

**City of Sumner**

**PLANNING COMMISSION  
MINUTES**

**Regular Meeting**

**April 17, 2003**

**CALL TO ORDER**

MYERS called the Meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

**ROLL CALL**

Members Present: Bush, Myers, Nalder, Powers, Richardson and Walter

Members Absent: None

Also Present: Ryan Windish, Senior Planner

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

WALTER motioned to approve the March 6, 2003 meeting minutes. POWERS seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was no public comment.

**NEW BUSINESS**

There was no new business.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

RICHARDSON motioned to switch Unfinished Business agenda items 1 and 2. BUSH seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

1) Infill Development (Pipestems)

WINDISH gave a brief background on infill development and summarized the Sumner Infill Development Tour Survey Results.

COMMISSIONERS had the following questions/comments:

MYERS asked whether the 1415 Washington Street site was considered a pipe stem lot or an accessory dwelling unit?

WINDISH replied that it was considered pipe stem.

MYERS noted that there was not a driveway on that lot and that it does not pipe stem out to the front?

WINDISH stated that there was a driveway easement.

MYERS asked whether the code provided for just easements? Does that apply to utilities as well?

WINDISH stated that he researched it and that it does allow an easement for access via an extension of the lot through a driveway easement. This also applies to utilities.

MYERS stated his concerns about that type of easement.

WINDISH stated that one of the alternatives is not to allow it. They could make the minimum width 60 feet, plus another 15 feet.

MYERS stated that his main concern was with regard to driveways.

DISCUSSION was had about parking alternatives.

MYERS asked when there would be a public hearing on this topic.

WINDISH indicated that the goal was to have a meeting by mid-May.

WINDISH continued with Staff's report, reviewing the Memorandum on Infill Development.

MYERS asked if Design Review could be done on just the location of the building, as opposed to the whole project?

WINDISH responded that that would come under the site plan review, however, an administrative review could be done. It could be similar to the review of signs. It would be difficult to apply the Design Guidelines.

MYERS asked with regard to the narrowing of lot widths, if Staff is suggesting that the front lot be the narrower lot?

WINDISH stated that it would apply to both the front and the back lots. This is an option that may really allow for more potential pipe stem development.

MYERS asked if there was any thought of limiting the number of pipe stem lots that could appear in a neighborhood?

WINDISH stated that it would be similar to the requirements on four-plexes. Only one four-plex is allowed per one block space. It would be on a first come, first serve basis.

MYERS asked the Commissioners if they had any additional comments with regard to Staff's Memorandum on Infill Development.

RICHARDSON commented that he felt the development should not fall under the 6,000 sq. ft. requirement and that the maximum height should be 1 ½ stories. It would then at least be consistent with other properties. Less than that would seem like a lot of properties all crammed together. Easements could be granted in the situations where necessary.

BUSH asked whether it is known if the people who sent in the e-mails supporting pipe stem development actually live in close proximity to pipe stem?

WINDISH stated that the e-mails did not indicate either way.

POWERS commented that he thinks that these projects should not be required to go through Design Review. What makes Sumner Sumner is that we do not just have one type of house.

MYERS opened the meeting for public comment.

DAVE BAKER, 403 Alder Avenue appeared. Pipe stems have been around a long time and will be around for a long time. According to the latest residential infill housing report, there is a shortage of approximately 1,200 housing units in Sumner. In order meet the Comprehensive housing unit goals of the Sumner Comprehensive Plan the City of Sumner will have to use pipe stem lots for infill. You cannot go out and create old empty lots. If any of the lots in the LDR6000 have enough square footage to create another lot and meet the City of Sumner set backs, they should be able to be short platted regardless of lot width. He would request that the Planning Commission recommend that City Council accept this plan. RICHARDSON asked BAKER which option he preferred.

BAKER responded that his preference is option two.

MYERS asked BAKER with regard to his particular lot how much room he had on either side of his house, and the depth of his lot?

BAKER responded that he has 20 feet on the south side and 3 feet on the north, and a lot depth of 248 feet.

RICHARDSON asked Staff if there were any known properties that do not meet the minimum width, but still meet the 6,000 sq. ft. requirement?

WINDISH thought that there were a few lots that fall into that category.

DISCUSSION was had about minimum lot width reduction.

ED HANIS, 315 Sumner Avenue appeared. His concern is with regard to fire fighting techniques on pipe stem lots. He recently had an experience on Willow while at a friend's house, wherein a structure at the back of the property caught fire. The Fire Department responded and experienced difficulty getting back to the fire. The hose was too short. They had to go back for more. There was no hydrant available. It is difficult to get a fire truck to the back structure. He is concerned fire protection cannot be provided to the structures on the back lot.

