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City of Lake Forest Park - Planning Commission
Meeting Minutes: October 28, 2019
17425 Ballinger Way NE—Council Chambers

Planning Commissioners present: Chair Joel Paisner; Vice Chair Maddy Larson, Richard Saunders, Ira Gross, Steve Morris, Mark Withers, T.J. Fudge, Rachael Katz

Staff and others present: Steve Bennett, Planning Director; Nick Holland, Senior Planner; Tom French, Councilmember

Members of the Public: Mike Dee; Jack Tonkin, Connie and Byron Barnes, Lynsey Burgess, Cara McKinnon

Planning Commissioners absent: Jon Lebo

Call to order: 7:00 PM

Approval of Agenda:

Cmr. Gross moved to approve the agenda. Cmr. Saunders seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

Public Comment:

Lynsey Burgess stated that she was attending on behalf of Merlone Geier. She continued that it has been several weeks since the Council passed the moratorium and that she was at the meeting to represent the property owner and to listen to the Commission deliberate on town center issues. She indicated that Merlone Geier would like more opportunities to talk to the Commission and that it is counter-productive to change the regulations without involving the property owner.

Jack Tonkin asked about the height of the proposed garage. He said that Merlone Geier said they have a right to 200 stalls and that the City would also like dedicated space in the parking garage. He stated that he would like the number of stalls to be clarified.

Mike Dee said that the Council had a talk about 522 and that he thinks that the Planning Commission meeting was timed too close to the joint Council meeting in Shoreline.

Byron Barnes said that his neighbor had said that he had been advised that their lease would not be extended on the medical complex in town center. He asked if that was to be the case or not and said he would like the third place commons preserved.

Chair Paisner said that Merlone Geier has requested to have time to discuss things with the Commission. Cmr. Larson asked Ms. Burgess to clarify if she would like to speak tonight or at a future date. Ms. Burgess said that future dates would be acceptable. Chair Paisner confirmed that the Commission is interested in speaking with the property owner. Cmr. Larson and Cmr. Saunders agreed that communication with the property owner would be beneficial. Ms. Burgess said that she would email Director Bennett to coordinate a future meeting date and discussion topics. Cmr. Larson requested that Merlone Geier communicate in writing, so that Commissioners can study it before a meeting. She also reminded others that Third Place Books would like to speak to the Commission.

Approval of Minutes: September 10, 2019 minutes

1 Chair Paisner told Director Bennett that he had a minor edit which he would forward that to Director
2 Bennett. Cmr. Larson moved to approve the September 10 minutes, Cmr. Katz seconded, and the motion
3 passed unanimously.
4

5 Meeting Dates

6 Chair Paisner noted that the meeting was scheduled for November 12, 2019. He also referenced an email
7 sent by Director Bennett about future meeting dates and told the Commission to keep those dates in mind.
8

9 Old Business: Implementation of Town Center Vision

10 Parking Structure Standards and Design Guidelines

11 Director Bennett referred to a revised version of the structured parking design criteria that he had sent the
12 Commission and noted that Cmr. Fudge's suggestions had been added in. He noted that Cristina Haworth
13 from Otak would be presenting some parking garage design scenarios. He then suggested that
14 Commissioners provide feedback on would be appropriate design criteria so that, within a couple of
15 meetings, staff and consultants could bring back draft regulations for the Commission to consider. He
16 suggested that he Commission should decide what the highest priority should be in terms of design elements.
17 Cmr. Larson said that the Commission should consider when it would be appropriate to have a public
18 hearing on the draft regulations. Director Bennett said that a public hearing could happen in December,
19 when a substantially complete can be presented. He also said that Sound Transit would probably appreciate
20 an opportunity to speak to the Commission along with Merlone Geier and Third Place Commons.
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23 Ms. Haworth began by introducing the first of three scenarios for a potential parking structure next to City
24 Hall that was entitled "Option 1". She pointed out that some design scenarios are aligned with the front of
25 City Hall and others are not. Cmr. Withers asked if the concepts come with input from Sound Transit or
26 Merlone Geier. Ms. Haworth said that she was not sure who had input and added that the design examples
27 are conceptual.
28

29 Cmr. Larson asked if space count was considered in developing each concept. Ms. Haworth responded that
30 each version had a different amount of stalls. Cmr. Gross asked how much of the parking was below grade.
31 Ms. Haworth clarified which floors were above and below grade. Cmr. Katz asked if Option 1 is in front of
32 City Hall. There was discussion about how much of Option 1 stuck out in front of City Hall. Cmr. Saunders
33 asked if the stall count included roof top parking. Ms. Haworth confirmed that it did. Cmr. Fudge asked
34 what the height of the parapet on the top floor would be. Ms. Haworth said that four or five feet is typical.
35

36 Cristian Haworth presented Option 2 and pointed out that the floor plates in all three scenarios were level
37 with internal ramping. Cmr. Saunders asked about the height of this option. Director Bennett responded that
38 it was approximately 45 feet in height. Ms. Haworth mentioned that she would follow up and confirm the
39 assumed massing of each option.
40

