

1 City of Lake Forest Park - Planning Commission
2 Regular Meeting Minutes: August 11, 2020
3 Virtual/Zoom Meeting
4

5 **Planning Commissioners present:** Chair Maddy Larson, Vice Chair Rachael Katz, Richard
6 Saunders, Steve Morris, Ira Gross, Jon Lebo, Joel Paisner, T.J. Fudge
7

8 **Staff and others present:** Steve Bennett, Planning Director; Nick Holland, Senior Planner, Cristina
9 Haworth, Otak, Lorri Bodi, Councilmember
10

11 **Members of the Public:** Don Fiene
12

13 **Planning Commissioners absent:** n/a
14

15 **Call to order:** Chair Larson called the meeting to order at 7:05PM
16

17 **Approval of Agenda:**

18 Cmr. Katz made a motion to accept the agenda, Cmr. Gross seconded the motion, all agreed and the
19 agenda was approved unanimously.
20

21 **Approval of Meeting Minutes from July 14, 2020**
22

23 Cmr. Paisner made a motion to approve the draft minutes from July 14, 2020; Cmr. Gross seconded
24 the motion and the minutes were approved unanimously.
25

26 **Meeting Dates:**

27 The next regular meeting is scheduled for September 8, 2020. Cmr. Saunders indicated that he
28 would not be able to attend.
29

30 **Citizen Comments:**
31

32 Senior Planner Holland noted that no one signed up to comment.

33 Cmr. Katz reminded Commissioners that a comment letter had been received after the 7/14
34 meeting from Melissa Sargent Cmr. Katz shared the content of the letter which addressed affordable
35 housing in the town center, ending systematic racism, and altering zoning and housing laws to
36 encourage racial diversity.

37 Commissioners reflected on the content of the letter. Chair Larson asked about the plans to
38 implement in person meetings. Director Bennett said that there are no plans to resume them at this
39 time, but that the City's virtual meeting format is evolving to accommodate more aspects of regular
40 meetings including live public comments. Chair Larson said that she wants to understand the
41 Commission's position on affordable housing. She also asked if the Commission should send a
42 memo to the Council recommending extension of the moratorium. Director Bennett said that the
43 Council is likely to consider extending the moratorium in September. Chair Larson asked
44 Commissioners if they would like to make a recommendation to Council to extend the moratorium
45 and suggested sending a recommendation via memorandum.

1 Cmr. Paisner reflected on the letter’s content and said that extension of the moratorium makes
2 sense. Director Bennett suggested that the easiest way for the Commission to communicate with
3 the Council on the moratorium topic would be to make a motion.

4 Cmr. Gross moved that the Commission recommend that the City Council to extend the
5 moratorium. Cmr. Saunders seconded the motion. Chair Larson asked if there was any discussion of
6 the motion.

7 Cmr. Katz said she was curious about updates from Sound Transit. Director Bennett said that
8 Sound Transit plans on applying for a permit after the City Council adopts regulations. Cmr. Katz
9 thanked Director Bennett for the update and indicated that it did not change her position on
10 extending the moratorium.

11 Chair Larson called for the vote and the motion passed unanimously.

12 **Report from City Council Liaison**

13 Noting that Councilmember French was not present to provide a report, Chair Larson asked
14 Director Bennett if he had anything to share. Director Bennett responded that a Council
15 Committee of the Whole meeting had occurred the night before and Council has completed its first
16 review of the Commission’s recommended code amendments and design guidelines. He said that
17 he, Otak consultants, and the City Attorney were working on a revised draft reflective of Council
18 comments which should be ready for review by the middle of September. He added that, when that
19 draft is available, it would be a good time to resume discussions with Sound Transit and possibly
20 Merlone Geier. He concluded by noting that Councilmembers had been very engaged in the
21 discussion, asking good questions, and had proposed amendments such as changing ‘shoulds’ to
22 ‘shalls’ in the draft design guidelines.

23
24 Chair Larson said that, after reviewing the track changes version of the Commission’s recommended
25 code changes, she, as an individual citizen, had concerns about some of the recommendations the
26 Commission had made. She said, by eliminating the first few sections 18.42.040, there are no longer
27 provisions that set a limit on density in town center. She added that she wanted to check in with
28 Commissioners to see whether they would like to communicate to Council that the Commission did
29 not intend to eliminate those density limit provisions until the Commission had replacement
30 provisions for them. Cmr. Paisner pointed out as a point of order that this subject is not on the
31 agenda and that he doesn’t have enough information to consider the question. . Chair Larson
32 acknowledged that it was not on the agenda and said that she would like to add this subject to the
33 next agenda.

