



REDMOND PLANNING COMMISSION

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

MINUTES

REDMOND PLANNING COMMISSION SPECIAL MEETING

Wednesday, June 30, 2021 – 7:00 p.m.

1. Call to Order & Roll Call – 7:00 p.m.

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

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chair Nichols, Vice-Chair East, Commissioners Captain, Raj, Shefrin and Aparna

EXCUSED ABSENCE: Commissioner Knopf

STAFF PRESENT: Beverly Mesa-Zendt, Jeff Churchill, Beckye Frey, and Glenn Coil, Planning Department

RECORDING SECRETARY: Carolyn Garza, LLC

2. Approval of the Agenda

Chairperson Nichols suggested that items seven and eight, Report Approvals, be switched to between items four and five.

- **MOTION to approve the agenda with the change** that Chairperson Nichols had suggested by Vice Chairperson East. MOTION seconded by Commissioner Captain. **The MOTION passed unanimously.**

3. Approval of Minutes

[June 9, 2021](#) and [June 16, 2021](#)

- **MOTION to approve both Meeting Minutes** by Commissioner Captain. MOTION seconded by Vice Chairperson East. **The MOTION passed unanimously.**

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4. Items from the Audience

Ms. Frey stated that two written comments had been received and one request to speak.

Mr. Tom Hinman, a resident of Redmond, asked to speak first regarding item eight, the 2022 Annual Docket cycle. Mr. Hinman asked that the final report specifically condition the approval of DT-11 as exceptional height provisions in Town Center upon a robust community consultation process which has yet to be undertaken. Eventual inclusion of residential units in Town Center was anticipated in the 2030 Comprehensive Plan as stipulated on pages 14, 17 and 18. Mr. Hinman served as Planning Commission Chairperson when the plan was built and approved. DT-11 stated that tree lines and hillside vistas should be respected, and a comfortable pedestrian scale maintained in the urban area. Mr. Hinman had two recommendations; that an upper limit or cap on building height should be established in consultation with community stakeholders regardless of whatever exceptional public amenities are proposed, and that a simulation of any future urban center developments should be required, possibly in the Design Review Board process rather than in the current ad hoc project by project approval process that does not provide full context as the urban centers of Redmond are proposed for greater density in Redmond 2050.

Regarding item nine, Redmond 2050 SEPA Environmental Analysis, there were three comments. First, Mr. Hinman strongly supported alternative two, centers and corridors, as the most equitable and manageable over time. Second, despite surveys and other public testimony, no responses have been received regarding inclusion of Redmond Ridge traffic impacts on Avondale corridor planning. Third, Overlake Center boundary revisions will stimulate an extended conversation with neighbors in Redmond, Bellevue, and Kirkland.

Finally, a recommendation for coordination of performance metrics including sustainability factors to engage the Environmental Sustainability Advisory Committee among other stakeholders.

Chairperson Nichols replied that regarding building heights, the merits of the proposal are not being discussed at this time but rather only if the proposal meets the threshold criteria for going onto the Planning Commission docket.

5. 2021 Annual Docket: Report Approval for expansion of Retail Marijuana sales.

Planning Commission report approval for the expansion of retail marijuana sales per the motion from the June 16, 2021 Planning Commission meeting.

Attachments: [Draft Planning Commission Report](#), [Attachment A – Issues Matrix](#), [Attachment B – Public Comment Matrix](#), [Attachment C – Technical Committee Report \(with attachments\)](#), [Attachment D – Public Hearing Notice](#)

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

- **MOTION to approve the Planning Commission Report** for the expansion of Retail Marijuana sales, as presented, by Commissioner Captain. MOTION seconded by Commissioner Aparna. **The MOTION passed unanimously.**

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6. **2022 Annual Docket: Report Approval for the 2022 Annual Docket cycle.** Planning Commission report approval for the recommendation to the City Council on items to be included in the 2022 Annual Docket of Comprehensive Plan Amendments per the motion from the June 16, 2021 Planning Commission meeting.

Attachments: [Draft Planning Commission Report](#), [Attachment A – Application Materials](#), [Attachment B – Staff Analysis](#), [Attachment C – Applicant Testimony materials](#), [Attachment D – Public Hearing Notice](#)

Staff Contact: [Glenn Coil](#), Senior Planner 425-556-2742

- **MOTION to approve the Planning Commission Report** for the 2022 Annual Docket cycle, as presented, by Commissioner Captain. MOTION seconded by Vice Chairperson East. **The MOTION passed unanimously.**

NOTE: Commissioner Shefrin joined the meeting at this point.

7. **2021 Annual Docket: Continue Public Hearing and Study Session for the Education Hill Amendment and Land-Use Designation Change.** Close the public hearing from the June 16, 2021 Planning Commission meeting and hold a study session to review and consider a recommendation on the application for a land-use designation change along Avondale Road and an amendment to the Education Hill Neighborhood plan as part of the 2021 Annual Docket.

