

**REDMOND PLANNING COMMISSION  
MINUTES**

May 23, 2012

**COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:** Outgoing Chairman Tom Hinman, Vice Chair Franz Wiechers-Gregory, Commissioners O’Hara, Biethan, Murray, and Chandorkar

**COMMISSIONERS EXCUSED:** Commissioner Miller

**STAFF PRESENT:** Sarah Stiteler, Redmond Planning Department; Pete Sullivan, Redmond Planning Department

**RECORDING SECRETARY:** Lady of Letters, Inc.

**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Vice Chair Franz Wiechers-Gregory in the Council Chambers at City Hall.

Commissioner Gregory thanked the outgoing Chairman, Tom Hinman, for his many, many years of service. Lori Peckol also thanked and recognized Commissioner Hinman for his work on the Commission for seven years, serving two years as Chair and one year as Vice Chair. She said Commissioner Hinman brought three special qualities to the Planning Commission and the community as a lasting legacy. Ms. Peckol said that Commissioner Hinman has expanded the bench of the Planning Commission. All Commissioners know that volunteering for this role takes considerable time in meeting preparation and attendance. She said what Commissioner Hinman has done has encouraged the Commission’s participation well beyond that by asking about each Commissioner’s interests for the topics coming before them and by tapping Commissioners to lead reviews of amendments all through the Comprehensive Plan update, and participate in a variety of community meetings. Through these actions and by including Vice Chair Gregory through past meetings, Commissioner Hinman has helped strengthen the depth of the Planning Commission, expanded its knowledge, and helped with the transition in leadership.

Secondly, Ms. Peckol noted that Commissioner Hinman has introduced regionalism to the Planning Commission, which has been a big topic for the City of Redmond, and an important topic for the Planning Commission especially with regard to policy amendments. Commissioner Hinman spoke about this issue during his interview in 2005, and thought about regionalism when considering the Overlake Neighborhood Plan update and the Comprehensive Plan. Ms. Peckol noted that Commissioner Hinman has wanted to continue to strengthen connections with neighboring communities and consider the regional implications of policies under consideration, from economics to transportation to housing. Ms. Peckol was glad that Commissioner Hinman will continue his work on the East Corridor Task Force and help the City continue to strengthen connections.

Thirdly, Ms. Peckol noted that Commissioner Hinman has been very thoughtful about the transition from Redmond today to a vision of Redmond in the future. She noted Commissioner

Hinman's ability to think about the transition to that future and the challenges and opportunities along the way. Ms. Peckol said that Commissioner Hinman's insights have been valued and appreciated by the City during preparations for a meeting or during consideration of the work for the years ahead.

On behalf of the City of Redmond, Ms. Peckol thanked Commissioner Hinman for his dedication and service, and all the contributions he has made. She looked forward to continuing to work with him. Ms. Peckol presented him with a plaque, which reads, *To Tom Hinman, in recognition of your leadership and dedicated service as Planning Commissioner from September 2005 to March of 2012, and Chair from March of 2010 to March of 2012, from John Marchione, Mayor, City of Redmond.* A round of applause followed. Commissioner Hinman said he would cherish the award always.

Commissioner Hinman said he has been honored to serve with seventeen different commissioners in his time, as well as a respectable group of city staff and members of the community. He said he got involved in the Commission out of interest in the Bel-Red corridor and the Overlake Neighborhood plan updates which then led to his interest in the Planning Commission. Since then, he said he has been involved in all the neighborhood plans except Grass Lawn and nearly all of the functional plans of the City, such as the TMP. During his last two years, he worked on the Comprehensive Plan with Commissioners and staff to inject new thoughts regarding sustainability. He was gratified to have that opportunity. He acknowledged Ms. Peckol's kind words and appreciated the thanks of the Commission. Commissioner Gregory noted that Commissioner Hinman would not be far away.

**APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA:**

There were no changes to the agenda.

**APPROVAL OF MEETING SUMMARY:**

The meeting summary of April 25<sup>th</sup>, 2012, was approved without objection.

**ITEMS FROM THE AUDIENCE:**

There were no items from the audience.