41 Ms. Haworth said that Option 3 was a five story structure with 470 stalls. Director Bennett clarified that
42 these examples are intended to illustrate elements that can serve as a gauge to start discussions on design
43 standards. Cmr. Katz said that she would like to see some ground level treatment that would interact well
44 with City Hall. There was discussion about the number of parking stalls needed and Cmr. Larson said that
45 required spaces are not the driving factor, but standards that reflect the community's needs should be the
46 primary consideration. Director Bennett suggested that the Commission should plan to be close to the space
47 count that Sound Transit needs. Cmr. Morris said that the community doesn't want large massing in the
48 structure. Cmr. Larson said that traffic flow in and out of the garage should be a consideration, given the
49 current traffic concerns. Chair Paisner said he agreed with Cmr. Larson, but indicated that all elements of the
50 design are under discussion. Cmr. Fudge said that all of the drawings have the garage in the same space and
51 in no other location within the town center. He asked why other locations in Town Center were not
52 included. Cmr. Katz said that Sound Transit held public meetings to determine the location of the garage.

1 Director Bennett said that the location question would be a good question to ask Sound Transit when they
2 attend a Commission meeting. He added that regulations could be developed to limit the siting of the garage
3 to a particular location. Cmr. Gross said that the Planning Commission should develop standards that
4 produce a garage that the community can accept. Cmr. Saunders said that the users of the structure should
5 be considered when developing the design guidelines.
6

7 Chair Paisner asked Ms. Haworth to continue with her presentation. Ms. Haworth said that traffic studies will
8 accompany the application for development, so those potential congestion issues can be considered. She also
9 said that the massing and elevations of the structure are elements that the design standards can easily regulate.
10 Chair Paisner said that Option 3 looks too big. Cmr. Larson talked about comments from the community,
11 but agreed on the size being too big. She added that if the code allows a garage that generates traffic that
12 town center can't handle, that would be problematic. Cmr. Fudge asked if Alternative 1 from the EIS was
13 driving the number of stalls or whether the proposed garage has more stalls than the EIS evaluates. Director
14 Bennett responded that, while the three options are associated with the work on the EIS, they are not tied to
15 any particular EIS alternatives. He then asked Commissioners what kind of parameters the Commission
16 wants to regulate. Cmr Fudge said that it is hard to suggest regulations when all of the information comes
17 from different sources. Director Bennett clarified the types of elements that can be regulated through the
18 design standards. Cmr. Katz said that the EIS didn't evaluate every particular configuration of a possible
19 parking garage. Chair Paisner addressed Cmr. Fudge's comments and asked him what he thought the
20 Commission should do. Cmr. Fudge said he is concerned about the quality of information provided by Otak.
21 Chair Paisner suggested that the Commission move onto the next topic.
22

23 Director Bennett talked about differing building materials used to lessen the impact of the garage façade. He
24 presented an image of a parking garage constructed of wood gluelam or cross-laminated timber construction.
25 He suggested that the design guidelines could have language that dictated materials. Cmr. Gross said that
26 alternative materials may create additional height. Director Bennett said that the regulations surrounding
27 materials could be written to trade off for additional height or stall count. Director Bennett asked the
28 Commission to provide feedback on the number of stories that were appropriate. Cmr. Larson said she did
29 not prefer option three in the presentation because it is too big. Cmr. Fudge asked if all of the floors have to
30 be above ground. He talked about an example where floors were below grade. Director Bennett suggested
31 that the code could remain silent on the below grade parking. Chair Paisner said that he favors less floors
32 above ground. Cmr Withers said that he has researched the water table under Town Center and he thinks the
33 costs would rise if dewatering operations are necessary. Cmr. Katz said she is okay with options one and two.
34 Cmr. Larson agreed. Cmr. Morris asked if the regulations could suggest retail trade offs for additional floors
35 and step backs for upper floors. Cmr. Saunders asked if the height could be driven by highway improvement
36 requirements. Director Bennet talked about how trade-offs and incentives work within regulations. He said
37 that the incentive-based codes must have a nexus that is proportionate to the impacts of the project. Cmr.
38 Withers said that the regulations should include provisions for covered walkways to transit stops. Director
39 Bennett clarified that he City is pursuing a grant for an overpass over 522. Chair Paisner said that he was
40 hearing that the position of the Commission is more in line with options one and two in tandem with the
41 incentive-based regulations that were discussed. He went onto talk about the location of the garage and a
42 possible alternative location other than town center. Director Bennett reminded Commissioners that they
43 had discussed pursuing a dual track where regulations are developed for both a garage in town center and a
44 second track that prohibits one in Town Center.
45

46 Chair Paisner asked if an example can be provided of code language that doesn't allow a garage. Director
47 Bennett responded that such provisions would be a part of the process. He added that the developer and
48 Sound Transit will always comment on whether or not the code allows a design that they can use. Cmr.
49 Larson said that the Planning Commission should develop code that community supports. Director Bennett
50 clarified that the Commission recommends regulations to the City Council. Cmr. Withers asked about the
51 location of the garage and how that influences the choices for each option presented. Cmr Withers asked if
52 the Commission should come up with specific building heights and footprints. Cmr. Gross said that all area

1 and dimensional requirements should be developed. Cmr. Morris and Cmr. Saunders also agreed with Cmr.
2 Gross.

