISISONER TOWNSEND MOVED TO AMEND THE MOTION TO REMOVE ANY MINIMUM SQUARE FOOTAGE REQUIRMENTS FROM ANY SECTION OF THE CODE, NOT JUST THE CBD. HAVING NO SECOND THE AMENDMENT FAILED. MOTION ON THE ORIGINAL MOTION PASSED 6-0 ON A ROLL CALL VOTE.

Communications:

Councilman Alvarez thanked Mr. Stevens for his well-prepared presentation and commissioners for their deliberations.

No other communications from commission members.

Adjournment:

Chairwoman Maier adjourned the meeting at 7:13 PM.

PREPARED BY: Lynne Follett
Lynne Follett, Administrative Assistant II

REVIEWED BY: Mike Stevens
Mike Stevens, Planning Manager

APPROVED BY:
Francesca Maier, Chairwoman

MINUTES
PLANNING COMMISSION WORKSHOP
VIA ZOOM
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 24, 2021
7:00 P.M.

Call to Order:

Chairwoman Maier called the meeting to order at 7:14 p.m.

Attendance:

Present: Chairwoman Maier, Vice Chair Townsend, Commissioners Mealer, Smith, Palmer and Eadie. Council Liaison Alvarez, Planning Manager Stevens, Sr. Planner O'Neill and Administrative Assistant II Follett were also present.

Agenda Item:

1. Shoreline Master Program Update

   Mr. O'Neill presented a Power Point presentation outlining proposed changes to the Shoreline Master Program. After his presentation the Commission discussed the proposed updates. Mr. O'Neill noted there was a document missing from the packet that would be forwarded to commission members. Mr. Stevens also noted the number of items that were required to be updated, the biggest being that the Critical Areas and Shoreline Master Program needed to be consistent with each other.

Adjournment:

Chairwoman Maier adjourned the meeting at 7:41 p.m.

PREPARED BY: Lynne Follett
Lynne Follett, Executive Assistant

REVIEWED BY: Mike Stevens
Mike Stevens, Planning Manager

APPROVED BY: FMaier
Francesca Maier, Chairwoman