34
35 Cmr. Fudge said that he wants the public to understand that the Commission did not intend to
36 recommend those changes and that this part of why there is a lot of distrust in public about this
37 process. Cmr. Katz noted that by the time the Commission meets again, the Council’s revised draft
38 may be available and it may be clearer how the Council is going to address this issue.

39
40 **Old Business**

- 41 • Implementation of Town Center Vision
- 42 ○ Discussions of open space and public amenities associated with other mixed use
- 43 developments in surrounding communities of comparable size

1
2 Chair Larson asked Director Bennett to lead the discussion of the open space presentation.
3 Director Bennett summarized the three examples of open space in surrounding communities that
4 would be reviewed. He said that two represent good examples and one represents a less successful
5 example.
6
7 Cristina Haworth from Otak provided a description of the Mill Creek Meadows project. She said it
8 is similar in size to town center and is primarily residential. She highlighted the central park and the
9 variety of types of open space it included. Cmr. Gross commented that this was fully residential
10 with no commercial like LFP town center. Chair Larson asked why this was a good example.
11 Director Bennett said that the consolidated open space made it a good example. Cmr. Saunders
12 asked how open space gets categorized in LFP. Director Bennett explained the difference between
13 private and public open space and added that required amounts for each can be specified in the
14 regulations. Cmr. Fudge asked how many parking spaces per unit are required and asked about the
15 ground floor as a parking garage and indicated it might not be the best pedestrian experience. He
16 said he is curious about the pedestrian experience and how this type of feature would translate in
17 LFP town center. Ms. Haworth provided some details about the parking and base requirements and
18 mentioned the developer received a parking credit. She said that 1.94 spaces per dwelling unit were
19 provided. Chair Larson said that she is concerned with transitions to residential neighborhoods
20 adjacent to town center.
21
22 The discussion moved on to the Farm at Mill Creek and Ms. Haworth indicated that this project
23 may not be an ideal example. She pointed out that there is a lot of surface parking and that much of
24 the open space provided was in the form of corridor/linear spaces along with multiple smaller open
25 spaces for a total of two acres. Director Bennett suggested that minimum dimensions for open
26 space could be used to prevent long, corridor shaped open spaces. Cmr. Lebo said that this example
27 has no appeal and the planning is centered around the vehicle. Chair Larson agreed. Cmr. Katz
28 asked if the same code regulated both Mill Creek projects and Ms. Haworth said it was the same
29 code and design guidelines for both developments. Cmr. Katz said that these examples are a good
30 learning exercise to see what comes out of regulations. Director Bennett clarified that both projects
31 were part of a larger area covered by the same subarea plan and that the Farm project was
32 designated as an area intended to accommodate more intense commercial development which may
33 account for the additional surface parking. Cmr. Fudge said preventing something like the Farm
34 project should be a top priority. Director Bennett said that they would research if development
35 agreements were used in the two projects, but that he thinks the area plan dictated the some of the
36 differences in those two developments. Ms. Haworth said that the Farm did not include integrated
37 access to the wetland area, which she thought was a missed opportunity.
38
39 Ms. Haworth presented the Woodinville School House project. She said it is a combination of
40 residential, commercial, and civic uses on a three-acre site that the City sold to the developers. She
41 said there is 30,000 square feet of public open space. She indicated there was a lot of variety
42 included in the open spaces such as sports, recreation and other flexible types of open space. Ms.
43 Haworth indicated the project was a private public partnership and a conceptual master plan that
44 was approved with a development agreement was presented. Ms. Haworth indicated that there are
45 a lot of changes from the development agreement's conceptual plan and explained what had
46 changed. Chair Larson and Cmr. Katz discussed the ratio of open space and compared it to LFP
47 town center. Ms. Haworth explained that height bonuses were allowed in return for the large
48 amount of open space. Cmr. Fudge said that he likes a lot of about the project. He said that

