



PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES AUGUST 29, 2018

CALL TO ORDER

The Planning Commission was called to order by Chair Daniel Hubbell at 6:06 PM in the Council Chambers at 9611 SE 36th Street, Mercer Island, Washington.

ROLL CALL

Chair Daniel Hubbell, Vice Chair Tiffin Goodman, Commissioners Carolyn Boatsman, Jennifer Mechem, Lucia Pirzio-Biroli, Craig Reynolds, and Ted Weinberg were present.

Evan Maxim, Interim Development Services Director, Andrea Larson, Senior Administrative Assistant, Robin Proebsting, Senior Planner, Nicole Gaudette, Senior Planner, and Bio Park, Assistant City Attorney were present.

MINUTES

There were no minutes to approve.

APPEARANCES

There were no public appearances.

REGULAR BUSINESS – PUBLIC HEARING

Agenda Item #1: 2018 Comprehensive Plan & Code Amendments

Evan Maxim, Interim DSG Director, provided a brief presentation on the 2018 Comprehensive Plan & Code Amendments.

Chair Hubbell opened the public hearing at 6:30pm

Marjorie Offer, 2980 76th Ave Se, Apt 301. She has lived on island for 10 years and is a member of the SJCC & Herzel Ner Tamid. She understands the concerns of the neighbors because of her experience with a variance on a property next to her condominium, but she supports of the purposed rezone for the SJCC, FASPS & Herzel Ner Tamid properties. She met with the CEO of the SJCC and stated that the SJCC wants to work with the neighbors in everyway to make it a better environment for the neighborhood.

Susan Greisse, 4717 89th Ave SE. She is both an alumni parent and current parent at the FASPS and also currently a trustee on the board of the school. She spoke to express her support of the Comprehensive Plan amendment and zoning change. She has been a resident of the island for 11 years. She believes that this provides a balanced way for our island to grow, sees the benefit of community facilities and will help the community move forward in a strategic way.

Aaron Kiviat, 8147 W Mercer Wy. He is an attorney, third generation islander, and graduated the class of 1994, Mercer Island High School. He is a board member of Herzel Ner Tamid and spoke in support of the Comprehensive Plan amendment and zoning update. He believes the proposed amendment will support the land use goal 17.4, in the City's Comprehensive Plan; adding a designation will help with the city goal and long-term viability of public community facilities.

Joel Espelien, 9920 SE 40th St. He has lived here for 8 years, his kids attend FASPS, and he is a past member of SJCC. He spoke in support of the purposed rezone, stating that his property abuts proposed properties. He spoke regarding the hap-hazard current development of the property, that isn't ideal and that anyone who is dropping kids off at school or children crossing the street can see that it is not optimal. He believes that the properties will continue to be sub-optimally used if this amendment does not proceed.

Steve Dispensa, 3990 92nd PI SE. He has lived on the island for 5 years, has three children at FASPS, and is vice chair of the board. He spoke in support of Comprehensive Plan amendment and new zoning designation for SJCC, FASPS & Herzl Ner Tamid. He values the planning process and can clearly see how this planning model will benefit Mercer Island residents and is worthy of the support of the Planning Commission.

Natalie Heitzeberg, 5818 80th Ave SE. She is a Mercer Island resident and a parent of a son at FASPS. She has spoken to many colleagues and friends and feels that the proposed amendments are a very positive step which supports the children's development, is a reason why people move to and value Mercer Island and supports the diversity of our community. She stated that these amendments help to bring predictability and development requirements to an area that is already used for community facilities.

Laura Mousseau, 1696 NE 36th Place, Bellevue. She is the current chair of the FASPS board and former parent. She found when her family joined the school they found a profound sense of community. FASPS families and students deeply value their relationships with the Mercer Island Community. She supports the Comprehensive Plan amendment as she feels this long-range planning will help the respective organizations update aging facilities, plan for the future and address concerns in the most effective way.

Eric Thuau, 18945 NE 20CT Redmond. He is the head of the FASPS and an alumni parent. He spoke in support of the Comprehensive Plan and zoning amendments, stating that these amendments will offer the chance for these organizations to create something wonderful that will benefit the island, residents and community. He explained that they look forward to continuing the dialog with the neighbors and are very mindful of the shared concerns about traffic, pedestrian safety and parking; working towards the goal of creating a plan that meets everyone's needs.

