

**REDMOND PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES**

March 24, 2010

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chairman McCarthy, Commissioners Gregory, Hinman, Miller, and Julinsey

COMMISSIONERS EXCUSED: Commissioners O'Hara, Biethan

COMMISSIONERS CURRENTLY SERVING ON THE CODE REWRITE COMMISSION: Thom Youngblood, Vibhas Chandorkar

STAFF PRESENT: Jeff Churchill, Kimberly Dietz, Lori Peckol, Sarah Stiteler, Redmond Planning Department; Lei Wu, Redmond Public Works Department.

RECORDING SECRETARY: Kathryn Kerby

CALL TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chairman McCarthy in the Council Chambers at City Hall.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA:

Senior Planner Sarah Stiteler proposed that the agenda allow for Policy Planning Manager Lori Peckol to make a short presentation. Ms. Peckol wanted to formally recognize Chairman McCarthy's contributions to the Planning Commission, prior to his upcoming retirement from the Commission. He has served on the Commission since 2002, and during that time he has contributed to many projects of critical importance to Redmond, such as the regulations for historic buildings, updates to the Shoreline Master Program, Critical Areas Ordinance, Comprehensive Plan updates, the first Transportation Master Plan and several major neighborhood plans. Chairman McCarthy's leadership as Chair and lead for several major topics, critical thinking, skill in finding solutions and building consensus, and helpful guidance to staff have all been very much appreciated by everyone associated with the Redmond Planning Commission. Ms. Peckol presented him with a recognition plaque to celebrate that service.

Commissioner Gregory added that he hated to see the McCarthy era come to an end, and that Chairman McCarthy has been a wonderful inspiration with his assistance and guidance to new Commissioners over the years. Chairman McCarthy in turn thanked his predecessor Marty Snodgrass for teaching him a great deal about how to be an effective leader. Chairman McCarthy informed the audience that Commissioner Hinman had been voted the new Chairman, and Commissioner Gregory had been voted Vice-Chair. Chairman McCarthy was sure that they would lead the Planning Commission to new accomplishments.

MINUTES AND SUMMARIES:

The February 17th, 2010 meeting minutes were approved. The meeting summaries from December 16, 2009, January 27, 2010 and March 3, 2010 were all approved.

ITEMS FROM THE AUDIENCE:

There were no items from the audience.

PUBLIC HEARING AND STUDY SESSION, Idylwood (Viewpoint) Neighborhood Plan Update, presented by Kimberly Dietz, Senior Planner.

Chairman McCarthy opened the public hearing. Ms. Dietz started her presentation with a request that issues related to the neighborhood plan's transportation discussion be held until the next planned meeting on this topic, on April 14th. At that time Jeff Palmer, from Public Works, will be available to answer those questions more directly. Therefore Ms. Dietz asked that this meeting focus on housing, which included Issue #1, open space at five or more dwellings; Issue #5, senior living; and Issue #17, housing inventory and types.

The Idylwood neighborhood under discussion is in the southern portion of Redmond, bounded by Lake Sammamish on the east. The Plan's major points addressed the following topics:

- 1) Neighborhood Awareness:
 - a. Formally change the neighborhood name from Viewpoint to Idylwood.
 - b. Improve street lights and gateways for more unified feel.
- 2) Transportation:
 - a. Improve bikeability, and walkability, and non-motorized safety.
 - b. Update intersections to calm traffic and improve connectivity.
- 3) Water Quality and Natural Environs:
 - a. Safe and sustainable practices for neighbors.
 - b. Awareness and education.
 - c. Make use of innovative techniques, incentives, partnerships and grants
- 4) Land Use/Zoning:
 - a. Preserve current diversity.
 - b. Allow for backyard homes, senior living, and multiple generations.
- 5) Parks, Trails and Places

One of the key pieces of the Neighborhood Plan was to bring people together for various neighborhood functions, such as classes, parties, or neighborhood improvement opportunities. Ms. Dietz concluded her presentation with a reminder of the issues to be considered during the current study session as listed at the beginning.

