



REDMOND PLANNING COMMISSION

Sherrí Nichols, Chair | Judy East, Vice-Chair
Roy Captain | Aaron Knopf | Vidyanand Rajpathak
Denni Shefrin | Aparna Varadharajan

MINUTES

REDMOND PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING

Wednesday, May 26, 2021 – 7:00 p.m.

1. Call to Order & Roll Call – 7:00 PM

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chair Nichols, Vice-Chair East, Commissioners Captain, Knopf, Rajpathak, Shefrin and Varadharajan

STAFF PRESENT: Jeff Thompson, Public Works Department; Beverly Mesa-Zendt, Jeff Churchill, and Beckye Frey, Planning & Development Services Department

RECORDING SECRETARY: Carolyn Garza, LLC

CALL TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chairperson Nichols.

2. Approval of the Agenda

MOTION to approve the Agenda by Vice Chairperson East. MOTION seconded by Commissioner Captain. The MOTION passed unanimously.

3. Summary Minutes

[May 12, 2021](#)

MOTION to approve the Meeting Summary by Commissioner Captain. MOTION seconded by Vice Chairperson East. The MOTION passed unanimously.

4. Items from the Audience: Two Written Comments and Five Speakers

Redmond Planning Commission Minutes
May 26, 2021

Speakers for the 2022 Annual Docket Cycle were brought on to speak at this time. Ms. Frey stated that there would be five speakers, and that two written comments had been received from Mr. Christopher Daw and Mr. Siddharth Jha

Mr. Sean Buran *with* CIM Group spoke first. CIM is a Developer based in Los Angeles, California which currently owns a 12-acre site roughly at the intersection of Redmond Way and Northeast 68th Street. The site is built with five single-story light industrial buildings. CIM is requesting to be docketed for consideration of a Comprehensive Plan amendment on the site. The site is an opportunity to develop transit-oriented housing and retail commercial uses. Most current tenants are geared toward commercial uses and not industrial. Whole Foods is located across the street and light rail will be a nine-minute walk from the site. The long-term vision for the site is that the best use will not be manufacturing based on existing uses and is an opportunity to meet the growing need for housing near light rail in Redmond. The process timeline will involve years, but the support of the Commission is respectfully requested.

Ms. Katie Kendall *with* CIM Group was the next speaker. Ms. Kendall stated that most of the uses on the site Mr. Buran referred to do not meet the current Comprehensive Plan goals of the manufacturing designation. As the location is a 10-minute walk to light rail and with services such as Whole Foods across the street, the use will not return to manufacturing. The land represents a small percentage of all manufacturing land in Redmond and a designation change will not displace existing manufacturing uses. The proposal by CIM Group is for the site designation to change to Design District. The location is ideal for transit-oriented housing. CIM Group is willing to work on Affordable housing and housing with multiple units for families if the Comprehensive Plan amendment is docketed. In the past, the application has been rejected as not meeting criteria, CIM Group respectfully disagrees and asks the Planning Commission to review. Regarding whether or not the application would be better considered as part of the Periodic Update, please keep in mind that while there will be discussions regarding growth allocations over the next couple of years, consideration of proposed changes to land use designations before growth allocations are finalized can continue and the City does not need to wait for the Periodic Update to recognize that the site in question along Redmond Way is the perfect location for housing and that the site no longer works well for manufacturing and industry. The project is discreet due to the 12-acre size and location and the perfect scenario for Design District designation. The proposal would become a background condition for the Periodic Update conversation. The applicant will be able to do much of the initial work and public outreach to reduce Redmond staff burden. In closing, the Commission is being asked to docket the concept for further discussion on the appropriate use for the property.

Mr. George Manojlovic *with* Redmond Town Center and Fairbourne Properties stated that certain portions of Redmond Town Center are not working as well as possible due to restrictive regulation associated with the 30-year-old Master Plan that was included in the Comprehensive Plan and code. The request is for the restrictions to be removed to provide more flexibility for the overall site. The goal of re-envisioning the property is to capitalize on the proximity to light rail, enliven the streets to provide a more engaging and right-sized retail experience with local vendors, to provide a public gathering space, and to create a mix of uses promoting community. In closing, the Commission is being asked to recommend docketing this item for consideration.

