CITY OF REDMOND PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES

February 20, 2019

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Vice Chairman Miller, Commissioners East, Kritzer, Nichols, and Rodriguez

STAFF PRESENT: Cathy Beam, Kim Dietz, Jae Hill, Scott Reynolds, Erika Vandenbranle, and Cameron Zapata, Planning Department

EXCUSED ABSENCE: Chairman Captain and Commissioner Rajpathak

RECORDING SECRETARY: Carolyn Garza, LLC

CALL TO ORDER:
The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Vice Chairman Miller.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA
There were no changes to the Agenda.

ITEMS FROM THE AUDIENCE:
Devendra Maharaj with Verizon Wireless in Bellevue stated that Verizon supports the proposed changes but that there were some concerns addressed in a comment letter sent to the Commission today. More detail will be presented at the next meeting. Mr. Maharaj stated that Verizon thanked the Commission and looked forward to working with the City.

Vice Chairman Miller replied that the Commission looked forward to the staff presentation on the topic.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES:

MOTION to approve January 9, 2019, and January 23, 2019, Meeting Minutes by Commissioner Nichols. MOTION seconded by Commissioner Rodriguez. The MOTION passed unanimously.

Report approval, Periodic Cleanup of Redmond Zoning Code, Kim Dietz, Redmond Planning

Ms. Dietz did not have a presentation and requested Commissioner’s review and approval of their Report, as provided in their meeting packet.

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The current amendments are specific to small cell facilities, or fourth, and fifth generation mobile communication system infrastructure. Macro cell is meant to be the backbone of the cell network while the small cell fills in gaps, primarily in downtown or residential areas. Small cells can be attached to utility, light or traffic poles in the right-of-way. The purpose is to augment the capacity of macro units, be located in more dense areas, and at 25 to 45 feet in height in comparison to macro cells which can be beyond 75 feet in height. Examples of how a small cell facility would be attached to an existing or new pole were displayed.

One change was necessary to update the size of an equipment cabinet and another to clarify that the size would not include antennas. Another example is that new poles in an existing neighborhood would be designed to be compatible with existing utility and light poles. In the definition section, there is a clarification to collocation required to be consistent with the FCC ruling. A full replacement of the definition of small wireless facilities in order to establish compliance and consistency with the FCC ruling is also included.

All are minor changes necessary to achieve compliance. The recommended amendments are limited to what would be necessary based on the FCC’s new ruling.

The proposed schedule for the review by the Planning Commission includes a Study Session at this meeting, a Study Session and Public Hearing on February 27, 2019, and a recommendation and Approval on March 13, 2019. The City Legal Counsel will be present at the February 27, 2019 meeting and can assist with questions and respond to any testimony that evening.

Commissioner Nichols asked if reviews of special exceptions typically are completed by a Technical Committee, as stated on page D-23 of the draft code, section C3. Mr. Reynolds replied that this section was added for clarity regarding the authority, a clean-up technicality of the code.

Vice Chairman Miller asked, should the issue under review involve design, if there would be a role for the Design Review Board and particularly in an area with a specific designated infrastructure design; would there be a peer review by design professionals. Ms. Dietz replied that the question would be researched and an answer would be brought to the next meeting.

Commissioner Kritzer stated that the presentation had been helpful but may be challenging for the general public to understand. The presentation from this meeting should be posted online but if possible, also an expand on the chart for clarity on the most important changes. Ms. Dietz replied that staff would be happy to do this.

Commissioner East stated that on page D-25, the code portion including “Without limitation, the expert shall provide a recommendation; entitled to ” has been taken out but the word be would need to be removed as well.

Commissioner Rodriguez asked for clarification on pages D-35 and D-36; two conditions had been struck and replaced with four; would not mentioning there would be some associated equipment located outside the primary equipment enclosure in the green text infer that everything must be included inside the enclosure. Ms. Dietz replied that this would be looked
into. Commissioner Rodriguez further asked if, when a passage or word is struck, this should imply that what was struck has been incorporated into the change.

Vice Chairman Miller stated having the impression, looking at what the FCC has done, that local autonomy regarding design is not to be considered. The presentation chart was displayed again and Vice Chairman Miller asked for the definition of Safe Harbor for the audience. Ms. Dietz replied that the FCC rule would need to be looked up and that this was not a part of the code amendment. Vice Chairman Miller stated that the definition may help with a general understanding. Ms. Dietz replied that this would be brought to the next presentation.

Vice Chairman Miller asked which entity would determine what would materially inhibit small wireless facility deployment. Ms. Dietz replied that this would be brought to the next presentation and that staff and legal counsel have been discussing this. Vice Chairman Miller stated that work has gone on for years to create an attractive downtown and details will be necessary.

Commissioner Kritzer stated that more clarification—what the changes would mean for the aesthetics of Redmond—should be included online.