Chairman McCarthy asked if anyone from the audience had oral testimony for the public hearing. There was none. He then closed the oral portion of the public hearing, kept the written portion open, and opened the study session.

Commissioner Julinsey asked if any of the Commissioners had questions regarding the existing issues matrix and their previous discussions. Commissioner Hinman asked which of the issues were regarded as transportation, to be saved until the next meeting. He pointed out that several of the issues at least touched on transportation. In answer to that question, Chairman McCarthy asked Ms. Dietz if she had yet compiled a list of those issues with Mr. Jeff Palmer. She replied that she had already met with him but would be meeting with him again prior to their next meeting on this topic, and so far they had only discussed general items from the Transportation Master Plan, traffic volumes, and future vision. Mr. Palmer does have the accidents map and will speak more to that during that meeting. So far they intended to focus mostly on traffic function and standards to describe that function, along with ways to implement the neighborhood's future vision. Ms. Dietz

suggested that if any of the Commissioners had specific transportation questions, those questions should be submitted as quickly as possible.

Commissioner Hinman replied that as he went through the issues list, four seemed to have enough to do with transportation that he questioned if they should be set aside for the moment: #11, #12, #16 and #18. Ms. Dietz agreed that those specific items should be set aside. Chairman McCarthy suggested that if they get through the other issues, they could at least start to go through those transportation-related issues in preparation for the next meeting.

Commissioner Julinsey opened the study session focusing on Housing Issues #1, #5, and #17. Issue #1 related to the proposed trigger of five or more housing units for additional requirements regarding configuration of open space. The question was whether five units was the appropriate trigger. Commissioner Julinsey asked Bob DeWald of the Citizens Advisory Committee where that number had come from. He explained it was not a scientifically-derived number, but rather based on a consensus of the CAC members on what felt right.

Chairman McCarthy asked Ms. Dietz whether she could explain the color coding in the aerial neighborhood photo. Ms. Dietz explained that the red areas and one large dark green area are larger lots that could accommodate five dwellings according to current zoning standards, many of which were developed prior to 1965. The circled yellow areas are clusters which could redevelop over time. Chairman McCarthy asked Ms. Dietz if she knew what percentage of the red-colored areas were also currently vacant. Ms. Dietz replied that only one parcel was known to be vacant. Chairman McCarthy asked whether that meant all the other properties would involve a potential developer buying not just the land, but also the houses, and demolishing the houses. Ms. Dietz replied that would not necessarily be the case. Approximately one-third of those red areas are large single lots. The rest are smaller lots that would have to be purchased together to form enough of a land base. Chairman McCarthy asked what the practical impact would be, given the low number of lots which would actually be candidates for five or more units.

Commissioner Hinman suggested that perhaps the impact would not be immediate, but instead would help guide how those properties are managed long term. Ms. Dietz said that was the consideration behind the CAC's recommendation. Chairman McCarthy clarified that he understood those parcels probably would not be developed tomorrow. His point was that even if they were developed tomorrow, they are so small that any sort of open space would be minimal even under this new regulation. Chairman McCarthy also wondered if this five-unit minimum would become the precedent for the City as a whole. He understood that was not the intent for this particular guideline. However, once a guideline like this is made, it can often serve as that precedent later.

Commissioner Miller pointed out that other neighborhoods have much higher minimums already written into their plans, and he was not aware of any proposal to take those limits down to five units. Ms. Dietz added that the Code Rewrite Commission has been discussing that 30-unit number as becoming the standard throughout the City. Commissioner Julinsey pointed out that the intent was to preserve the existing open space of the neighborhood. Commissioner Julinsey asked Ms. Dietz whether the City currently had a standard for the area. Ms. Dietz replied that this particular neighborhood did not currently have a trigger in place related to configuration of open space.