Mr. Siddharth Jha *with* Pier 67 Capital Partners presented slides of the evolution of a site not identified for the audio recording and a proposal to change the single-family urban land

Redmond Planning Commission Minutes
May 26, 2021

use designation to multi-family land use. Development standards, housing supply, variety and an increase in density would be appropriate given site conditions.

Mr. Hank Myers stated living in Redmond for 45 years in a home free of a mortgage, built in 1968. The home is in good shape but is a challenge for a semi-retired person to maintain. A home half the size would be desirable but there are no ownership properties in the area that would not require taking on a mortgage even after the sale of the current home. Despite Sound Transit taxes, the home is the most secure, comfortable, and affordable place available to him. Mr. Myers stated that younger families would probably desire the location for reasons such as to take advantage of excellent schools no longer needed by Mr. Myers, a two-car garage that is for one car too many now, and a spacious yard which is becoming harder to maintain. Realtors have approached Mr. Myers but while there is excellent equity, there is nowhere to move to. Mr. Meyers recognizes that a next home will be in a multi-family development and this will not be only due to finances but for the appreciation of added security as well as the potential for assisted living options. Mr. Myers expressed a desire to live in a multi-age development for diversity. With the Pier 67 project there is an opportunity to not only create a solution that does not exist in Redmond, but also to assist with a policy shift recognizing the needs of people who are aging out of their homes but have no place to move to. The proposed use is ideal for the property but never made sense as single-family. The topography of the lot is suitable for multi-story. Since the last time development of the site was considered, Metro Transit has added a route along Avondale which serves the PCC Shopping Center as well as the Redmond Transit Center, Downtown, Kirkland and Bellevue. Redmond does not have an efficient housing market and there is no real ground floor for buyers now. Opportunities Mr. Myers had available starting out are no longer available intentionally in Redmond. Until older residents have somewhere to move to, younger families will have to continue to wait for good schools in a convenient location. Mayor Marchione had long stated desiring a housing plan that allowed people to age in place in Redmond. Redmond should move forward to fulfill this dream.

Ms. Frey stated that all speakers who had requested to speak had spoken.

5. 2021 Annual Docket: Public Hearing and Study Session of the General Wastewater Plan update.

Planning Commission to hold a public hearing and consider a recommendation to the City Council on the updates to the General Wastewater Plan

Attachments: [Memo](#), [Technical Committee Report](#), [Q&A](#)

Staff Contact: [Jeff Thompson](#), Senior Engineer 425-556-2884
[Peter Holte](#), Senior Planner 425-556-2822

Staff Presentation

Mr. Thompson presented a slideshow explaining the Plan update.

Public Hearing

Chairperson Nichols opened the Public Hearing.

Redmond Planning Commission Minutes
May 26, 2021

There were no requests from the public to speak on the item. There was no written comment received by Ms. Mesa-Zendt or Mr. Thompson.

Commissioner Captain stated that the Commission has asked and received answers and that the Public Hearing could be closed, and the update voted on.

Chairperson Nichols closed the Public Hearing to both verbal and written testimony.

Study Session

Chairperson Nichols asked the Commission if all questions in the packet had been answered and if there were additional questions. Commissioner East replied that all questions were answered. Chairperson Nichols asked Ms. Frey if there would be any reason not to vote on the update, and Mr. Frey replied no.

MOTION by Commissioner Captain to recommend to the City Council the General Wastewater Plan update as presented. MOTION seconded by Commissioner Knopf. MOTION passed unanimously.

- 6. 2021 Annual Docket: Study Session on Education Hill Amendment and Land-Use Designation Change.** Review and discuss application request for a land-use designation change along Avondale Road and an amendment to the Education Hill Neighborhood plan.

Attachments: [Memo](#), [Ordinance 2579 Map](#), [Ordinance 2930 Map](#), [Presentation](#)

Staff Contact: [Beverly Mesa-Zendt](#) 425-556-2423
Deputy Planning Director

Staff Presentation

Ms. Mesa-Zendt presented a slideshow explaining the items. The question for the proposal is consistency with the Comprehensive Plan policies and designation criteria, consistency with the preferred growth and development pattern of the land use element of the Comprehensive Plan, and the capability of the land including the prevalence of critical areas. Additionally, consistency with neighborhood planning components, which are already in the Education Hill Neighborhood, are to be considered.

Ms. Mesa-Zendt stated that an alternative for middle ground could be potentially structuring the Amendment with an incentive opportunity within the land use designation to permit a specific amount of density if conditions for critical areas and other public benefits are met. The applicant has not asked for this, but this would be a possibility for the Commission to consider although any density increases that were similar to what would be allowed under a multi-family urban land designation should not be considered with this option.

