

City of Mount Vernon
Planning Commission
Minutes of December 1, 2009

Chairperson **Denny Legro** called the meeting to order. Present were Commission members **Mark Hulst, Al Lyon, Warren Cheney, Gary Molenaar, Tom Twedt**; and staff member **Elizabeth Higgins**. Also in attendance were **Gary Thor** with Commercial Cold Storage, **Daryl Hamburg**, Dike District 17; and **Gary Jones**, attorney for the dike districts. Commission member Don Keltz was absent.

Draft Shoreline Master Program Work Study:

Ms. Higgins stated a public hearing is scheduled for December 15th for Planning Commission to recommend to City Council approval of the Downtown Design Recommendations. The document is near completion; a few elements have been added and corrections made. Approval of the SMP is scheduled for February. There has been some editing; industrial use is incorporated with mixed use; which has been revised. Comments received from DOE have been included; appendixes and definitions will be at the end of the document. The restoration program has not been finalized. Environmental designations will be the equivalent to zoning.

Using an aerial map **Ms. Higgins** outlined the environmental designations. **Mr. Hamburg** inquired if the City was aware the Dike District's intent to purchase property along the dike for flood control. He is concerned the SMP designation of residential could inflate the property value. **Mr. Jones** does not think residential an appropriate use there. **Ms. Higgins** stated they should work together to re-designate through a Comprehensive Plan amendment. **Mr. Cheney** suggests broadening the SMP to accommodate the Comprehensive Plan. **Ms. Higgins** stated she will research this issue and follow up with the Planning Commission and Mr. Hamburg.

Mr. Hulst asked if industrial language is within mixed use. **Ms. Higgins** stated yes, the City is currently working with Commercial Cold Storage to allow its' continued use. Dairy Valley will also fit into this same category.

Discussion on building height and design ensued. **Ms. Higgins** stated building height would be 35'; or mixed use would allow 55' with an additional 5' for amenities. High density is needed. DOE has not objected to this. **Mr. Lyon** asked if a developer can build a 60' structure with no setbacks. **Ms. Higgins** stated if they meet requirements. She added parking is an issue with smaller buildings as it will have to be provided underground. **Mr. Legro** asked if the developer will have to provide 100% of the parking. **Ms. Higgins** stated it will have to be provided on site, or through an agreement at another location. **Mr. Molenaar** wants guidelines to be clear. Consultants are currently discussing parking issues with the City and other local agencies. One suggestion is to have 2 smaller parking garages versus one large building. The parking garage

has to be in place prior to re-development. **Mr. Hulst** asked if the design guidelines will apply to existing buildings. **Ms. Higgins** stated the design recommendations are intended to encourage, not be mandated. **Mr. Lyon** stated he is concerned about the enormity of the development.

Mr. Legro asked **Mr. Thor** if he has had sufficient input. **Mr. Thor** stated he is pleased, and has had good communication and working relationships with Elizabeth Higgins and Jana Hanson. **Ms. Higgins** stated some of Mr. Thor's comments have been included in the draft. **Mr. Legro** asked about specific comments from DOE. **Ms. Higgins** will provide a memo outlining those comments. **Mr. Legro** stated additional discussion regarding Dike District 17 is needed. The SMP should be more specific to the District's flood control efforts. **Ms. Higgins** asked Mr. Jones regarding the legality of down zoning. **Mr. Jones** stated need to recognize the hazard and avoid development in flood hazardous areas. He questions the geology of downtown and how it will support 60' buildings. **Mr. Hamburg** reiterated the Dike District's flood control plans.

The public hearing on the 15th is on the Downtown Design Recommendations. There being no further business the meeting adjourned.