**PUBLIC HEARING AND STUDY SESSION, Proposed Zoning Code Amendment to Sign Code Procedural Requirements**, presented by Deborah Farris, City of Redmond Code Enforcement Officer.

Commissioner Gregory opened the public hearing and asked about written comments. He noted that the public hearing would remain open through the presentation by Ms. Farris.

Ms. Farris identified herself as one of two Code Enforcement Officers for the City of Redmond. She has been involved in many parts of the Sign Code process, specifically with temporary signs. She spoke to the Commission about a minor amendment, moving Section 21.44.010(J), which deals with the removal and disposal of illegal signs, from the Redmond Zoning Code into the Redmond Municipal Code, Section 1.14. This section of the Municipal Code has all of the City's Code enforcement language contained in it. There are several reasons for the change:

1. The Code Rewrite Commission and City Council, when working on the new Zoning Code, had a mission to keep the Code a standalone land use document. This paragraph, which Ms. Farris said should have been moved to the RMC during the rewrite, was not relocated.
2. This relocation would put all of the Code language in one place, complying with the mission statement of City Council.
3. City staff believes the Code would be more efficient and user-friendly for staff, businesses, or citizens at large with this change to relocate Code language regarding portable signs and Code enforcement.

Right now, the Code language on this topic is in several different locations. Thus, when a Code Enforcement Officer issues a Sign Code warning, notice, or order, there are different places to send people depending on whether a fine versus a fee is involved. Ms. Farris said it would be more efficient if people could go to one book with all the Code enforcement language.

Commissioner Murray confirmed with Ms. Farris that the Code section in question would move, word for word, from the Zoning Code into the RMC. Commissioner Hinman clarified this was not a matter of substance, but rather a matter of format or placement for ease of use. Commissioner Gregory closed the public hearing at this point.

**STUDY SESSION, 2012-2013 Annual Update to the Comprehensive Plan**, presented by Pete Sullivan, City of Redmond Planning Department.

Mr. Sullivan noted that one of the core functions for the Commission was to set the course for Redmond's future and make policy recommendations to the Mayor and City Council. The primary source of that policy is the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Sullivan noted that there are nineteen proposals on the docket for this update, and he said the Commission would have an opportunity to add any that may be missing.

Mr. Sullivan said the Comprehensive Plan is updated because it contains Redmond's visions and goals as well as policies. Those policies can come in the form of a land use map that describes what development activities can take place. Sometimes, Zoning Code changes also require a change to the Comprehensive Plan land use map. Text and policies may need to change as well. There are two types of Comprehensive Plan updates, including public, city-initiated proposals and private proposals. Yet, the same legislative review process oversees both of these types of updates, involving the Planning Commission and then the City Council for a final decision.

The Commission just wrapped up the periodic update of the Comprehensive Plan, which is a document-wide review required every five to seven years by state law. The themes of the last periodic update were the following:

1. Reflect work completed since 2004.
2. Incorporate sustainability principles.
3. Respond to state and regional requirements.
4. Extend the long-term horizon to 2030 instead of 2022.
5. Emphasize the urban centers.

6. Incorporate stakeholder feedback.
7. Better organization of the document as a whole.

Annual amendments are minor revisions to the plan which are typically narrower in scope. They target areas that were not updated during the periodic update or provide a response to situations that have changed. Under state law, these types of amendments are allowed to be docketed once per year. The themes for this year's annual amendments are the following:

1. To complete the carryover of items from last year's docket that for a variety of reasons, the Commission was not able to complete.
2. To add some new proposals from the City and the private sector.

Last year and the year before, the annual amendment did not entertain private sector proposals because people were encouraged to participate in the periodic update process as a whole. The year 2009 was the last time City staff sought private requests as separate amendments. Tonight, Mr. Sullivan would like the Commission to learn about what the summary list contains and confirm it while trying to figure out if anything is missing. Mr. Sullivan said the docket was established via a 30-day request for proposals sent out to the community and to staff in the earlier part of this year asking for ideas. An application can be completed at no cost. At the close of that 30-day period, staff creates a summary list which is presented to the Commission, which is the process happening at this meeting.