There has been no direct opposition to the Amendment. The Public Hearing will be held on June 16, 2021 and Report Approval will be on June 30, 2021.

Study Session

Redmond Planning Commission Minutes
May 26, 2021

Commissioner Varadharajan asked for clarification regarding when Council will vote on Redmond 2050 Phase I. Ms. Frey replied adoption of all Phase I items in the first quarter of 2023. Commissioner Varadharajan asked if technical background information would begin in the coming months or if 2023 would be the beginning. Ms. Frey replied that the designation criteria that has been of concern will be reviewed, and the door could be opened for designation change to occur, not a full land use element update but rather a lowering of the bar to allow for an application for a land use designation change. A redesignation of the entire corridor remains to be seen if there is a strong mandate.

Commissioner Captain asked for clarification that a Critical Areas Report would be needed prior to any kind of decisive action. In addition to the Critical Areas Report, other criteria have not been met. Ms. Mesa-Zendt replied that action could be taken subject to the Critical Areas Report as a condition of approval. Commissioner Captain stated that the description by the applicant is broad and not specific and asked how high the applicant could be expected to desire in density. Ms. Mesa-Zendt replied that R-8 is permitted at this time and multi-family urban picks up at R-12 and goes to R-30. If the land use designation and text change is approved, the range would be redesignated opening the door from R-12 to R-30. The applicant has not specified what is desired, but the full range is requested. The applicant will still be held to the Critical Areas Report. Commissioner Captain stated having reviewed many times and sees no reason to revisit this outside of the 2050 Redmond process.

Commissioner Shefrin asked if changing the land use designation would set a positive precedent for other parts of Redmond, incentivizing the opportunity for different housing types. Ms. Mesa-Zendt replied that LU-36 applies through all multi-family designations and has impacts across the City. The applicant request is a very site-specific policy change followed by a specific zoning change. The reasoning used to approve should be consistent with similar applications.

Commissioner Varadharajan asked for clarification regarding conditional approval and if mitigation measures on the site could be included. Ms. Mesa-Zendt replied that State-mandated regulations would be relied on in the future as the project is currently not development. The Critical Areas Report is necessary to judge if the area can take on the density being sought, and that is not known yet. Should the Commission decide to approve, staff would recommend that the approval be conditioned on the receipt of the critical area information. Once the Critical Areas Report is submitted there will be a host of mitigation required to protect buffers, the shoreline, and drainage requirements. If there is a hazardous slope, the site would be rendered difficult to develop.

Chairperson Nichols asked for the size of the site. Ms. Mesa-Zendt replied that acreage size would be sent, and then that the answer would be found and given before the end of the meeting. Chairperson Nichols stated that the application mentions many uses but there is only so much capacity on a site. Ms. Mesa-Zendt replied that when the designation and range is approved, site-specific considerations are not simultaneously being approved. The opportunity of a condition that would allow for greater density could be more binding if presented as an incentive.

Commissioner Captain stated that the documentation appears to indicate that the site is 2.85 acres. Ms. Mesa-Zendt stated that the size would be verified. An email sent during the

Redmond Planning Commission Minutes
May 26, 2021

meeting by Mr. Jha to Ms. Mesa-Zendt stated that the site size is 4.21 acres. Commissioner Captain apologized for the confusion.

Commissioner Varadharajan asked if language could be added to the policy putting a condition on affordable housing units. Ms. Mesa-Zendt replied that the review criteria are specific, but that other conditions, needed to meet regulations such as critical areas information and the requirement for an approved zoning application, could be put into the adopting ordinance, Criteria to review by the Planning Commission is specific. The legal team should be consulted regarding specific conditions, to avoid conditional re-zoning which is a challengeable action. Allowing up to R-30 is what is under review at this time.

Commissioner Rajpathak asked for clarification regarding a donut hole area mentioned by Mr. Jha during comments. Ms. Mesa-Zendt replied that there are two parcels which include the donut hole area mentioned. Commissioner Captain replied that the donut hole area had been enveloped into one parcel.

Ms. Mesa-Zendt stated that documents would be prepared for the Public Hearing. Unless there is different direction, documents will be prepared based on the applicant's proposal for the Public Hearing. Chairperson Nichols replied yes.