Paige Fisher, 4125 W Mercer Wy. She is 16 years old, grew up on Mercer Island, attends MIHS, went to preschool and programs at the SJCC and her family attends Herzl Ner Tamid. She supports the Comprehensive Plan amendment and feels that the proposed investments that these facilities want to make for the future will be very beneficial to the community and let them grow responsibility.

Rabbi Jay Rosenbaum, Senior Rabbi at Herzl ner Tamid, 9900 SE 40th St. He is a 17-year resident of Mercer Island and lives right behind the SJCC, and he can empathize with the needs of both the neighbors and the facilities. Granddaughter at JCC preschool. As a community leader, he appreciates that the City needs to balance a variety of needs, and that it benefits the community to have flourishing institutions. He also stated that he understands and appreciates that neighbors have very real needs in this process as well. He believes this would provide the City Council the ability to balance those needs.

Dona Peha, 7653 W Mercer Wy. She is a life-long member of Herzl Ner Tamid, the SJCC and graduated MIHS class of 1982. She moved back to the island a little over a year ago and what has struck her the most is the pride of the citizens. She spoke in support of the Comprehensive Plan amendment and doesn't feel that it is in the City's best interest to hinder the upgrading of buildings for organizations that are so well loved and used by the community.

Michael Leahe, 9852 Mercerwood Dr. He requested that the Planning Commission reject amendment No. 8. He is a member SJCC, but states that the first priority of the Planning Commission is to protect the best interests of the residents of Mercer Island, and not other entities. He believes that if this Comprehensive Plan amendment is adopted, it would adversely affect the property values of neighbors as well as negatively impacting the overall residential character of the community and provide an unsafe environment for traffic, pedestrians as well as creating noise and light pollution.

Julie Garwood, 9772 SE 41st St. She spoke regarding amendment 8 and has many concerns regarding this Comprehensive Plan amendment. She spoke to the number of houses that would be lost if this amendment is passed and how it will have an enormous impact on the neighborhood.

Ryan Ralfs 9703 SE 40th St. He submitted written comments and would like to speak at next meeting.

Liz Friedman, 2035 80th Ave SE. She has been a resident since 2004 and is currently chair of the SJCC board. She spoke in support of the Comprehensive Plan amendment and rezone. She indicated that the three organizations are a beginning of long-range planning process to update aging facilities and plan for the future; these facilities are very old and require a lot of maintenance. She spoke to the want of the organizations to work collaboratively and responsibly with the City and the neighbors.

Amy Lavin, 7835 SE 22nd Pl. She is currently the CEO of the SJCC and a 33-year resident of Mercer Island. She spoke to the number of users of the SJCC, how most of them live on Mercer Island and how the SJCC is focused on enhancing community. She stated that the organizations could redevelop with current zoning, but that they don't believe that it would effectively address all of the concerns of the neighbors and community. She indicated that the Comprehensive Plan and zoning amendments would allow for wiser more comprehensive design and development and community engagement to assure that neighborhood interests and interests of the broader community are incorporated.

Jeff Davis, 4568 E Mercer Wy. He has been an island resident for 58 years and a member of the SJCC. He considers the SJCC an important part of the community but does not support the Comprehensive Plan and zoning amendment. He feels that the community can benefit by the current facility that the SJCC has with maintenance and remodeled. He spoke to all of the changes that have occurred since the SJCC was built. He stated concerns that if this Comprehensive Plan and zoning amendment pass regarding what other facilities on Mercer Island would want to take advantage of the new zoning.

Suzanne Zhar, 2441 76th Ave SE. She disclosed that she is a member of Design Commission and indicated that she was speaking as a resident, business owner, real estate owner. She commented on amendments 13 & 15. She encouraged the Planning Commission to reconsider amendment 13. She spoke to the giving the opportunity for a potential demonstration project could possibly be explored as a way to creatively and thoughtfully develop the Town Center. She also voiced her support for amendment 8 that her and her family are participants of those facilities.