Following review of the summary list, the Commission then examines the interrelationships between the different proposals presented. Mr. Sullivan said that process is undertaken to understand the cumulative effects and broad potential impacts of all the proposals together. Mr. Sullivan reminded the Commission this is a rolling docket cycle, meaning the Commission can make decisions that could become effective over the course of the year because the interrelationships are examined up front. Those interrelationships would be considered as each item is reviewed. This part of the process will happen in two weeks' time.

After the Commission has looked at the interrelationships, there will not be a public hearing, because each of the 19 items will be individually reviewed once City Council adopts the docket, or final report. There will be a staff report to City Council in July, and likely City action on that report by the end of July to confirm the list generated. At that point, staff members are assigned to different items on the list and a schedule is determined.

Community involvement entails the outreach for proposals, and Mr. Sullivan explained the mechanism of how that outreach occurred. The docket process also helps interested parties track these amendments over the course of the year. If someone is interested in something, they can look at the Planning Commission's "Topics Under Review" web page and see when those items are coming forward and access materials. The public hearings occur as each item is reviewed.

Mr. Sullivan noted that interested people can sign on to an email list to figure out what Comprehensive Plan updates are coming. There are about 500 people on that list. There were also Facebook and Twitter announcements about the 30-day call for proposals. The Redmond

newspapers also picked up a press release on this item. The Redmond home page has a link to the call for proposals, as well. A mailed letter went out to more than 1,100 people in Redmond.

Nineteen proposals were received under three categories: city-initiated proposals from last year that were not completed; those that are new for the next year, and the privately-initiated requests. Commissioner Chandorkar asked if this process would be undertaken at the start of next year. Mr. Sullivan responded that the docket runs on a July to July timeline. Mr. Sullivan detailed the nineteen proposals received. The city-initiated carryovers include the following:

1. Updates to the stormwater policies and the Comprehensive Plan Utilities element. There was some public testimony on this issue last year and a host of proposed updates based on development regulations that had changes, and changes to best practices and contemporary stormwater management concepts. The City Council had said these items were on hold because there were broader discussions to have about stormwater. Thus, these changes were not enacted.
2. The Transportation Master Plan, begun in the prior cycle and will come before the Planning Commission.
3. The Natural Environment element of the Comprehensive Plan, which was also in the scope of the periodic update. Due to some federal parties that had not reviewed their portion of that element it could not be carried forward. There will be many updates that affect that element, but it will go directly to City Council per Planning Commission recommendation.
4. Watershed Management Plan, the new functional plan for stormwater initiated in the last cycle.

New proposals include these items:

5. One of the carryover parking lot items from the Code Rewrite Commission had to do with housing and innovative housing regulations. That may necessitate corresponding policy changes in the Housing element of the Comprehensive Plan.
6. When the Transportation Master Plan is complete, it may be necessary to make changes to the Transportation element or the Land Use element of the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Sullivan does not believe these changes would be significant, but terminology may need to be changed.
7. Within the Urban Centers element, the Urban Center boundary and its employment area, and the zoning for Overlake Business and Technology are not in alignment. The Commission had discussed coming back to this and exploring the alignment of the boundary. This would involve significant participation from the City of Bellevue as well as some major businesses and stakeholders in that area. The current and planned development should line up with the Urban Center boundary, out of administrative need. Applying for grants and other tasks are more difficult if those boundaries don't match. Commissioner Hinman noted that this area is west of Highway 520, and there are a number of large employers that have TMP issues that this alignment will simplify. Commissioner Murray asked if Bellevue was in alignment with Redmond on this topic. Mr. Sullivan said that Redmond would have to initiate thoughtful discussions with the City of Bellevue.

