



PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Vancouver City Hall – Council Chambers – 415 W. Sixth Street
PO Box 1995 – Vancouver, Washington 98668-1995
www.cityofvancouver.us

Marjorie Ledell • Steve Schulte • Larry Blaufus • Zachary Pyle • Hannah Burak • Nena Cavel

January 25, 2022

REGULAR MEETING (Convened telephonically, no in person attendance)

Vancouver City Hall - 415 W. Sixth Street, Vancouver WA

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

The January 25, 2022, meeting of the Planning Commission was called to order at 5:00 p.m. by Chair Ledell.

Present: Marjorie Ledell, Zachary Pyle, Larry Blaufus, Steve Schulte, Hannah Burak, and Nena Cavel

ADOPTION OF MINUTES

Motion by Vice Chair Pyle, second by Commissioner Schulte, to adopt the November 9, 2021 minutes as written.

Roll Call Vote

Larry Blaufus	Yes
Steve Schulte	Yes
Hannah Burak	Abstain
Nena Cavel	Abstain
Zach Pyle	Yes
Marjorie Ledell	Yes

Commissioner Schulte suggested a revision to the December 14, 2021 minutes. On page 5, the definition of basement to be changed from “two feet above ground level”, to “two feet or less above ground level”.

Motion by Commissioner Schulte, second by Vice Chair Pyle, to adopt the December 14, 2021 minutes with the suggested revision.

Roll Call Vote

Larry Blaufus	Yes
Steve Schulte	Yes
Hannah Burak	Abstain
Nena Cavel	Abstain
Zach Pyle	Yes
Marjorie Ledell	Yes

COMMUNICATIONS FROM CHAIR AND STAFF

Chair Ledell introduced the new Commissioners, Hannah Burak and Nena Cavel, and the existing Commissioners provided background on their work and contributions to the Commission.

Rebecca Kennedy, Deputy Director, reminded the Commission and the public about the annual Retreat on February 12, 2022.

WORKSHOPS

5:13 P.M. HOUSING CODE UPDATES

Bryan Snodgrass, Principal Planner; Becky Coutinho, Associate Planner

Rebecca Kennedy, Deputy Director, introduced the workshop. Bryan Snodgrass, Principal Planner, provided a summary of the goals of the project, and the proposed new single-family R-17 zoning district standards.

Commission Discussion

The Commission asked questions on the following topics, and staff provided the following responses:

- Alleyway safety concerns. Staff responded they hadn't heard safety concerns but would investigate it further and noted that it also came up in a community open house.
- The safety standards for houses that are built close together related to fire danger. Staff responded the fire marshal is involved during the sub-division and development review process and apply all building and fire code regulations for all development that occurs in the City. The building code covers fire rating requirements for all development approved in the City.
- The change in the minimum lot size, from 2,500 square feet to 2,000 square feet. Staff responded it was in response to the Commission, as feedback from development stakeholders.
- Any consideration of glazing requirements on the door or windows. Staff responded it hadn't come up yet but they would investigate it further.
- Requirements for street widths. Staff responded there are specific standards by street classification but haven't considered a special width requirement for this zone that doesn't already exist in the City code.
- Preservation of tree canopy and open space. Staff responded that small lot sizes will mean less room for trees but that developments will still need to meet overall standards. This new zone would be applied by the rezoning process and it's hard to foresee this zone being applied on a mass scale, so would not expect to see a noticeable difference in tree canopy overall.

Staff continued the presentation, covering the proposed new multi-family R-50 zoning district and cottage cluster housing.

Commission Discussion

The Commission asked questions on the following topics. Due to the time limit, staff responses will be provided in subsequent presentations.

- For the cottage cluster housing, is it possible to fit three stories in the maximum height of 30 feet, and consider limiting to two stories with a height limit of 30 feet? Staff responded it's likely possible to fit three stories in 30 feet.
- Hesitant to allow on street parking as credit in cottage cluster housing because it is inconsistent with other single family zones.
- For the R-50 zone, the parking requirements is lowered to 1 parking stall per unit. How often are more spots added, and how are visitors treated.