Commissioner Miller asked if the City had any sort of default open-space trigger. Ms. Dietz conferred with Senior Planner Ms. Stiteler, who confirmed that the City had requirements on both a

lot-by-lot basis as well as at the development level. However, the City has no default trigger for configuration of open-space based on housing units, so the triggers come from neighborhood plans.

Commissioner Julinsey asked if the Commission wanted to postpone further discussion on this topic until they could obtain more materials. Chairman McCarthy pointed out that one of the CRC's goals was to consolidate similar regulations from a variety of neighborhood plans, and create a unified set of code that included as many of those similarities as possible. Yet, each neighborhood wants to be unique and this topic may be one of those aspects which are left at the neighborhood level. Chairman McCarthy did not have any further concern with this stipulation given that this is handled as a neighborhood issue, and 30 units clearly would not work in this neighborhood. He simply wanted to ensure that a stipulation here would not serve as the precedent elsewhere.

Commissioner Hinman asked Commissioner Julinsey for her opinion based on her work with the CRC. She replied that she deferred to the neighborhood's preference since they had already spent a great deal of time on this issue. Commissioner Miller still wondered why this particular neighborhood may have chosen five, which is six times more stringent than every other City neighborhood. He trusted that the number worked for that neighborhood, but he shared Chairman McCarthy's concern about having this become the default later.

Ms. Dietz pointed out that in the neighborhood's discussions they originally had a figure of ten as the minimum, but that was also considered to be too limited an application. The CAC wanted to take it down to five units as the minimum given neighborhood conditions. City staff did not have additional suggestions than what the CAC came up with. Commissioner Miller pointed out that on parcels with the more typical 30 units the resulting open space area is actually large enough to serve a variety of functions, such as trails or a neighborhood park. He asked what the neighborhood and/or City could realistically expect from a scaled-down smaller open space for only five dwellings.

Ms. Dietz said that one of the CAC's priorities was perimeter landscaping to buffer new infill developments from existing homes. The CAC also wanted to give each house a bigger yard on one side, than what would be possible if each house were centered on the lot. Finally, the CAC wanted to make allowances for so-called "aging in place" amenities such as benches along the sidewalks. Commissioner Miller said he saw the value in all these ideas. He simply shared Chairman McCarthy's concern about how this unique unit minimum could have unintended consequences. Commissioner Julinsey said she would relate those concerns to the CRC and the City Council. The Commission closed their discussion on Issue #1.

Commissioner Julinsey began the discussion for Issue #2, regarding techniques for creating and promoting open space. She invited either Ms. Dietz or Mr. DeWald to comment. Ms. Dietz explained that if there are opportunities for any preservation of existing greenery, that such preservation be considered either at that location or a nearby location. Chairman McCarthy asked how permanent easements or tracts relate to significant capital improvements. He pointed out that the stipulation for permanent easements and tracts in this context is redundant, since by definition capital improvements already occur within permanent easements and tracts. Ms. Dietz replied that there could be opportunities to protect or encourage greenery parallel to, or adjacent to, but outside of the right-of-way. The proposed amendment simply encouraged the City to consider that possibility and include such preservation in the project if possible.

Chairman McCarthy asked if that meant the City would then be obligated to go purchase those nearby areas to provide for such permanent easements and tracts. He agreed that the intent of the policy is fine, but including the word tract leaves the City open for scope creep down the road. Ms. Dietz said perhaps she could come back with revised language, to preserve the original intent without also creating an opportunity for private land-taking later. Chairman McCarthy asked whether the word “tract” should perhaps be removed, since it may have no relevance for City-owned land. Ms. Dietz will review the language and make recommendations. They left this issue open.