8. There would be minor tune-ups to the Comprehensive Plan glossary to reflect the periodic update from the last docket cycle.
9. Parking-related policy and regulatory update. King County Metro is conducting a regional parking study called right-size parking to take a broader look at optimal parking ratios for the region. Redmond may need to respond to the findings of that study.
10. The Southeast Redmond Neighborhood Plan is scheduled for an update to look at transportation, employment, and light rail implications of that neighborhood.
11. The Sammamish Valley Neighborhood Plan has not been updated for ten years. The two neighborhood plans would involve corresponding policy changes to the neighborhood's element of the Comprehensive Plan. Commissioner Gregory asked how boundaries for neighborhoods were set. Mr. Sullivan said in the Neighborhoods elements of the Comprehensive Plan, each neighborhood has individual policies. During the neighborhood planning process, the boundaries are reviewed.
12. GTEC, the Growth, Transportation and Efficiency Center. Currently, Overlake is designated as a GTEC, but not Downtown. The designation helps facilitate state funding for transportation and the Planning staff would like Downtown to get that designation.
13. The Bear Creek Design District will be updated corresponding to the policy changes in the Bear Creek Neighborhood Plan.
14. In the Utilities element, there are a series of maps, including some relating to electrical facilities. The map that indicates the proposed electrical facilities will be updated based on system-wide comments that Puget Sound Energy has provided following changes in that agency. Also, there is a joint planning process underway between Redmond and PSE in the Willows/Rose Hill neighborhood that has to do with a transmission line alignment from the Juanita substation west. Once that process is complete, the City will need to update the map.
15. One Redmond includes the Redmond Economic Development Alliance, the Chamber of Commerce, and the City and has been formed to encourage economic development and retention and the recruiting of businesses. There may be changes to the Economic Vitality element to support those objectives.

There are four privately-initiated requests:

16. In a corridor along 132<sup>nd</sup> Avenue NE in the west edge of the City, there is a proposal to change the General Sewer Plan to would allow connection to the City of Kirkland, which is not currently allowed per the plan. The applicant is Yuval Sofer on behalf of Emerald Commercial LLC.
17. A proposal with three components would amend the Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Code by adding a goal on sustainability, adding text regarding community character and architectural design excellence, and involving the State Environmental Policy Act process for environmental review. Certain categorical thresholds are allowed based on lot size and other criteria, such that environmental review is not needed. The City is at the upper tier of most categories except for in-fill development. The applicant wants to raise the thresholds where possible to support desired development in the urban centers. There is also consideration at the state level about changing the thresholds altogether, which the applicant would like the City to track.

18. A site-specific request pertaining to a single parcel at the junction of Willows Road and NE 91<sup>st</sup> Street, zoned currently as a Manufacturing Park through the Comprehensive Plan and the zoning map. The request is to change this to General Commercial to allow for a stand-alone restaurant with a drive-through. That zoning change would require a Comprehensive Plan change. The applicant is Tim Brennan on behalf of B&B Alpine Properties.
19. A two-part package would involve Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Code amendments for tree retention requirements and replacement ratios for development activities. There would also be an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan and the Zoning Code that speaks to community engagement that is needed when exceptions to the tree retention requirements are sought. Certain community engagements processes would need to be expanded in a case like this. The applicant is Tom Hinman on behalf of Citizens and Neighbors for a Sustainable Redmond. Commissioner Gregory clarified that this package would limit the number of exceptions to the tree retention. Commissioner Hinman noted that a portion of it dealt with more public engagements in the process of granting an exception. A definition for the term Technical Committee might be amplified, as well.

Commissioner Biethan said he would recuse himself for the first of these private issues, in that he was a member of the LLC in question in the Rose Hill neighborhood.

Mr. Sullivan said the schedule going forward would involve another meeting on June 13<sup>th</sup>, when the Commission would look at the interrelationships. The docket will go directly to City Council on July 3<sup>rd</sup> for a staff report and July 31<sup>st</sup> for Council action. The schedule after that will be established immediately following City Council's confirmation of the final docket list. Commissioner Biethan confirmed that the only action to take here would be to ask questions or to add to this list, not to remove anything from it. Mr. Sullivan gave an example of an interrelationship to the Commission, where a change in the Transportation Master plan and changes in the Transportation element and the Land Use element would be connected. Commissioner Chandorkar asked if there were parking lot issues from the Code Rewrite Commission that would result in Comprehensive Plan changes. Mr. Sullivan said there was only one, dealing with housing policy changes.