Attachments: [Memo](#)

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

Staff presentation

Ms. Mesa-Zendt summarized comments, reviewed a correction, and made a clarification.

Public Hearing

NOTE: The applicant provided additional written testimony on June 30, 2021.

- **Chairperson Nichols closed the Public Hearing for both written and verbal testimonies.**

Study Session

Commissioner Aparna stated that Redmond 2050 should not be expected to do all work, and that the proposal should be considered with one of three potential conditions: time for re-zoning subject to the critical areas analysis, a traffic analysis, and an update to the Neighborhood Plan.

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Chairperson Nichols asked for clarification regarding the Housing Action Plan and if parts of Redmond 2050 will be implemented sooner than 2024. Ms. Mesa-Zendt replied that the revised timeline brings phase one towards adoption in early 2023. The evaluation of LU-36 and language in the Education Hill Neighborhood Plan that presents an unqualified barrier are conversations happening now. Re-zonings accompanying these will likely occur in 2024. Conflicts with Redmond 2050 will be eliminated from the Neighborhood Element.

Vice Chairperson East stated respectfully disagreeing with Commissioner Aparna in that the community is being engaged to make decisions regarding how growth goes forward, and if changes are made parcel by parcel at this time, the work being done on the vision is undermined. Also, the Technical Committee and staff have agreed that the project does not meet criteria. It is important to adhere to criteria.

Commissioner Raj asked staff to comment regarding the response to a letter received from Mr. Jha by the Commissioners today, June 30, 2021. Ms. Mesa-Zendt replied that staff does not recommend denial of the proposal based on critical areas. There are critical area concerns but not enough to deny. Staff recommendation to deny is based on other criteria reviewed in the Education Hill Neighborhood Plan. If approved by the Commission, staff recommends requiring a full critical areas report supporting the density to be submitted with the application for re-zoning.

Commissioner Captain stated that a past Commission had established, with full support, that the Commissioners did not want documents submitted by an applicant the day of a public hearing. Volunteer Commissioners should not be expected to read and come to a conclusion immediately before a meeting. Commissioner Captain stated having no knowledge of the letter of Mr. Jha today, and that the applicant has been through the process before and informed that the Commission should not be expected to be fully educated on a late submission. The Commission and staff should discuss the expectation at a future meeting to determine if the issue needs revisiting. The applicant and the application has been denied multiple times on the same project for technical reasons but the project returns in a slightly different package. A long-term project had been denied in the past for a variety of reasons and some current Commission members voted strongly for the City to reconsider leading to an amicable settlement. The Commission does not take sides and is not unreasonable. The project has been discussed many times.

Commissioner Aparna stated that housing needs have been identified as urgent in Redmond and asked if the Commission should wait to see how growth unfolds or look at the project as an opportunity. New data should be considered before denying a project again. While the Technical Committee analysis is vital for understanding, the Commission should determine if Technical Committee recommendation is the final word.

Chairperson Nichols agreed that there may be an opportunity to say that things have changed, pushing the policies. Chairperson Nichols stated having been in support of increasing density in single-family neighborhoods. However, changing large policies in such a targeted manner for a single parcel and not on a neighborhood scale, when the process is being currently being undertaken on a larger scale for the entire city, is not beneficial.

Commissioner Raj stated that a mechanism that would avoid repeating the same actions over and over possibly through policy change should be discussed.

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Commissioner Raj stated that regarding the letter received today from Mr. Jha, the comment period was still open when received and while the comments of Commissioner Captain are understood, the comment period was still open. Chairperson Nichols replied that while the Public Hearing was still open, the question is if the Commissioners will have had time to fairly include information with short notice. The issue can be discussed at the Planning Commission Retreat if desired.

- **MOTION to recommend the denial of the application**, supporting the Technical Committee report by Commissioner Captain. MOTION seconded by Commissioner Shefrin. **The MOTION passed unanimously.**

8. 2021 Annual Docket: Public Hearing and Study Session for:

- **New policy in support of affordable commercial space; and**
- **New policy in support of affordable housing.**

Planning Commission to hold a public hearing and consider a report approval and recommendation to the City Council on the proposed minor updates to the Redmond Comprehensive Plan related to affordable commercial space and affordable housing.

Attachments: [Memo](#); [Draft Planning Commission Report – Affordable Housing, Attachment A – Technical Committee Report, Attachment B – Public Hearing Notice](#); [Draft Planning Commission Report – Affordable Commercial, Attachment A - Technical Committee Report, Attachment B – Public Hearing Notice](#); [Presentation](#)

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

Staff presentation

Ms. Mesa-Zendt gave a short slide presentation. Staff recommended approval of both new policies.

Commissioner Captain asked for the definition of affordable commercial space. Ms. Mesa-Zendt replied commercial space that would be available to small, local businesses that often are displaced by redevelopment and are not a part of national franchises.