Commissioner Julinsey pointed out that they had reached the time allotted for this discussion and since the issues had been reviewed, and no new issues introduced, perhaps they should move onto the next item on the agenda. Chairman McCarthy asked Ms. Dietz if she still had one more issue to discuss. Ms. Dietz clarified that they still had Issue #17, regarding implementation of senior housing and backyard homes. This issue originated during her first presentation of this neighborhood plan. Specifically, Commissioner Miller wanted to know more about the neighborhood’s housing inventory. Commissioner Miller replied that he had not yet had a chance to review the material and requested that this issue be held open.

Chairman McCarthy suggested that they go ahead and close Issue #2, and create a separate issue related to his concerns about the tract language. With that, he noted that they had received two written comments on this issue which he asked Ms. Dietz to enter into the record. Chairman McCarthy also pointed out that one of them appeared to be from an out-of-state resident who owns a parcel in the neighborhood. The written comment essentially asked the Planning Commission to rezone that parcel from single-family to multi-family. Chairman McCarthy wanted to make clear that a rezoning request is not something they can address as part of the neighborhood plan. That would have to come before the Planning Commission as an initiated amendment to City documents. If the owner of the parcel is interested in that process, they may contact the City for more information. Chairman McCarthy left the written portion of the testimony open, to be closed at Commissioner Hinman’s discretion after he assumed the role of Chair during the next Commission meeting.

BREAK

PUBLIC HEARING AND STUDY SESSION, Amendments to the Transportation Master Plan for the Southeast Redmond Transportation Study, presented by Lei Wu, Senior Engineer and Jeff Churchill, Senior Planner.

Chairman McCarthy opened the public hearing and invited Mr. Churchill to begin his presentation. Mr. Churchill explained that the public hearing was an opportunity for the City to describe, and the public to comment on, the City’s proposed amendments to the Build-Out Transportation Plan resulting from the Greater Southeast Redmond Area Transportation Study. This portion of the plan is the most distant in terms of project initiation dates, and these projects are not constrained by funding availability. Some of these projects may never be built for a variety of reasons.

Chairman McCarthy asked if anyone in the public wished to comment on the transportation plan but none stepped forward. He closed the oral portion of the public hearing but left the written portion open until the next Commission hearing April 14th, or until the Commission has finished deliberating this item. The issues matrix still had four items to be discussed. Before beginning a

review of those issues, Chairman McCarthy asked if any Commissioners had thought of any additional issues since their last discussion. Commissioner Hinman reminded the Commissioners that these were not finalized concrete project plans, but rather general goals, and as such did not warrant a great deal of in-depth conversation at this time. Rather, this is a time to provide general guidance while those projects are still in their infancy, with the bulk of the work to be done if or when those projects mature. Commissioner Julinsey pointed out that Sound Transit would be hosting a public hearing on April 1st to discuss East Link, in case any Commissioners are interested. Chairman McCarthy opened the issues discussion.

Commissioner Miller asked that Chairman McCarthy clarify his original concerns about Issue #1, given staff's response to that issue. Commissioner Miller was not concerned about transit and trail components, but rather with the HOV element of each, which is what he would like to see addressed. Unless the station in the vicinity of Marymoor/Whole Foods is the end of the line for some portion of East Link's development, he did not see the justification for adding bus transit capacity in the same corridor for rail transit capacity. The property is already going to have an extremely high volume of high capacity transit modes. An HOV lane in that area would seem to consume resources in that particular area when those resources could be spent elsewhere, thus negating the whole point of investing in multi-mode transit there.

Chairman McCarthy did not object to this item on the list, and pointed out that having it on the list was no indication it would ever be completed. He appreciated Commissioner Miller's concerns and agreed that there is competition for transit space at that location. Before any expansion is undertaken, a traffic study would be done to see if demand was sufficient. Ironically, having it on the list ensures that Commissioner Miller's concerns would be discussed if this project got to that point. Commissioner Hinman stated that this issue also pointed out that other jurisdictions are working on these same issues, and the City must remain aware that those other jurisdictions will have an impact on how these projects play out.