**STUDY SESSION, Proposed Zoning Code Amendments to eliminate the requirements for existing single family homes, and additions/modifications thereof, to underground utility distribution lines along public rights-of-way**, presented by Pete Sullivan, City of Redmond Planning Department.

Commissioner Murray thanked Mr. Sullivan for his work to improve public engagement in the Planning Commission's activities at this point. Mr. Sullivan noted that the Comprehensive Plan Utilities element has policies that direct the City during capital projects, and developers as part of private projects, to relocate aerial utilities underground as part of certain development. Tonight, the Commission will hear about the benefits of the proposal, the Planning Commission's role in this effort, the background and purpose of this proposal, key issues considered in drafting the Zoning Code amendment text, and drawbacks to the proposal, and the schedule.

The proposal would exempt new single-family homes and additions and remodels thereof from undergrounding utility distribution lines along public rights-of-way. Undergrounding would still be required for service lines from the buildings on the property to the nearest utility pole, wherever that might be, for all development types. The proposal would clarify that new single-family homes are also subject to this requirement, which before was a little unclear. The proposal will also clarify the mechanism by which any applicant of any land-use development type may petition the City for relief from any of the undergrounding standards or other rights-of-way improvement standards.

The benefits of this proposal are that a minor change would help continue to implement the broader Comprehensive Plan policy calling for relocating utilities underground. It would also eliminate high cost burdens associated with undergrounding for minor developments such as new homes and remodels. The Commission will review the amendment and consider the conceptual review last year about this topic, which was part of the Commission's review of the Utilities Element of the Comprehensive Plan. The Commission considered this a major sub-item, that the City had become aware that minor residential development was facing high costs as part of this requirement. The Commission had explored three alternatives for implementing this Comprehensive Plan requirement. This amendment is to follow up on that recommendation from the Commission last year, which City Council also endorsed. If other discussion issues come up, Mr. Sullivan would like to hear about them as well.

If the Commission has other, broader thoughts beyond this isolated proposal, those would be acceptable for discussion. However, the City Council's strategy has been to go ahead and make the Code changes discussed last year, then come back with other discussion items as phase two of undergrounding. Staff would come back later to carry forward other thoughts of the Planning Commission.

The Comprehensive Plan says builders should relocate aerial utilities underground to promote safety, aesthetics, and reliability. The downside of the way that the Zoning Code currently implements this policy is that it can range from \$30,000- \$65,000 for minor residential projects, which can become a large portion of the overall project itself. This is also an incremental approach to undergrounding, development-by-development rather than going by each corridor.

In 2011, when the Commission explored this issue, three alternatives were identified:

1. A fund-based corridor approach, where the applicant would instead of doing the undergrounding work contribute a set amount to an overall fund that would come back at a later time and take care of undergrounding the whole corridor.
2. Increase the City's capital program contribution towards the undergrounding fund and limit the amount that private residential development would need to contribute.
3. Make a flat exemption for certain development types. This option was recommended.

Initially, the fund-based approach seemed equitable, in that it would even out the cost and would not make the slope of the land or size of the lot a determinant. There were problems found in this approach by the Technical Committee and the City Attorney. When a developer's money is taken as a fee in lieu, it can only be held for five years under state law. Mitigating projects that

the money would go towards need to happen in the general area for which the impact is occurring. The City would not know all the time if capital projects are scheduled for that same corridor, so it would be uncertain as to when the money would be spent and where. It would also be a complex program to set up for fairly low utilization. Given all that, the Commission recommended to remove from the equation the people who were burdened the most by this requirement through exemptions, namely, single-family residential development.

The Planning Commission had also recommended exempting single-family new homes, additions and modifications, but also short plats became a question. Some of those plats are larger and more complex and have more undergrounding to do, based on existing and planned configurations of utilities. The Technical Committee noted that for some short plats, that amount of mitigation would not be required, in that it does not match the impact. For larger short plats, undergrounding does make sense. Thus, short plats should be considered on a case-by-case basis. The Planning Commission had asked for some criteria that would give predictability and consistency for applicants with short plats.

