

**Planning Commission
Remote Meeting
Meeting Minutes
March 1, 2022**



Approved: kmd

Chair Michael Finch called the meeting to order. Commissioners in attendance: Adam Yanasak, Michael Zelinski, Christine Lavra, Carly McGinn, Kevin Ballard, Demi Chatters, and Charles Adkins.

Commissioners Absent: None

Staff Present: Yorik Stevens-Wajda, Becky McCrary, Steve Ingalsbe, Kelsey Heyd, and Kathy Davis

Meeting Minutes

Motion: Commissioner Yanasak made a motion to approve the February 15, 2022 meeting minutes. Commissioner Zelinski seconded the motion.

Vote: Commissioner Adkins, yes; Commissioner Chatters, yes; Commissioner Ballard, yes; Commissioner McGinn, abstain; Commissioner Lavra, yes; Commissioner Zelinski, yes; Commissioner Yanasak, yes; and Chair Finch; yes.

Motion Carried.

Staff Comments

Yorik Stevens-Wajda, Planning Director, updated Commission on the County Council adoption of the growth targets that were recommended by the Snohomish County Tomorrow steering committee, and the Puget Sound Regional Council 's executive board adoption of a regional housing strategy. There's a link to that in the Planning Commission packet. After his update, he introduced two new Planning Commissioners - Demi Chatters and Kevin Ballard.

Commissioner Reports

Chair Finch thanked Commissioners Holland and Lark for their years of service.

General Citizen Comments

None

Item 6: Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update EIS Scoping Public Hearing

Becky McCrary, Long Range Planning Manager, provided a short briefing on the comprehensive plan periodic update process and status. Mr. Stevens-Wajda provided information on the alternatives and the population and employment growth targets. He reviewed preliminary maps on the existing concentrations of housing and employment and areas that had additional capacity. Ms. McCrary reviewed the elements of the environment to study in the EIS. Virtual community open houses scheduled on March 3 at 12:00 pm and on March 10 at 6:00 pm.

Commission Discussion

Commissioner Zelinski asked about mixed-use buildings. Mr. Stevens-Wajda responded that there are mixed use projects proposed at Waterfront Place and the Riverfront; however, he wasn't aware of any currently in the permitting process along the Evergreen Way and Broadway corridors.

Commissioner McGinn asked about the buildable lands map. Mr. Stevens-Wajda responded that the buildable land methodology includes vacant land, redevelopment, and infill. Chair Finch asked about aggregation of land under separate ownership. Mr. Stevens-Wajda responded that if parcels were under common ownership they were considered as one for the analysis. If parcels are owned by different people than the methodology would not assume aggregation of those lots.

Commissioner Chatters referred to the elements of the environment studied in the EIS and asked about accessibility and equity in terms of housing that meets the needs of seniors and those that have disability issues. Residents have different requirements for their living spaces. Ms. McCrary responded that element is one that will be addressed throughout the Comprehensive Plan update process. Housing and transportation needs will be reviewed by income level and special needs.

Citizen Comments

None

Item 7: Accessory Dwelling Units

Mr. Stevens-Wajda briefed Commission on implementation of the City's Housing Action Plan in terms of infill development and some work the state Legislature is working on in terms of accessory dwelling unit related bills. He then introduced Steve Ingalsbe and Kelsey Heyd who have worked on the development review of accessory dwelling unit projects.

Ms. McCrary presented information on accessory dwelling units (ADU) which included a definition, policy guidance, housing action plan implementation, ordinance history, and the current ADU regulations. Mr. Steve Ingalsbe and Ms. Kelsey Heyd presented information on the existing ADUs. Mr. Stevens-Wajda presented information on the potential code amendments.

Commission Discussion

Commissioner McGinn asked about the pre-approved models for accessory dwellings. Mr. Stevens-Wajda responded that the City of Renton had a competition where architects would submit their suggestions that were reviewed by a panel appointed by the City Council. Los Angeles had a similar process. Not sure if this would be the City's process; however, there is some interest in lowering the barrier for accessory dwelling units.

Commissioner McGinn referred to the potential code amendments and suggested that the ADU height not exceed the height of the primary structure and suggested more specific language regarding the appearance and character of the ADU such as the roof design, window, door scale, and design match the architectural detail of the primary structure. She also suggested incentives for designing for accessibility.