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4 Director Bennett asked for Commission feedback on the list of design criteria presented. Cmr. Fudge asked
5 about the space numbers and how many can be gained with either flat or elevated floors. Cmr. Gross said
6 that he thought that unsloped floors generally take about 15% of stalls away from a footprint. Director
7 Bennett said that the building code would regulate the maximum slope of floors. Cmr. Fudge asked if the
8 garage would be for just commuters, or if shoppers would use it since the design elements could be different.
9 Director Bennett pointed to the example Boise guide and the user comfort level rating. Cmr. Katz would like
10 mixed use standards to be developed. Cmr. Larson said that pedestrian safety should be a priority. Cmr.
11 Withers said that he understood that Sound Transit has developed fee based parking systems for commuters.
12 Chair Paisner asked if the height, footprint, and façade were dictated, would it achieve the number of stalls
13 Sound Transit needs. Director Bennet responded that the Commission should develop a code that seems
14 appropriate and that Sound Transit could probably do the calculation quickly enough for the Commission to
15 know if the agency's needs were met.

16
17 Director Bennett introduced signage options for the code. Cmr. Saunders said he is in favor of a color theme
18 for the garage. Director Bennett spoke about construction types, and mixed use mandates for the code and
19 that incentive-based provisions that can be developed for additional heights/floors. He asked the
20 Commission if they support those types of direction for the code. There was discussion about how the
21 design guidelines would read if the desired outcome were wood construction and whether wood construction
22 is problematic for safety reasons. Chair Paisner asked if Sound Transit is interested in bonus stalls/height.
23 Director Bennett said that he did not know, but it would be worth asking when Sound Transit comes to a
24 meeting. Cmr. Larson suggested that staff and Commissioners come up with some examples to discuss at a
25 future meeting. Director Bennett said that he plans on bringing regulations to the Commission regarding the
26 process for development and land use approval to the next meeting. Chair Paisner clarified that all
27 communication must be directed to the staff. Cmr. Fudge said that the garage location will impact the
28 farmer's market location and that the current location does not support construction types that equate to
29 more stalls. There was discussion about Merlone Geier's position on the potential garage location and that
30 conversations with property owner and Sound Transit should happen soon. Ms. Haworth clarified that she
31 will leave out option three for next time.

32
33 Chair Paisner clarified that the Commission should set aside time to discuss design criteria with Merlone
34 Geier. He asked the Commission about the types of things to discuss with the property owner. Cmr. Gross
35 said that the Commission should focus on developing regulations for the parking garage. Cmr. Larson said
36 that the Commission should set aside time to discuss design criteria with Merlone Geier, and that the date
37 should be specific.

38
39 Council Member French spoke about developments at the Council level. He said that the Council is not in
40 direct discussions with Sound Transit and that discussions are occurring through the administration. He also
41 said that the Council is letting the Commission take the lead on developing regulations for the parking garage.
42 He said the Council is working on budget amendments. Councilmember French said that the Council
43 expects to have the regulations for town center completed within the six month moratorium and he hopes
44 that an extension would not be needed. He said that he appreciates all of the work the Commission is doing
45 and that the Council is more than willing to work with the Commission.

46
47 There was consensus that the work plan for 2020 should be discussed at the next meeting. Cmr. Katz asked
48 about the shoreline regulations and Director Bennett said that the Commission still needs to develop a
49 recommendation for those regulations.

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52 **Public Comments**

1 Jack Tonkin said that traffic considerations should be priority. If code is changed, three stories should be the
2 limit, maybe four stories. He suggested that a graphic with strikethroughs would be useful for code revisions.
3 He said that building height increases could have an effect on the entire town center. He asked if Sound
4 Transit is firm on 300 stalls and who will pay for the extra space in the garage. He said that they don't have
5 money to accommodate what the Commission is exploring with regard to regulations. He said don't look at
6 increased floors and height if you don't know the costs.

7
8 Mike Dee thanked staff for posting cancellation notice for last meeting, for having the Boise standards online,
9 and said for posting documents online for this meeting. He talked about the need for links on the website.
10 He talked about the notify-me function on the website.

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13 **Reports and Announcements:** None.

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15 **Agenda for Next Meeting:** Similar to this agenda.

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17 Chair Paisner thanked staff for all of their hard work.

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19 Cmr. Larson moved to adjourn the meeting, Cmr. Gross seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

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21 **Adjournment:** 9:10 pm

22 APPROVED:

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25 Joel Paisner, Vice Chair