For the short plats, staff had proposed criteria based on the number of lots and the existing and proposed facilities. Unfortunately, setting such criteria would not apply equally across all proposals. Due to the wide range of conditions that can emerge with short plats, creating one set of criteria to apply to all short plats would not be useful. It would not be targeted enough in regulatory language to be helpful. The Technical Committee has recommended not creating such criteria.

Instead, the solution would be to use the existing provisions that are already in that chapter, which say that if an applicant of any development type feels that their project should not be held to the standard for a compelling reason, a case could be made for exemption. The Technical Committee would consider that and select alternatives such as a fee in lieu or relief from the requirements altogether. That mechanism is already in place and can be reinforced by relocating it into the chapters on electrical systems and wiring in the Zoning Code. Before, it was less prominent in the Code because it was several subheadings down.

The exemption applies to single-family homes and additions and remodels. It was unclear, previously, that new single-family homes would be required to do undergrounding. Part of that is because any new home site would be created through a short plat process. Mr. Sullivan said there are not be too many examples currently of newly-created, undeveloped lots that have not already done the required undergrounding, meaning vacant lots with no homes on them. Full demolitions to older homes would be considered new single-family home construction. Mr. Sullivan wanted to make sure the amendment captured the few cases where there are undeveloped lots in Redmond. Commissioner Biethan confirmed that the current requirement for service lines was to go from the utility pole to the house via undergrounding, which has not changed. Commissioner Chandorkar clarified new homes which do require undergrounding of the utilities in front of them would be part of these proposed exemptions.

Mr. Sullivan said a minor drawback of this amendment was that new homes and additions or remodels that previously triggered the undergrounding of distribution lines would not occur. Thus, the overall effort to get aerial wiring underground would be extended that much further

into the future. The number of these cases over the given year is fairly small. A corollary to that is, if this removal of the cost burden of doing the undergrounding helps small projects such as an accessory dwelling unit or beautification of the housing stock, that does help other policies of the City regarding economic development, for example. Commissioner Gregory asked if the expense for fiber was the main driving economic factor in this situation.

Mr. Sullivan agreed that fiber was expensive, but said labor for undergrounding can be expensive, too. Puget Sound Energy says undergrounding along the right-of-way can be 80%-90% of the cost of installing the distribution and service lines. Variables include the length of the right-of-way, the slope of the lot or wet terrain. Fiber telecommunications add a costly variable when splicing is needed. Commissioner Gregory asked if that cost might be going down in the future. Mr. Sullivan said he was not aware of where the cost of fiber was trending, but the City is taking the cost issue of fiber very seriously.

Commissioner Biethan noted that through this proposal, the undergrounding process would not happen in many neighborhoods unless some public process occurs to have that happen. Mr. Sullivan agreed that undergrounding would not be required for new single-family homes or additions and remodels. Commissioner Biethan asked what, then, would trigger the undergrounding. Mr. Sullivan said that multi-family development still would have an undergrounding requirement, as well as new subdivisions and some short plats. Generally, in a residential area, since there is not much commercial and industrial development for undergrounding, it would happen much more slowly.

Commissioner Gregory clarified Commissioner Biethan's point that a public project would be the only trigger for undergrounding, and added that this proposal was undertaken to consider the financial hardship for single-family homeowners to do undergrounding. Commissioner Biethan said the previous process was not working, in that it would target small homeowners. Commissioner Hinman noted that when a street was torn up, for example, that would trigger undergrounding. Mr. Sullivan agreed, and said the City has set aside \$100,000 a year to seed capital projects that will trigger undergrounding. Commissioner Chandorkar asked about a hypothetical new property that would have to link to a utility pole that would be across another piece of property. Mr. Sullivan noted that with a new house on a newer plat, that plat would have had done the undergrounding distribution lines that are in the right-of-way, with the hope that a developer would have created a situation where connecting new home sites to the distribution line would not be that onerous.