Commissioner Miller replied that this stage of the project is where these issues should first be named, so that any future design development includes those issues. This issue in particular seemed to stand out as being a contradictory element in the City's general philosophy and policy for Southeast Redmond. HOV lanes are about both efficiency and capacity. Commissioner Miller believes that HOV lanes in that particular area would provide the same capacity that the rail link is intended to provide. He questioned why that was the case at the policy level. Chairman McCarthy agreed with him, but pointed out that now is not the time to be having such in-depth project discussions. Rather, those conversations should take place when this project is actually added to the Transportation Facilities Plan, if that ever occurs. Commissioner Miller was satisfied with that but was also concerned about similar issues with apparently shorter-term projects like the trail, and those decisions were on a shorter horizon. Chairman McCarthy suggested, and Commissioner Hinman agreed, that perhaps the Commission could flag this issue in their report to City Council, as needing additional attention if or when the time came. Commissioner Miller consented to close Issue #1.

Chairman McCarthy opened discussion of Issue #2 regarding projects T5 and B1, and asked whether they had a place in the City's plan. Commissioner Miller was satisfied with the staff suggestion to add the responsible party to those descriptions. Issue #2 was closed.

Chairman McCarthy opened discussion on Issue #3, regarding the Avondale Corridor project. Commissioner Miller originally felt that project did not adequately account for reduced traffic and focused heavily on capacity versus demand management. Specifically, he said residents in that area were concerned that this project would functionally become an extension of SR-520. He felt this issue was similar to Issue #1, and that the question should be raised early in the design process for similar reasons. Chairman McCarthy also wondered how this project would impact nearby areas, in a mix of ways. The City does have high-density housing and sensitive areas in that corridor. He wanted to ensure that any possible project development would include discussions on those topics.

Mr. Churchill replied that members of the Bear Creek CAC have already identified many of those issues as part of their neighborhood planning process. Any update to that neighborhood plan will review these issues again even if this particular project does not move forward. Commissioner Miller replied that his concerns were answered with the knowledge that those neighborhood plans have already begun those discussions, and that the discussions would continue. Commissioner Julinsey added that the Transportation Master Plan's review later this year would also address some of those concerns.

Chairman McCarthy moved on to the last Issue regarding R28, and how it is contradictory with other listed projects. He asked Commissioner Miller if he was satisfied with staff's response for that issue. Commissioner Miller replied that he was satisfied with the specific information they provided about NE 76th Street. However, from a more general perspective, he asked how a sub-area plan like this would try to balance conflicting City goals. As with these other issues, Commissioner Miller would prefer that those conflicts be discussed earlier in the design process, rather than later. Given that preference, he was satisfied with staff response on this issue and was willing to close it. Commissioner Hinman asked Ms. Lei if there was an open house for NE 76th Street scheduled later this year. She confirmed that an open house was tentatively scheduled for June 1st. Chairman McCarthy assured Commissioner Miller that the Commission would have ample opportunity to reconcile such differences in partnership with City Council.

Chairman McCarthy asked if there were any additional issues regarding this topic. Commissioner Miller thanked the staff for all of their assistance and said he recognized this plan would be particularly challenging given all of the different priorities. Chairman McCarthy then moved that the Commission recommend approval of the Comprehensive Plan Amendment as recommended by staff, with the single modification discussed in Issue #2 regarding a list of responsible agencies where projects do not fall under the City's direct responsibility. The motion passed. Chairman McCarthy closed the public hearing.

REPORTS

Ms. Stiteler reminded the Commissioners of the ARCH Housing 101 workshop on March 31, 2010.

SCHEDULING/TOPICS FOR NEXT MEETING(S)

The Commission discussed the issues to be addressed in upcoming meetings.

ADJOURN

Chairman McCarthy adjourned the meeting at approximately 9:30 p.m.

Minutes Approved On:

Planning Commission Chair