BREAK

Chairperson Nichols suggested a five-minute break.

- 7. 2022 Annual Docket: Study Session on the Comprehensive Plan Amendment applications for the 2022 Docket cycle.** Review and discuss the threshold criteria analysis in advance of the public hearing scheduled for June 16, 2021.

Attachments: [Memo – 2022 Applications](#), [Memo – Public Safety Plan](#), [Presentation](#)

Staff Contact: [Jeff Churchill](#), Planning Manager 425-556-2492
[Beckye Frey](#), Principal Planner 425-556-2750

Staff Presentation

Mr. Churchill and Ms. Frey presented a slideshow explaining the Docket process and proposals. Questions were taken at the end of each proposal.

Regarding the **Redmond Town Center Text Amendment**, Commissioner Varadharajan asked for explanation regarding a description of *clarification of existing building height policy versus an overall change in policy*. Mr. Churchill replied that Policy DT-11 speaks to exceptional public amenities that can be provided in exchange for additional building height in the Town Center zone. The language would be examined to determine if additional guidance can be provided considering the current state of the community. Commissioner Varadharajan asked for clarification that the applicant is only asking for more information regarding what would meet the criteria already established. Mr. Churchill replied yes, the Policy does not speak to specific building height but rather that height could be increased in exchange for exceptional public amenities, manifesting as text in the Policy but not changing the substance of the Policy. Commissioner Knopf asked for clarification regarding an

Redmond Planning Commission Minutes
May 26, 2021

exchange made in the Esterra project. Mr. Churchill replied that the Esterra project used a Development Agreement process and not this policy.

Regarding the **CIM Group Land Use Map Amendment**, Commissioner Knopf stated being in support of staff's conclusion that the proposal would be better reviewed as part of a Comprehensive Plan periodic review. Commissioner Captain stated agreement with Commissioner Knopf in terms of staff recommendation but indicated that an applicant representative who spoke earlier had said that manufacturing has moved away. Times have changed and the City needs to be nimble. Commissioner Captain stated not disagreeing with staff particularly regarding the Redmond 2050 overlap but would encourage the Commission to think about possible changes, as within a few hundred yards of the site there are multi-family developments that have been built in the last decade. Commissioner Captain encouraged the Commission to not necessarily change anything at this time but as 2050 is developed, old definitions of manufacturing should be examined. Staff resources and time must be acknowledged. Commissioner Knopf stated hearing that staff recommended continuing to reevaluate the uses of the property and that manufacturing has moved on, being looked at on a broad level. Chairperson Nichols stated that in Marymoor Village work, the choice was made to put housing in that area recognizing that light industrial and manufacturing would be displaced and to explicitly preserve manufacturing use in this parcel as a trade-off. Mr. Churchill replied correct, and staff opinion is that this topic would be more appropriate for the Periodic Review.

Regarding the **Evans Creek Relocation Land Use and Zoning Map Amendment**, there were no questions from the Commission.

Regarding the **Public Safety Functional Plan Update**, there were no questions from the Commission.

Mr. Churchill stated that for next steps, a Public Hearing is scheduled for June 16, 2021. The Commission is scheduled to make a recommendation at the June 30, 2021 meeting although a recommendation can be made at any time after the Public Hearing. Council review and action will follow in July and August 2021.

8. **Redmond 2050: Monthly Briefing.** Staff provided a memo in the packet outlining the next round of community engagement beginning in early June. Staff is available to answer questions if needed.

Attachments: [Memo](#)

Staff Contact: [Beckye Frey](#), Principal Planner

425-556-2750

Chairperson Nichols stated that the Monthly Briefing was a memo in the packet and a presentation was not planned. Mr. Churchill highlighted the section regarding Transit Oriented Development (TOD); there is a link to TOD research completed recently at the regional level, which represents a large amount of work and will inform TOD planning being done now.

Redmond Planning Commission Minutes
May 26, 2021

9. Staff & Commissioner Updates

Ms. Frey stated having confirmed with Ms. Cathy Beam that the earliest the Tree Regulations will be seen again by the Planning Commission will be July 2021. An updated Extended Agenda will be distributed shortly.

10. Adjourn – 8:41 p.m.


MOTION to adjourn by Commissioner Captain. MOTION seconded by Vice Chairperson East. The MOTION passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 8:41 p.m.

Minutes Approved On:

Planning Commission Chair

06-09-2021

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