Commissioner Chandorkar asked about this situation for a hypothetical existing neighborhood, and where the burden for undergrounding a service line from the utility pole to the house would be. Mr. Sullivan said connecting the service line from the home to the nearest utility connection would be required from the homeowner. Commissioner Chandorkar said what he was bringing up might be broader than what the Commission was supposed to discuss with this proposal. Commissioner Gregory asked that this point should be on the issues matrix. Mr. Sullivan clarified the question, in that, in the case where the configuration for a connection to a utility pole would be an "L" shape or something indirect, if the current requirements and proposed requirements would mean that one would need to find a way to that utility underground. Mr. Sullivan noted that the answer to this is yes. Commissioner Gregory noted that this could be a

totally new item, but said this was not germane to the proposal under consideration. Commissioner Chandorkar is not happy with the undergrounding process, and would like a larger discussion on the issue at some point.

Mr. Sullivan noted that there would be a public hearing on the Wednesday following this meeting and then come back on June 13<sup>th</sup> for report approval. The City Council staff report would be July 3<sup>rd</sup>. If needed, a study session would be held on July 31<sup>st</sup>. If not, Council action would occur on July 31<sup>st</sup>. Commissioner Gregory asked how the Commission could consider the undergrounding issue again, as a larger issue. Mr. Sullivan said that could happen through the docketing process, and noted that Commissioner Chandorkar's comments could be considered as a phase two to this issue. Commissioner Chandorkar said he would appreciate a broader discussion in the future. He understood that the proposal in front of the Commission was to ease the burden on single-family homeowners, which he does not have a problem with.

Commissioner Chandorkar continued that his basic objection to the way the City is approaching undergrounding is the non-evenhandedness involved. To wit, if a person was on the wrong side of the street as far as the utility pole is concerned, then that person would get dinged for what is not his or her fault. Also, Commissioner Chandorkar said this is an infrastructure development, and thus the burden should be citywide rather than on an individual homeowner. How that happens is a point of debate, but Commissioner Chandorkar said that would be the best way to handle this situation. He said the capital fund set aside for undergrounding approached this concept, but he noted there were several practical considerations. The notion of having single-family homeowners not doing undergrounding, he suspected, would create a weird patchwork of undergrounded and non-undergrounded utilities, which he did not believe was a clean solution. In general, he would like a global, citywide solution.

Commissioner Hinman asked Commissioner Chandorkar if he was not involved in the discussion of this issue on the Commission earlier, and asked if some offline conversation with Mr. Sullivan and the Technical Committee would be helpful. Commissioner Chandorkar agreed that he was not able to attend meetings on this issue. He said an offline conversation would be fine, but he wondered if a more public conversation was needed. Commissioner Hinman noted that a private conversation might inform that public conversation. Commissioner Gregory noted that the question of undergrounding the service lines, raised by Commissioner Chandorkar, has not been addressed. The right-of-way undergrounding and the streetscape issue have been talked about, but not the service line undergrounding, which could create a situation like water lines. Commissioner Gregory wanted to make sure that issue was reflected in the record.

Commissioner Biethan confirmed with Mr. Sullivan that the regulations for undergrounding between the right-of-way and the structure have not changed. Currently, if there is a new single-family home, a homeowner would be required to do undergrounding not from the right-of-way to the home, but for the right-of-way in front of the home, which is the expensive problem the new proposal attempts to deal with. Commissioner Biethan said the City may have gone too far in exempting everyone from the undergrounding process. Mr. Sullivan clarified that Commissioner Biethan's concerns were as follows: while the City has addressed relieving the burden of undergrounding on smaller projects, the City has not addressed how undergrounding would happen citywide. Mr. Sullivan noted that this was a balancing act between the responsibility of

an individual developer, and the broader responsibility of the City for aesthetics and reliability of the system.

