

City of Mount Vernon
Planning Commission Meeting
1805 Continental Place
September 16, 2008

Chairperson **Denny Legro** called the meeting to order. Present were Commission members **Warren Cheney, Tom Twedt, Donnie Keltz, Mark Hulst, Gary Molenaar** and **Al Lyon**. Staff members Jana Hanson and Rebecca Bradley-Lowell were also present.

The minutes of August 19, 2008 were approved as presented.

Public Hearing: Amendments to Mount Vernon Municipal Code, Chapters 14.05 and 14.20; and Titles 16 and 17:

Ms. Bradley-Lowell stated there has been 2 previous meetings with Planning Commission and 3 committee meetings with City Council. The directive from City Council for larger lot developments has formed the basis of the proposed code amendments. She provided an overview of the proposed changes to the municipal code. **Ms. Bradley-Lowell** provided 2 illustrations of PUD density calculations using existing developments Big Fir North and Montreaux. These examples show a decrease of only 2 lots in Big Fir and 4 in Montreaux. The introduction of a minimum lot size is for discussion only. An example may be 10% of lots between 4,500 to 6,000 square feet.

Code amendments that have been added as of 08.19.08:

Title 17

- Two new definitions, Flag Lot and corner Lot.
- Clarification on percentage of multi-family in a PUD based on number of single family
- Landscape code: Letters of credit removed

Title 16

- Topographic mapping: 2 foot contours may be increased to five foot where slopes exist in excess of 20% by administrative approval by CEDD Director
- Definition of condominium unit will be the same as State RCW.
- For Boundary Line Adjustment the CEDD Director can administratively waive surveying on a case-by-case basis if deemed unnecessary
- City survey standards will be changed to State survey standards
- Modifications to Final Plat: Re-recording maps, CC&Rs, possibly other documents will be required even for minor modifications
- Adjacent property owners' names will no longer be required on recorded documents; parcel numbers will be used

Ms. Bradley-Lowell provided an overview of comments received from Bruce Lisser.

Mr. Legro opened the public hearing.

Joe Woodmansee, 17146 Britt Road, Mount Vernon; thanked the Planning Commission and distributed a letter he composed. The highlights of his letter include his concern with time frames; specifically it does not indicate when the City responds to the applicant. A lot of latitude is given to the director. He also expressed concern with response time for pre-application meetings, the 'technically complete' time frame, time frame between Hearing Examiner and City

Council. The Critical Area example removes development from a large portion of a site. He is concerned with the proposed change to the PUD density. In the past developers have worked with staff on code changes. These are major changes. Before he has chance to use the PUD code it is being changed.

There was a brief discussion regarding the wording of the percentage of multi-family in a PUD. **Mr. Cheney** recommends re-wording the math on the density calculation.

Ms. Hanson explained some of Mr. Woodmansee's written concerns are unfounded as they existed in the code previously. Changes in Chapter 14.05 are consistent with the State regulatory Reform Act. The 120 day time frame is from the State.

Brian Gentry, 504 E Fairhaven, Burlington; agrees with Mr. Woodmansee about working on the PUD. He understands clarifying, but density is an issue. There needs to be flexibility. Density and design go hand in hand. Make sure Mount Vernon is a liveable place and affordable. He recommends the development community work with staff on the code changes.

Jason Easton, Association of Realtors, 525 E. College Way, Mount Vernon; his biggest concern is affordability. Government affects affordability by increasing fees and decreasing density. Decreasing density affects affordability. He asked that a task force be appointed to work with staff on these code amendments.

A lengthy discussion between staff, Commission members, Mr. Woodmansee and Mr. Easton ensued regarding density, time frames, pre-application meetings and forming a task force.

Ms. Bradley-Lowell stated the current code is difficult to administer and density bonuses are not easy to earn. Additionally, the critical area code already requires critical areas be located in a separate tract. What has resulted with the new PUD are proposals with only small lots as opposed to a variety of lot sizes. **Mr. Keltz** noted 3 weeks has transpired between the last meeting and this one for developers to communicate with staff. **Ms. Hanson** stated we are always open to having discussions. With regards to time frames Chapter 14.05 is taken from the Regulatory Reform Act. The Director asking for additional time on the 120 days is due to the complexity of a project. The alternative is to require an EIS which has no time frame. Chapter 14.05 brings us up to current law. **Mr. Legro** stated he is concerned about staff approval over the design phase in a PUD, there is too much control before it reaches Hearing Examiner; by the time it reaches City Council they haven't seen it. **Ms. Bradley-Lowell** stated if it needs work there is a reason. **Ms. Hanson** stated the design guidelines and consultant are there to ensure the developer is on track; City Council has the ultimate decision. **Mr. Legro** recommends forming a committee. **Ms. Hanson** stated Council's concern is over lot size. **Mr. Molenaar** also recommends another study group. **Ms. Bradley-Lowell** stated she is available prior to next City Council meeting; but if entire ordinance is to be re-vamped staff's recommendation to City Council could be to repeal the ordinance. **Mr. Woodmansee** stated he also has concerns with buffers and landscaping. **Mr. Easton** stated he appreciates staff availability, but was not invited for input. He would like guidance from the City Council in writing regarding their concerns, and a task force including staff and developers working to reach a common ground. He also would like specific goals for the task force in writing. The consensus of the Planning Commission was to form a committee consisting of staff, developers and other community members who may be interested. The following motions were made:

Mr. Cheney moved to recommend to City Council approval of Chapters 14.05, 14.20; Titles 16 and 17; recommend City Council address lot size; and recommend City Council appoint a task force. Motion failed for lack of a second.

Mr. Hulst moved, second by **Mr. Keltz**, to recommend to City Council Chapter 14.05 as presented, including clarifications as necessary. Motion carried.

Mr. Lyon moved, second by **Mr. Hulst**, to recommend to City Council denial of Titles 16 & 17; without a moratorium, appoint a task force that may include Planning Commission, City Council, staff, developers and other community members, to address proposed changes for Titles 16 & 17. Motion amended to include approval of Title 17.06. Motion carried.

Mr. Keltz moved, second by **Mr. Cheney**, to amend Title 17.56 to include park and ride facilities, and Title 17.06, definition of park and ride. Motion carries.

Mr. Hulst moved, second by **Mr. Lyon**, to approve Chapter 14.20. Motion carries.

The next meeting is scheduled for October 7th. There being no further business the meeting adjourned.