

City of Mount Vernon  
Planning Commission  
Minutes of August 5, 2008

Member **Warren Cheney** called the meeting to order. Present were Commission members **Gary Molenaar** and **Mark Hulst**. Staff members **Jana Hanson-Director**, **Rebecca Bradley-Lowell-Senior Planner** and **Krista Jewett-Permit Tech** were also in attendance.

Minutes:

**Mr. Cheney** mentioned that the minutes from the July 15, 2008 meeting would be tabled due to no quorum.

Study session to discuss possible code amendments to the MVMC Titles 14, 16 & 17:

**Rebecca Bradley-Lowell** started the discussion by explaining that tonight's scheduled format will be an informal review of the code amendments. She has gone to City Council twice to give summaries and review the code amendments. She hopes to have motions made at the next Planning Commission meeting on August 19<sup>th</sup>. There will be one more review with City Council on August 20<sup>th</sup> and then back to City Council on August 27<sup>th</sup> for final approval. **Mr. Cheney** questioned if there would be a cut off date for input from Planning Commission members. **Rebecca Bradley-Lowell** responded saying that she would accept comments up to the 19<sup>th</sup>. Both the 19<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> meetings are open record.

Review of Chapter 14.05-Procedures:

**Rebecca Bradley-Lowell** referred to the summary she provided and walked thru the section for MVMC Chapter 14.05. (See attached Summary) After reviewing the summary **Rebecca Bradley-Lowell** handed out an example scenario (see attached). The scenario walked thru a Conditional Use Permit and how Chapter 14.05 will help clarify the process.

**Jana Hanson** explained it is very important to have all of our requirements listed, so not be challenged. **Mr. Cheney** asked what is the process for a use that is not allowed by zoning?

**Rebecca Bradley-Lowell** said that our department would first look closely at the purpose of the specific zoning code and its other uses. The department's director may give an administrative determination to allow the use. Possibly, that use would then be incorporated into the code at a later time. **Mr. Cheney** mentioned that it would give motivation to default to a clear determination. **RBL** referred to Title 17, page 23 of the packet PCC received. See 17.09.080, which describes unclassified uses. **Rebecca Bradley-Lowell** also referenced the Type 1 process; the customer can appeal the department's decision. An example would be a card room.

**Rebecca Bradley-Lowell** explained that there are a lot of changes in the code but, procedurally it is the same, just more detail. **Rebecca Bradley-Lowell** walked thru the submittal checklist requirements. She explained that it is possible to waive certain items that do not apply to certain projects. The submittal checklist would be given to applicants at their Pre-application meeting. The checklist will assist the applicant and their consultants with what they need to accomplish their project.

Review of Chapter 14.20 Late comers Agreements:

Small change to clarify for developers. (See attached summary)

Review of Chapter 16-Subdivision Code:

**Rebecca Bradley-Lowell** reviewed summary (see attached). **Mr. Cheney** asked if there is a minimum size proposed for separate tracts created for critical areas, buffers, storm water drainage facilities and easements etc. **Jana Hanson** explained that there is not a minimum size. Staff would take a common sense approach when looking at the development. **Mr. Cheney** asked what about a Binding Site Plan. **Jana Hanson** and **Rebecca Bradley-Lowell** both responded yes. The next topic discussed was the requirement to have a 28 foot paved travel width on streets instead of 26. This would allow for parking on one side of the street only. Also, in review is the concept of bulb outs. **Mr. Cheney** asked if our developer clients would complain. **Jana Hanson** explained that we are already requiring this thru SEPA review and are seeing it. Some developers will gripe but, they are not the ones vested in the development. We need to pay close attention to that client.

Review of Chapter 17-Zoning:

**Rebecca Bradley-Lowell** explained that a lot of the changes made in the chapter are to stay consistent with the process chapter. There was old language that needed to be updated. Some definitions needed to be removed from other previous code changes. Verbiage needed to be cleaned up etc. (see summary attached). One in specific was the IBC adoption of the shed size, which had not been added into definitions. **Mr. Cheney** brought a typo to the attention of **Rebecca Bradley-Lowell**. The code amendment regarding card rooms was brought up. **Rebecca Bradley-Lowell** reviewed the new definition and that it is proposed to be allowed as an accessory use to a restaurant or drinking establishment in the C-1, C-2, C-L & M-1, but only if not located adjacent a residential area. **Mr. Molenaar** brought up the fact that Gentlemen Gene's and The Town Pump are both adjacent to residential areas. Those existing taverns would be potentially good spots for card rooms. (**Mr. Molenaar** noted at the August 19<sup>th</sup> meeting this is an observation only, not a recommendation.) Discussion followed about existing taverns and bars that are located adjacent to residential areas. A question was brought up by staff member **Krista Jewett**. If the city allows drinking establishments adjacent to residential areas, why not allow card rooms? **Rebecca Bradley-Lowell** suggested that the Planning Commission members consider the code changes and to make suggestions. She will review with them on the 19<sup>th</sup>. **Jana Hanson** brought up the fact that the City does collect tax on card rooms.

Review of two new proposals to mention:

**Rebecca Bradley-Lowell** reviewed an update to the landscape code that will clarify the height of the required evergreen trees. The other proposal would be in 17.78. Ecology block walls visible from the street shall not be allowed or will have some type of covering.

Review of Design Standards:

**Rebecca Bradley-Lowell** explained that Design Standards were adopted by reference. Now it will be placed directly into the code. **Rebecca Bradley-Lowell** also noted that the word "should" has been removed and replaced with shall, so there is no confusion. The city has higher levels of concern for smaller lots. In the Landscaping portion, pg. 17, clarification has been input with regard to the actual amount of plants required: 3 trees, 80 shrubs, 20 ground-covers. **Jana Hanson** explained that with the Design Standards comes flexibility for the builder. In return the city is asking for the builder to improve other elements.

**Mr. Cheney** asked how does the city enforce landscape installation. Is there any security such as bonds? **Rebecca Bradley-Lowell** responded that bonds put in place for the common and public landscape, also commercial, but not private houses. **Jana Hanson** added that the city does have the ability to hire specialists to make sure that proper planting has occurred.

**Rebecca Bradley-Lowell** mentioned that in the meeting two weeks from today she will be proposing an expansion of nonconforming use for Dimensional Communications on the Anderson Road. Most of the south Mount Vernon area is zoned C-L. The location of Dimensional Communications is zoned C-3.

At 8:30 pm **Mr. Cheney** called the meeting to a close.