Commissioner Hinman said he was still struggling with the criteria piece of this proposal for short plats and how the Commission could help in this situation. He would like to see what factors, at least, would be weighed by the Technical Committee, when coming to a conclusion. Commissioner Hinman asked if there were any way to put a shopping list of issues together that would not become a regulatory problem for the Technical Committee. Mr. Sullivan noted that he had looked at previous applications for relief, and said this would have to be a case-by-case situation. By creating criteria, Mr. Sullivan said the Commission could undermine the opportunity for an opt-out. Commissioner Hinman said that thus, the burden was on the applicant to come up with those opt-out criteria. Mr. Sullivan asked if this would be a future issue to discuss. Commissioner Gregory said it might be a good phase two discussion item. Mr. Sullivan thanked the Commission members for their time.

#### **REPORTS/SCHEDULING/TOPICS FOR NEXT MEETING(S):**

Ms. Stiteler noted that at the City Council meeting of May 15<sup>th</sup>, the Council approved the Housing Strategy Plan, the City's first ever. On May 22<sup>nd</sup>, there was a special session between the Council and the Pedestrian/Bicycle Advisory Committee. She noted that there was a walk and talk session the night after this evening's meeting at the Veloce Apartments. The session will go from 5:30-7:30 p.m. and will be led by Mayor Marchione and Parks Director Craig Larsen, as well as a member of the Berger Partnership and a local artist. Participants must RSVP with the Parks Department. The Commission will have another meeting May 30<sup>th</sup>.

#### **OTHER BUSINESS:**

#### **CHAIR RECOGNIZED COMMISSIONER HINMAN FOR A POINT OF PERSONAL PRIVILEGE**

Commissioners - Since my appointment as Planning Commissioner, I've had the honor of serving with 17 other Commissioners and a reasonably large cast of City staff. I got involved in all Neighborhood Plans except Grass Lawn, probably all the functional plans – some of them several times (like the TMP) – reviewed a range of public and private projects throughout the City – with some focus on Overlake since my interest in development of the Bel-Red Corridor is what first brought me to the Planning Commission. Parenthetically, I will remain engaged in planning for that corridor as a member of the PSRC's Growing Transit Communities Partnership as we seek to do smart things while East Link light rail makes its way to Redmond.

Then of course, there was the Comprehensive Plan Update over the last two years and the opportunity to incorporate broader sustainability principles into City policies. I am grateful to have led some of that effort in collaboration with many others on this Commission, City staff and in the community.

In reflecting back over all this, I can only say that it is the people that make the City of Redmond a community. All the fancy plans, codes, brick and mortar buildings, roads, parks – the works –

means nothing if we don't have a community and neighborhood spirit. Continuing to build that sense of community is ultimately our most important and rewarding task. I believe that is why the Planning Commission began a conversation on public participation at our retreat and followed with interest results of the 2011 Citizen Survey and Neighborhood Network meetings at our last session.

In his State of the City remarks to the Chamber last month, the Mayor went over the Citizen Survey and pointed out some areas that he wanted to improve upon. Only 52% of Redmond residents agree that the City is open to community ideas and willing to act on them. Just 68% of residents feel that City does a good or excellent job of keeping residents informed about City issues and decisions. And 38% of Redmond residents do not feel connected to their community. These responses are in contrast to other survey sections that rated much higher. They reflect a need to strengthen two-way communications and improve public participation in City processes. We have a new Communications Manager on staff and I am confident that she will be working toward those goals.

Public participation and communications are a continual challenge for governments since there is so much competition these days for people's time and attention. I was struck by remarks of several Council Members at the recent hearing on the Bike Jump Park. They said that it is conversation that builds communities, not a reliance on attorneys and legal recourse to such things as quasi-judicial proceedings. I second those sentiments and the need for process improvement. And I am disappointed to have Redmond's name tarnished by not one, but two land-use appeals over the last six months. As a community of neighbors, we can do better than that.

So this is my closing challenge to the Redmond Planning Commission, City staff and all members of the community. Let's find some more ways to communicate -- early and often -- so there are no surprises for anyone and the visions and expectations of this community carry us into a sustainable future for our businesses and institutions; ourselves and our families; and our friends and neighbors.

## **ADJOURN**

Vice Chair Gregory adjourned the meeting at approximately 8:25 p.m.

Minutes Approved On: Planning Commission Chair