RICHARDSON asked whether the driveways were so narrow that a truck could get back there and pump water from its own tank?

WINDISH noted that the minimum width to pull in a truck is 15 feet.

DAVE BAKER again appeared. He has discussed the issue of fire safety and pipe stem lots with the current Deputy Chief of the Fire Department. He stated that there is no problem fighting fires on pipe stem lots.

MYERS commented that a fire truck in never suppose to commit to a place it cannot get out of real quick. One suggestion would be that the Fire Department carries more line in those cases.

BOE NORJBERG, 828 18th St. S.W., Puyallup appeared. Six months ago someone on the City Council stated that the hold on pipe stem development would only be temporary. It now sounds like the hold may be extended. It was his understanding that it had to be resolved within a six month period. Also, as a builder and developer, he knows that many other municipalities have changed their development requirements and made them stricter. They have been slapped by the State as they agreed to have a certain number of available lots during a certain period of time. By restricting development they have reduced the number of lots. The State says you cannot do that. Further, the number of pipe stem lots that have been developed in the City over the last few years has been minimal. Also, how many of the lots existing can be economically made into two lots? He does not think there will be an onslaught of applications for pipe stem lots. Many people prefer pipe stem lots as they are more private and safe for children. Further, if you are unable to split some of these lots into smaller lots, the cost of housing will increase. In turn, it makes it for a less diverse community. He would also support development on lots that do not meet the minimum lot size.

MYERS asked NORJBERG what his side setbacks are?

NORJBERG responded that his lot is a little bit narrower than 60 feet and his side setbacks are approximately 7 feet on one side and 25 on the other.

BUSH asked NORJBERG how his neighbors felt about pipe stem development?

NORJBERG responded that one neighbor on one side is against it. If he cannot develop his lot as pipe stem, he may have to put a four-plex on it. Economically he cannot afford not to develop it. Also, NORJBERG wanted to point out that there is an undeveloped alley at the back of the property.

SHERYL LIVINGSTON, 326 Alder Avenue appeared. She is across the street from NORJBERG and she does not want to see a four-plex across the street. She would prefer two nice homes. They live at the quiet end of Alder and she feels it would be nice to have two homes in there. If you have a lot that is almost 60 feet, you should be able to develop it. It does not make any sense not to allow it. As far as the concern that the back houses would have a poor relationship with the street, who cares? They lived on a street years ago and there were pipe stem lots. It was nice and they liked being back there. Also, maybe if the setbacks were changed a little bit, the garage could be moved. They could build the house behind and it would be in an "L" shape so you can turn into the driveway. The setbacks are now so strict that you have to shoot right into a garage door.

NANCY BAKER, 403 Alder Avenue appeared. She passed out a hand out to the Commissioners for their review. According to the report that they were provided at the last meeting, there are approximately 100 lots that could become pipe stem lots. All of these lots will not become pipe stem. This opportunity has been around since 1994 and only seven pipe stem lots have been developed since that time. Why would there be strict regulations on pipe stem when it is not an issue at this time? If it becomes an issue, it can be addressed at that time. As NORJBERG stated, some people like the privacy of pipe stem lots. Shortly after the article came out in the paper, they received two calls on their property. We all have different opinions as to what an ideal community should look like. We probably all would like nice wide streets and wide sidewalks, well kept houses and nice blooming trees in the parking strips. Part of the character of the community is the diversity of the homes in the down town core. Years ago land was abundant and the lots were large. Peoples need change. Forty years ago when their kids were little they needed a large lot. Now that the kids are grown, they have no need for a big yard. What seems to be the main issue tonight is that pipe stem changes the character of Sumner. Things like the Train Station and Fred Meyers change the character of Sumner. When people come to town, that is what they will notice, not a few pipe stem lots. She would urge the Planning Commissioner to recommend to the City Council options one and two.

MYERS asked WINDISH if there would be time for a Study Session on this topic?

WINDISH stated that there would be. A Study Session was scheduled for Thursday, April 24, 2003. They hope to have a public hearing the 15th of May, and then pass it on to City Council.

## 2) Draft Critical Areas Regulations Public Hearing (Continued)

WINDISH asked that the public hearing be closed in this matter until the next meeting to give Staff more time to develop the streams map and to give broader public notice.

WINDISH reviewed for the commission the Draft Critical Areas Regulations.

MYERS asked whether it is known how many wells there are in Sumner and where those wells are located? In setting up protection for specific areas you would have to know where the wells are.

WINDISH responded that the Department of Ecology would have log notes with regard to wells. As more and more houses convert to the City's water system, then the wells we want to be careful to protect will be mapped.