Commissioner Zelinski asked if the current level of ADU activity was greater or just a continuation of the level prior to the last code amendment. Mr Stevens-Wajda responded that since the updated code allowed detached ADUs, the level did increase. Mr. Ingalsbe agreed. Commissioner Zelinski commented that ADUs would accommodate additional population by providing affordable housing without really impacting in an adverse way the neighborhood character in single family zones.

Commissioner Yanasak agreed with Commissioner Zelinski and asked if staff could identify the top three code barriers in the current ADU regulations. Mr. Ingalsbe responded the 20-foot rear setback in the UR3 zone, additional timing and costs for a code modification, and parking requirement. Commissioner Yanasak asked about the owner occupancy requirement. Mr. Stevens-Wajda responded that the requirement was in response to absentee landlords and the concern about having two rentals on one lot. Commissioner Yanasak commented that the possibility of providing pre-approved plans could be a cost savings or maybe staff could consider other cost saving measures.

Commissioner Ballard asked if there were any public comments on the ADU regulations. Ms. McCrary responded that there were public comments received during the Rethink Housing Action Plan process and infill dwellings was a recommendation that came out of that work. The City's next step is to take the recommendations through to implementation. Commissioner Ballard supported the regulations which he felt provided affordable housing and the possibility for home ownership.

Commissioner Chatters agreed and supported the free model-based plans for streamlining the costs, and supported ownership lot segregation. She asked if there were other jurisdictions that had regulations on ownership segregation. Chair Finch responded that Seattle had regulations.

Chair Finch provided comments on the potential regulations.

- The owner occupant requirement was not something that would likely be legal much longer.
- Supported the pre-approved plans.
- The City should consider how lot coverage restrictions might work relative to some of the larger lots.
- With the removal of the owner occupancy requirement, he didn't support waiving impact or review fees because those are real costs to the City.
- Lot segregation could work; however, provide regulations that don't allow for odd-shaped flag lots in the R-1 and R-2 zones.
- Supported the UR3 rear setback reduction.
- Supported good design regulations.

Mr. Stevens-Wajda provided some thoughts for Commission to consider in regards to the architectural consistency requirement which has led to some problems:

- Throughout the City, many blocks of homes were built in different eras and in different styles. With that in mind, if two houses side by side can look different from each other, why couldn't a house look different than its accessory unit?

- With regards to the height of the ADU, the primary home is one story which limits the height of the accessory dwelling; however, the home in front adds another story. What if that one story house is surrounded by two story homes.
- Maybe the front home is poorly designed, but the proposal provides a better looking ADU.
- What does it mean by consistent appearance? It's clearly different to have one unit with horizontal siding and one with vertical siding. But what about the thickness of the slats? Would it be the worst thing if one dwelling was brick and one was slats?

Mr. Ingalsbe stated that currently, proposals are submitted with a one-story house in the front with construction of a garage with an accessory dwelling unit on top, which is higher than the principle dwelling in front. Ms. Heyd added that the existing code requires a maximum height for non- alley ADUs of 18 feet which eliminates that proposal based on the current height limitations.

Commissioner Lavra referred to owner segregation and asked about lots narrower than 50 feet which were considered non-conforming. Mr. Stevens-Wajda responded that staff would consider.

Citizen Comments

Leanne Roe, 6308 West Magnolia Avenue, didn't support accessory dwelling units in residential neighborhoods. A two-story accessory dwelling unit backs to her property which she feels is totally out of character with the neighborhood. She was concerned that over time, both dwelling units could become rentals. On-street parking is also an issue.

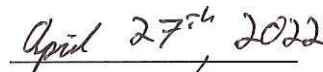
Ismail Mohammed, 3102 Rucker Avenue, stated that he supported the fee simple or ownership housing. He supported the potential code amendments. Considerations should be made regarding the length of time and the costs associated with accessory dwelling unit construction.

Dylan Sluder, Master Builders Association Snohomish County Manager, thanked Commission and staff for moving forward on the potential code amendments. Currently, there is a housing crisis and affordability is the key component. Accessory dwelling units can provide an opportunity to afford a home or place to rent. He looked forward to working with the City on this home ownership opportunity.

ADJOURNED 8:31 PM



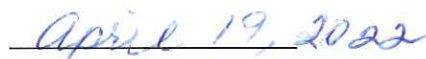
 Planning Commission Secretary



 Date



 Administrative Coordinator



 Date