Commissioner Rodriguez stated that there were pages titled Design Standards, and asked if the aesthetic appeal was being addressed or if the pages were simply an explanation of design standards. Vice Chairman Miller stated that the manner in which Design Standards are stated may imply that the applicant would define what materially inhibits small wireless facility development. How this is determined, what the ability of Redmond would be to work with small wireless facility developers to ensure standards can be met in the interest of the public, and how to continue to maintain a high standard of design and development in the community was needed. Commissioner Kritzer stated that in reading through the Design Standards, whether there would, in fact, be a large material change that the public would not see was not clear.

Commissioner Nichols asked for clarification on page D-22; when adhering to design standards would result in a physical or technical barrier which would block signal reception or transmission, that the decision-making body would be the Technical Committee. Ms. Dietz replied that cabinet paint can have an impact on the signal and that equipment from provider to provider can be different. A standard presented by Verizon may not be available to other providers. Staff will come back with as much information as possible particularly regarding character and what the City could anticipate seeing. There are some designs that the Public Works staff have been working with, and while more schematic, these examples will be provided for the Planning Commission’s reference. Commissioner Nichols stated that in the past, the conflict between design and physics had been an issue. Ms. Dietz replied that there have not been many implementations in Redmond as yet and in the future, this issue may need adjusting, but at this presentation, only the FCC ruling is being addressed.

Vice Chairman Miller asked how the code update would affect staff and applicants in terms of the level of effort to manage and implementing the proposed changes to the Code. Ms. Dietz asked if the applicant would be a telecom provider and Vice Chairman Miller replied yes. Vice
Chairman Miller asked for clarification regarding the role of the Planning Commission that is in place for design and aesthetics.

**Informational Briefing, Planning Department Restructure**, Erika Vandenbrande, Director of Planning, Redmond Planning

Ms. Vandenbrande stated that on March 4, 2019, a Deputy Director will be introduced to the Board, a longstanding member of the Redmond community and professional in the Planning field.

The Planning Department prepares and plans for growth. A slide was shown of Planning activities over several decades toward 2030. Infrastructure for future growth to 2050 is being examined now. In order to prepare, the Long Range and Comprehensive Planning division has a key role; demographics and trends, and building the base of a future vision. Stopping growth is not part of the equation. Visioning includes looking at current metrics and demographics, where growth is occurring, and the match to income levels and types of housing.

A new Strategic Initiatives Planning Group has been established, responsible for keeping the zoning code updated as well as working with the Long Range and Development Services departments to ensure that code will reflect realistically. Intensive analysis around the past allows for a forecast of the future. City Council will be presented next week with the A Regional Coalition for Housing (ARCH) affordable housing work program as well as the One Redmond initiative regarding workforce housing. Housing and Human Services are working together. Planning to realization literally can take 15 to 20 years.

Downtown parking is being inventoried with a consultant in order to evaluate parking standards within the vision. Planning helps support the achievement of light rail which serves an alternative transportation backbone. A specific architectural aesthetic, as well as economic development, will ensure a vibrant Downtown for both small and large businesses. Before and after photos were shown of the City and the differing characters.

Vice Chairman Miller stated that Chairman Captain had requested a briefing regarding changes to the Planning Department structure and that the Planning Commission is already familiar with what the Planning Department does. Vice Chairman Miller stated looking forward to seeing a presentation regarding changes to the Planning Department structure.

Ms. Vandenbrande stated that there would be two minor changes, and Vice Chairman Miller replied that the point of the request had been to learn about these and how the outreach of the department to the citizens of the community as well as Planning Commission work would be affected.

Ms. Vandenbrande stated that the first change was a new Deputy Planning Director on March 4, 2019, and the second change was the creation of the Strategic Initiatives Group. Housing and Human Services working together was a third.
Commissioner Rodriguez suggested that an organizational chart may be helpful to see how the Planning Department is structuring against initiatives. Another question was if the Planning Department is running on a net-loss or net-gain toward capacity, scope, and ability to support the long-range growth plan.

Ms. Vandenbrande asked Vice Chairman Miller if an organizational chart should be displayed at this time or if the information should be brought later and Vice Chairman Miller replied that Chairman Captain should be present as the requestor and the information should be presented later.

Commissioner Kritzer asked Ms. Vandenbrande to elaborate on the Strategic Initiatives Planning Group vision. Ms. Vandenbrande replied that the former Economic Development Manager moved to the Communications team to help support Planning and Public Works in communicating with the community. The Strategic Initiatives Planning Group will be responsible for the zoning code, transportation demand management and tourism in regard to economic development.

Vice Chairman Miller stated that the follow-up did help and thanked Ms. Vandenbrande.