MYERS asked with regard to Seismic Hazard Areas if Sumner is good about keeping up with modern building codes. Is that done automatically?

WINDISH stated that the Uniform Building Code is updated regularly and that Sumner's building official keeps track of that.

DISCUSSION was had about Volcanic Hazard Areas and emergency evacuation routes.

WINDISH stated that the Chief of Police gave a presentation a year ago about the volcano and evacuating. In that he stated that there is a specific weather radio that can be purchased that will come on in the event of an emergency. There is also new technology in Mason County. They have an automatic phone system. If there is no answer or you get the recording, it is programmed to call you back.

MYERS asked whether Sumner's sirens work? It is his understanding that they were recently tested.

WINDISH responded that they do work, however, they are not very loud.

MYERS stated that one thing to take in to consideration is that the prevailing wind is from the southwest. Wind has a lot to do with how sound travels.

RICHARDSON noted that in the police chief's presentation, he talked about using the Police and Fire Department loud speakers to make announcements up and down the streets.

WINDISH stated that he thought the Fire Department would be handling a lot of that.

MYERS commented with regard to Flood Hazard Areas. The Inter-County River Improvement District use to dredge the rivers. They stopped doing it several years ago. Now every time there is a flood it carries rocks and other debris from the river. As a result, the river level is rising every year.

POWERS commented that that is why the upper Puyallup is flooding so bad now.

WINDISH stated that one of the things the consultants pointed out is the fact that in flood plain management they will be taking into consideration the river and its natural movement in that sediment does get deposited and while it raises up is shifted and moves around. WINDISH stated that he would look into it a bit more. The federal government is looking at redrawing some of the flood maps. Sumner's

needs to be amended, as development is allowed at this time in the 100 year flood plain. FEMA runs a model of the whole flood plain area. The whole idea of the model is that you can develop entirely within the flood plain area, and it will not result in more than a 1 foot rise in the elevation.

MYERS asked if Staff is planning to put together the suggested changes and bring it back before the Planning Commission for review?

WINDISH stated that that was the plan. Staff will be going back through and doing code changes and will prepare a document for review.

MYERS asked if the Community Development Code is new?

WINDISH responded that the OCD Model Ordinance is new. They are still crafting it. Leonard Bauer, our former Planning Director, is a part of that. There should not be a lot of changes as it is really well written.

### 3) Zoning Code Class

Agenda Item No. 3 was added to the scheduled Study Session on Thursday, April 24, 2003.

## **CORRESPONDENCE**

WINDISH reviewed correspondence as follows:

- 1) Staff received two e-mails on pipe stem lots.

## **COMMISSIONER COMMENTS**

There were no Commissioner Comments.

## **STAFF COMMENTS**

WINDISH had the following Staff comments:

- 1) A Short Course has been scheduled for May 1, 2003 at 6:30 p.m. in place of the regularly scheduled Planning Commission meeting. It is an opportunity to meet other Planning Commissioners and City Council Members for other parts of the County;
- 2) Gary Ganns has inquired about being on the Planning Commission. He has been a resident of Sumner for approximately a year and a half. He has a financial background and a background in logistics management. He is interested in giving something back to the City. Monday Staff will be asking the City Council to confirm his appointment;
- 3) Staff has asked Doc Hansen if he is interested in a position on the Design Commission. There can be two lay people on the Design Commission and one of those appointments is made by the Planning Commission. Doc Hansen previously worked as a Planner for Pierce County. He now is a consultant. He is also President of the Main Street Association in Puyallup; (It was decided that Doc Hansen would come before the Planning Commission at the scheduled Study Session to be asked questions before the Planning Commission is appointment).
- 4) Fred Meyers has applied for a conditional use permit for a gas station. It will require public hearing. The owner of the Bavarian Hotel has appealed the decision to City Council challenging the Hearing Examiner's Decision. Their attorney will argue it before City Council on May 5th;

5) The Design Commission is putting on a charette involving the East Side Park. Robert Holler and an intern from the University of Washington have been on charettes with the elementary school kids, asking them what they would like to see in a park since they will be using the park. They showed a lot of enthusiasm and came up with a lot of ideas. One of their ideas was to ask the residents of the Senior Center, as they are so close to the park. Robert Holler is now setting up a charette at the Senior Center. Ultimately a consultant will be hired and there will be a formal charette held some time in June.

6) Mt. Rainier National Bank is now open;

7) The low impact development subdivision on East Main is moving forward. Staff has met with their builder.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

RICHARDSON motioned for meeting adjournment at 9:05 p.m. POWERS seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Sarah M. Heckman  
Minutes Taker