1 masking the lower level of parking was a good idea and that it created a better pedestrian experience.
2 He said the buildings look very tall. He said that this example would be good to get public input on.
3 Cmr. Lebo agreed that the pedestrian and open spaces are done well but it comes with the price of
4 structured parking and taller buildings which the community may not want. Chair Larson said the
5 transition to single family homes is what is different about LFP.
6

7 Discussion ensued about the Postmark development in the City of Shoreline. Chair Larson
8 indicated she did not find the height and the type of construction of that development appealing.
9

10 Cmr. Fudge asked about how much parking was required at Woodinville, and Ms. Haworth said that
11 630 spaces were required and the developer was able to get a reduction of 37%. She indicated that
12 parking reductions are often given for transit accessibility and joint use scenarios.
13

14 Director Bennett said that he feels that there is some Commission support for looking deeper into
15 the Woodinville schoolhouse development to research additional details. Cmr. Paisner said he likes
16 the Woodinville project as a good example for town center. Chair Larson asked to share some slides
17 of the Pearl (San Antonio, Texas) with regard to open space. She explained some of the aspects of
18 the open space in that area that she found appealing. She said that the mix of larger and smaller
19 open spaces were done well and that the pedestrian experience is a good one.
20

21 Director Bennett suggested pulling together images that were well received tonight and articulating
22 aspects to avoid as part of an outline of priorities for open space. Cmr. Fudge said that the trade-off
23 for the open spaces is height and that the LFP community may not receive it well. He said that
24 transparency in the vision and communication with the community is necessary so that all can
25 receive it well. Cmr. Lebo said the challenge is that members of the community do not want height
26 because of the proximity of residential uses. He sees a lot of constraints in LFP town center in
27 using height to achieve better open space. He said that the costs the developer will incur and the
28 profits received don't generate a development worth constructing. Chair Larson said all should look
29 at the code amendments. Cmr. Paisner said that the issue of affordability is pervasive throughout
30 the City. He said it isn't feasible to solve affordability at town center exclusively, the regulations for
31 other zones need to be amended as well to solve the problem. Cmr. Katz said that choices are
32 available for town center, but that the Commission should be honest about value choices. She said
33 that current events may have shifted public opinion on housing.
34

35 **Reports and Announcements**

36 None from staff.
37

38 **Agenda for Next Meeting:** Similar to this agenda. Chair Larson suggested talking about
39 mechanisms available for encouraging affordability in town center. Cmr. Saunders agreed and said
40 he also wanted to discuss the letter sent by Ms. Sargent. Director Bennett confirmed his
41 understanding of the next agenda items. Chair Larson suggested involving experts from the public
42 and other cities. Director Bennett agreed to look into it and added that provisions had already be
43 drafted related to the multifamily tax exemption which could be discussed.
44

45 Cmr. Lebo asked if there is any discussion about decision making during virtual meetings. Cmr.
46 Paisner said that he thinks approval is not needed and would support making decisions at the
47 Commission level. Cmr. Fudge and Cmr. Gross agreed with Cmr. Painser. Cmr. Lebo questioned
48 public involvement in this process. Cmr. Fudge said the process is moving backwards and would

1 like to help the City increase diversity. He said the town center should be wrapped up so the
2 Commission can take advantage of opportunities to make a difference for the City. Cmr. Paisner
3 said the global pandemic affects how the Commission engages the public. Cmr. Katz said she would
4 like additional direction from Council. Chair Larson said that she would suggest talking about how
5 to move towards recommendations for the Council to deliberate on. Cmr. Saunders said that being
6 in sync with Council is important and that he would like to be sure that the Council is supportive of
7 the Commission's direction.

8
9 Chair Larson asked Commissioners if they wanted to have public comments at the end of the
10 meeting. There was agreement that it was a good idea.

11 **Public Comments**

12 Don Fiene said that a small group of citizens had been working on a code update for Accessory
13 Dwelling Units(ADU). He said that 400-600 ADUs could be accommodated in the city and that the
14 rental rates would give the property owner a profit. He said that the group had drafted an ordinance
15 that they will be taking to Council.

16
17
18 Lori Bodi said that she appreciated the discussion on the open space examples and that the
19 Commission should decide which direction to take. She said that she will report back to the Council
20 on the content of the meeting.

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22 Cmr. Lebo made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Cmr. Katz seconded, and the motion carried
23 unanimously.

24
25 **Adjournment:** 9:07pm

26 APPROVED:

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Maddy Larson

Maddy Larson, Chair