Reports/Scheduling/Topics for Next Meeting(s)

Mr. Hill stated that on the agenda for the next meeting on February 27, 2019, is a Public Hearing and Study Session for the Wireless Communications Facilities (WCF) Zoning Code Update, and a Briefing on the Public Arts Integration Ordinance specifically within Marymoor Village. On March 13, 2019, on the agenda is Report Approval for WCF and two informational briefings; one for Affordable Housing by Sarah Stiteler, and Traffic Signals as requested by Vice Chairman Miller.

Vice Chairman Miller stated that a request had also been made for a third informational briefing regarding the Microsoft Refresh and asked if this was on the schedule. Mr. Hill replied no.
Commissioner Rodriguez stated having seen a Briefing regarding Microsoft Refresh on the agenda for the next meeting, but Mr. Hill replied that the agenda had been adjusted. Ms. Vandenbrande replied that coordination with the Microsoft team needs to occur in order to bring the most accurate information to the Commission. Vice Chairman Miller asked if there was a timeframe for a basic informational briefing, and that only the basics were needed at this time. Ms. Vandenbrande replied that scheduling time with the Microsoft team for information had not occurred yet due to weather and other factors.

Vice Chairman Miller stated that over the years, Planning Commission Chairs have sought to generate items on the agenda as the charter of the Commission is clear around, even to the level of creating ad hoc committees for special studies. A political analysis is not needed but only a basic briefing of what the project is. The response to the Public Testimony of Mr. Fuller was the first time the Commission has had mention of what will be the most significant, expensive and extraordinary privately funded development in the history of the City. The Planning Commission will not be a part of the approval process but the request for an informational briefing was in order to know. The Commissioners are residents of the City and other citizens ask them.

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questions. Vice Chairman Miller stated looking forward in a timely manner to see a very basic presentation. Issues such as storm water run-off and traffic affect neighbors and information has not been brought forward.

Ms. Vandenbrande replied that the conflict was not that the Planning department did not want to bring the information to the Commission, but rather a matter of scheduling those people most expert in the project and the vision of Microsoft together. Given the recent weather events and pace at which Microsoft is making people with this information available, a briefing will occur but a date cannot be made firm at this time. Vice Chairman Miller hoped to continue the discussion and to see a presentation, if only from a staff perspective, before leaving the Commission on March 31, 2019. The community deserves at least a basic briefing with positives because of the scope and impacts of the project. Transparency and clarity are extremely important.

Commissioner Rodriguez disclosed being an employee of Microsoft working in the division responsible for the campus Refresh, not reporting directly to the project but as part of the larger organization. Commissioner Rodriguez stated looking to the Commissioners for guidance regarding how to interact. Mr. Hill replied that Commissioner Rodriguez would need to recuse only if a role in preparing information coming forward was played. Commissioner Rodriguez replied no role in preparing information for a briefing would occur. Commissioner Rodriguez stated that there is an existing video and Power Point out on the Refresh plan, publicly. The information may be available through the Puget Sound Business Journal and LinkedIn and suggested that as this is Public Record and generally available, staff could send this to the Commissioners in the interim. Ms. Vandenbrande replied that the information link to the Microsoft website was also available on the City website and that basic information and transparency is already available to the community. The information being requested does not currently exist because of where the process is and experts are needed for specifics. Vice Chairman Miller stated that the Commission was not in a position to know what exists and any information is good and was aware of the video presentation. The Planning Commission is accountable to the citizens of Redmond, citizens are aware the Refresh is coming, and explaining why the Planning Commission is not involved at this point is difficult. The Commission is an important conduit between the City and citizens and any communication that can occur is good, why a basic informational briefing would be productive. Vice Chairman Miller looked forward to knowing when this could occur, including a discussion regarding the scope to be discussed if needed as the request for a briefing may have been overly broad. The response to specific questions regarding the impact of the project to Mr. Fuller, again, was concerning. Any information is good even if only what the Planning Department feels comfortable in presenting at this stage.

Commissioner Kritzer stated that when how Microsoft plans to connect with the City in terms of investment in affordable housing is clear, a briefing would be helpful for a sense of how the City is strategically positioning with the opportunity for affordable housing. Ms. Vandenbrande replied that there is a concept but operational logistics are being worked on. As soon as known, the information Commissioner Kritzer has requested will be brought forward.

**Communications with Staff**

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Mr. Hill reminded the Planning Commission that the Retreat would be held on April 3, 2019, in the same location as last year.

Mr. Hill stated that the application period for Planning Commissioners closed today, February 20, 2019, at 5:00 p.m. Staff will begin reviewing applications and the Planning Commission will be contacted to begin the interview process.

Commissioner East asked if the Retreat would be held at the same time as meetings, and Mr. Hill replied yes.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

MOTION to adjourn by Commissioner Nichols. MOTION seconded by ____________. The MOTION passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 8:21 p.m.

Minutes Approved On:


Planning Commission Chair

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