Staff continued presenting on apartments with shared kitchen and bathroom facilities, adjusting ADU standards, support for aging in place, setbacks for new apartments next to existing homes, density bonus for faith-based affordable housing providers, parking reductions near transit, feedback from a developer roundtable, the Vancouver Neighborhood Alliance, and a virtual open house, as well as next steps.

Commission Discussion

The Commission asked questions on the following topics. Due to the time limit, staff responses will be provided in subsequent presentations.

- Further explanation of the purpose of the program to encourage development for aging in place.
- For setbacks of new apartments next to existing homes, support for step backs of building heights.
- Regarding the density bonus for faith-based organization, consider other organizations like non-profits.

COMMUNITY FORUM

Glen Yung was present to provide comments on the housing code updates. He would like to see the site clearance issue on the west side of Vancouver addressed. He was in favor of allowing houses as small as 800 square feet. On the R-17 zone, he would like to see an easier process to rezone for average homeowners. He expressed concern with the lack of a definition for “affordable housing”. Lastly, he would like the City to take an official stance in lobbying the State to change the condo liability laws.

Peter Fels was present to provide comments on the housing code updates. He was in support of the changes to the housing code. His main concern was to do more to increase density and affordability and consider revising the existing residential zones. Increased density promotes the goals of the City – affordability, equity, and addressing climate change.

HEARING

6:39 P.M. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Chair Ledell opened the floor for nominations for Chair. Nomination by Commissioner Schulte to re-elect Marjorie Ledell for Chair. Motion by Commissioner Blaufus, seconded by Commissioner Pyle to close the nomination for Chair.

Roll Call Vote

Larry Blaufus	Yes
Steve Schulte	Yes
Hannah Burak	Yes
Nena Cavel	Yes
Zach Pyle	Yes
Marjorie Ledell	Yes

Chair Ledell opened the floor for nominations for Vice Chair. Nomination by Commissioner Blaufus to re-elect Zachary Pyle for Vice Chair. Motion by Commissioner Schulte, seconded by Commissioner Cavel to close the nomination for Vice Chair.

Roll Call Vote

Larry Blaufus	Yes
Steve Schulte	Yes
Hannah Burak	Yes
Nena Cavel	Yes
Zach Pyle	Yes
Marjorie Ledell	Yes

Roll Call Vote for the nomination of Zach Pyle to Vice Chair.

Larry Blaufus	Yes
Steve Schulte	Yes
Hannah Burak	Yes
Nena Cavel	Yes
Zach Pyle	Abstain
Marjorie Ledell	Yes

Roll Call Vote for the nomination of Marjorie Ledell to Chair.

Larry Blaufus	Yes
Steve Schulte	Yes
Hannah Burak	Yes
Nena Cavel	Yes
Zach Pyle	Yes
Marjorie Ledell	Yes

6:45 P.M. WORKSHOP: GROWTH MANAGEMENT ACT (GMA), OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT (OPMA), AND APPEARANCE OF FAIRNESS TRAINING

Bryan Snodgrass, Principal Planner; Becky Rude, Assistant City Attorney

Rebecca Kennedy introduced the workshop on the Growth Management Act and key laws and provisions relevant to the Planning Commission. This training is in addition to required training on OPMA and the Short Course on Planning through the Department of Commerce. Bryan Snodgrass presented on the Washington State land use planning framework, the Growth Management Act goals and requirements, local guidance, relevant sections of the City Charter and Vancouver Municipal Code, and the role of the Planning Commission. Becky Rude presented on the Appearance of Fairness doctrine, the conflict of interest statute, the Open Public Meetings Act, the Public Records Act, the Takings Clause of the 5th Amendment to the Constitution, the Due Process Clause of the 14th Amendment to the Constitution, and freedom of speech in the 1st Amendment to the Constitution.

Commission Discussion

The Commission asked a question on the following topic, and staff provided the following response:

- How to address non-factual information from the public at a meeting. Staff responded that for public hearing testimony, it is limited to factual and relevant information to the hearing topic. The Commission could consider revising the Commission's rules around testimony that is not relevant or applicable to the Commission. There are guidelines for inflammatory or disruptive speech as well.

ADJOURNMENT 7:48 PM

Marjorie Ledell, Chair

To request other formats, contact Julie Nischik, Community and Economic Development Department | 360-487-7813.
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