Commissioner East asked for an example of how the City would implement either policy. Ms. Mesa-Zendt replied that examples are working with the private sector to provide more affordable housing through revised incentives such as increased density or height bonuses, through Multi-Family Tax Exemptions (MFTE) and inclusionary zoning programs, refinements to programs within the Housing Action Plan, working with developers to go deeper with affordable housing policies, and alternative compliance and fees-in-lieu which fund projects such as the Together Center. Regarding affordable commercial space, requiring developers to have smaller space or mixed-use first floor reserved for locally owned businesses as redevelopment occurs is being researched.

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Public Hearing

- **Chairperson Nichols opened the Public Hearing.**

Ms. Frey stated that no requests from the public to speak or written comments had been received.

- **Chairperson Nichols closed the Public Hearing.**

Study Session

Commissioner Aparna stated that supporting affordable housing is the minimum that can be done for the community.

- **MOTION to approve the recommendations for the new policies in support of affordable commercial space and affordable housing** by Commissioner East. MOTION seconded by Commissioner Captain. **The MOTION passed unanimously.**
- **MOTION to approve the Planning Commission Report** regarding the new policies in support of affordable commercial space and affordable housing by Commissioner Captain. MOTION seconded by Commissioner East. **The MOTION passed unanimously.**

9. **Redmond 2050: Monthly Briefing – SEPA Environmental Analysis.** The monthly briefing from staff on Redmond 2050 will focus on the upcoming State Environment Policy Act (SEPA) environmental analysis.

Attachments: [Memo](#), [Presentation](#)

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

Staff presentation

Ms. Frey presented the work being done on the SEPA Environmental Review process.

Mr. Churchill asked if there are any specific metrics that the Commissioners would be interested in seeing.

Commissioner East stated that growth impact on schools and feedback from impacted school districts should be included. Ms. Frey replied that the issue will be a part of the Report Card under Evaluation of Public Services.

Commissioner Captain asked if the efficiencies of arterials and intersections, particularly in the Overlake area, should be examined. Mr. Churchill replied that congestion cannot be built out of and other ways to move people will be a part of the analysis.

Commissioner Shefrin stated that bicyclist and pedestrian safety should be considered in transportation modeling. Mr. Churchill replied that the analysis will be multimodal.

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Chairperson Nichols stated that the feedback from residents is that a walkable community is desired, and that a car-centric community is not walkable.

Commissioner Aparna asked if greenhouse gas issues across each model would be a part of the initial SEPA analysis. Ms. Frey replied that greenhouse gas is a part of the evaluation between scenarios and recommended a review of the Trends and Best Practices report and that if there are deeper questions the consultant can be contacted.

Commissioner Aparna referred to concerns regarding the tree canopy and asked if the broad energy modeling of business types would be reviewed. Mr. Frey stated that the subject of energy would not be deeply reviewed and offered to research the methodology proposed for energy with follow-up.

Commissioner Aparna stated that water should be looked at as well, and that mixed-use areas will change not only traffic patterns but energy patterns. Ms. Frey reiterated that reviewing the Trends and Best Practices report will be informative. Ms. Frey stated that the Report Cards being worked on this summer would be high-level but that there will be a deep evaluation of Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) documents and especially the preferred alternative.

Commissioner Aparna asked where green building codes would be reviewed. Ms. Frey replied that the best placement would be discussed with the team and would possibly be a part of the land use conversation in phase two.

Chairperson Nichols asked Ms. Frey to send out a link to the BERK Trends and Best Practices report.

Chairperson Nichols asked how coordination with other cities will occur, as growth on corridors will impact transportation, especially as a job center, through neighboring cities and that decisions by other cities can impact Redmond as well. Ms. Frey replied that meetings have begun with Bellevue for Overlake specific conversations, and that Redmond established and is leading meeting with a group of local long-range planners from the Eastside (will hold quarterly meetings throughout the periodic review timeframe).

Chairperson Nichols referred to the comments of Mr. Hinman earlier in the meeting and asked how Redmond Ridge would be reviewed in unincorporated King County. Mr. Churchill replied that the travel demand model includes areas outside of Redmond and makes assumptions based on land use and future growth; all impacts at Redmond Ridge are included in the model.

10. Staff & Commissioner Updates

Mr. Frey stated that possible Annual Workshop dates are August 18, 2021, or October 20, 2021. Based on availability, October would be preferred. The Commission agreed. Ms. Frey stated that a room would be booked in the first-floor conference center at City Hall. The Workshop will be in-person at this time.

Commissioner Captain asked where Extended Agenda calendars could be found. Ms. Frey replied that on the City website and the Planning Commission page, the Topics under

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Review tab will bring up the calendar. The work program links are available as well.

- Discussion only. No action be taken at this time.

11. Adjourn – 8:30 p.m.

Minutes approved on:

Planning Commission Chair

July 14, 2021

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Sherrri Nichols
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