Mark Hall, 6818 E Mercer Wy. He is building new home at 3832 E Mercer Wy. He requested that current zoning be maintained and that amendment 8 is not adopted. He is a member of Emmanuel Church and the have been operating with a conditional use permit. He stated that the church has been able to do lots of things with the CUP and respected neighbors. He stated that traffic has already changed dramatically because of traffic change on I-90 and the City vacating 97th Ave that used to go through to 37th. He does not want this city to look like Huston.

Marie Bender, 7890 81st Ave SE. She has lived here for 18 years. She spoke regarding process. She thought that commission was just tidying up the comp plan, but then realized that there was much more going on. She talked about the process with the school district and City for the Middle School remodel, and how it could have gone better. She also stated that the financial impact needs to be considered; how people off the island may benefit from this amendment.

Nicole Kelley, 9821 SE 40th St. She spoke regarding the private sales of properties surrounding the SJCC and questioned if the discussion regarding the mixed zoning problems that they have were self-created; that these properties were purchased with the knowledge that they were zoned residential. She questioned why this is taking away tax-paying residents to support these nonprofit facilities. She also spoke regarding the traffic safety issues and that she supports the redesign of these facilities but that she believes that the current footprint they have now is plenty.

Teresa Hall, 4242 E Mercer Wy. She spoke regarding her property taxes being depressed due to living close to Mercerwood Shore Club. She questioned why the organizations bought the properties they did knowing that they were zoned residential. She spoke regarding how busy East Mercer Wy is and how much of the traffic is not island residents but rather people coming to drop off their kids and then leave again and that the job of the Planning Commission and City Council is to protect Mercer Island.

John Hall. 9970 Se 40th St. He has lived on the island for 60 years. He has followed the SJCC in all expansion tries and they have been turned down many times. He talked about how the City suggested that the SJCC buy property to the north of them that is zoned commercial, which would fit their needs. HE spoke

regarding how the SJCC talks about how they care about neighbors, yet in last year they have trimmed up over 60 trees and have cut down at least 7 trees.

Matt Goldbach, 9980 SE 40th St. He spoke to how Amendment 1 seems a bit odd with out amendment 8, that there is already a Private Community Facility in Amendment 1. He stated that he has asked previously what is meant by private community facility and how can the Planning Commission approve a land use map with a designation that cannot be defined. He spoke of being skeptical of approving these amendments and then doing the regulations after they have been approved. He spoke to our both the SJCC and the City have not done a good job engaging the community and that the community does not know what is going on.

Tina Vedrickson, 6206 89th Ave SE. She moved from LA two years ago and that she moved here for the community. She stated that she knew nothing about this amendment, until yesterday. She indicated that her concerns with this type of amendment is what it could mean for this area. She questioned the percentage of residents that benefit from the school and sees no reason why these facilities could not go through a renovation; why do they need to expand and further change a residential neighborhood. She stated that she does not want to see happen in so many other communities happen here.

Don Thompson, 7265 N mercer Wy. He has been an island resident since 1970. He spoke to how creating an entirely new zone in a residential neighborhood, is a big deal; that once this Comprehensive Plan amendment is approved it would create a whole new set of regulations for this zone in a residential neighborhood. He questioned whether the development regulations must be concurrently adopted at the same time as this amendment and stated that the reason it is so critical for the regulations to be done concurrently, is because that is asking the citizens to trust DSG, who has not been very trust worthy over the last 5 years. He suggested moving the amendment to the 2019 docket.

Chair Hubbell continued the Public Hearing to September 5, 2018.

The Commission recessed at 7:35pm.
The Commission reconvened at 7:47pm

OTHER BUSINESS

Evan Maxim, Interim DSG Director, spoke to the Commission regarding City emails for the Planning Commission and how email is handled for the Commission.

The Commission discussed the pros and cons of City email accounts and agreed to proceed with moving email communication to City email accounts.

Evan Maxim, Interim Director, provided a brief Planning Manager report, regarding the procedural code amendment and the code compliance code amendment going to City Council for a first reading and possible approval on September 17th.

PLANNED ABSENCES

There were no planned absences.

NEXT MEETING

The next Planning Commission meeting will be on September 5, 2018 at 6:00PM at Mercer Island City Hall.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 PM.