

CITY OF BELLEVUE
BELLEVUE PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES

March 11, 2015
6:30 p.m.

Bellevue College Room D106
3000 Landerholm Circle SE

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chair Laing, Commissioners Carlson, Hamlin, Hilhorst, Tebelius, deVadoss, Walter, Councilmember Stokes

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Paul Inghram, Nicholas Matz, Department of Planning and Community Development

COUNCIL LIAISON: Councilmember Stokes

GUEST SPEAKERS: None

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:33 p.m. by Chair Laing who presided.

2. ROLL CALL

Upon the call of the roll, all Commissioners were present with the exception of Commissioner Tebelius who arrived at 7:00 p.m.

The Commissioners introduced themselves.

Chair Laing noted that at the request of some advocacy groups focused on affordable housing, deliberation on the Housing Element would be moved to the March 25 Commission meeting.

Chair Laing left the meeting at 6:38 p.m. and handed the gavel to Vice-Chair Hilhorst.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Todd Woosley with Hal Woosley Properties, PO Box 3325, spoke representing the owners of Eastgate Trailer Inns who he said would like the property zoned to permit the construction of hundreds of housing units, something that certainly would benefit Bellevue College students. He commented that in addition to the great need for affordable housing, there is a need for housing affordability. The city should not seek to take the heavy handed regulatory approach that has failed jurisdictions, including Bellevue, in the past, but rather should focus on increasing the supply of housing by making sure there is sufficient land zoned for housing. He said the city does not currently have enough land zoned for housing to accommodate the projected population growth. Very good questions were asked by the Commission at the meeting on March 4 and he recommended the book *Zoning, Rent Control and Affordable Housing* by William Tucker which concludes the more regulated the housing market the less affordable it becomes. He also made

available to the Commission a report done by the Bellevue Chamber of Commerce in 1985 focused on how the city's regulations directly and indirectly affect the cost of new housing in the city. The report indicates that every dollar the government adds to the price of a lot adds \$4 to the sale price of the house, and for every dollar government adds to the price of building a house, the sale price of the house is increased by \$2. Financing those increased costs over the course of a 30-year mortgage can really add up. The best way to address housing affordability is through increasing the supply of housing and minimizing associated government costs.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Walter, Mr. Woosley said the housing planned for the Eastgate Trailer Inns site is multifamily. The property owner is looking for a six-story structure and a 2.5 FAR.

Commissioner Carlson asked what if any actions were taken as a result of the document published by the Bellevue Chamber of Commerce. Mr. Woosley explained that it led to a regulatory reform effort that benefited the city's housing supply and which contributed to Bellevue's remarkable economic development. Bellevue had at the time an inclusionary housing requirement which has since been repealed.

Ms. Leslie Scofield with St. Luke's Lutheran Church, 3030 Bellevue Way, reminded the Commission that the church has partnered with ARCH and Sophia Way to build a women's shelter in the church. The church has now partnered with Imagine Housing to build apartments on the church site.

Ms. Sibyl Glasby, director of housing development for Imagine Housing, 10604 NE 38th Place, Kirkland, said the organization has partnered with St. Luke's Lutheran Church in submitting a Comprehensive Plan amendment application seeking zoning comparable to that of the church's neighbors. If approved, the amendment will allow for the construction of affordable housing on the church property. The need for affordable housing in Bellevue is great. Currently Imagine Housing has 3200 people on its wait list in East King County, a thousand of which are seeking housing in Bellevue.

Commissioner Carlson asked if the housing units would be open to all or to a specific group such as women or families. Ms. Glasby said the greatest need is for family housing and small households. The anticipation is that between 50 and 60 apartment units can be fit onto the church's existing parking area.

Mr. Paul Bell, office of student legislative affairs at Bellevue College, said he got his start working in advocacy at Bellevue College when an ordinance came out that affected the ability of students to find housing. Partnerships have since been developed with the city that have improved things. The advocacy program seeks continued involvement. There is much in the Comprehensive Plan of vital importance, including housing, transportation and the arts.

Commissioner Carlson commented that Bellevue College has at 32,000 almost as many students as the University of Washington. One major difference is that the University of Washington has plenty of dorm rooms for its students. Mr. Bell said a dorm is in the planning phase. He promised to get to the Commission information on the number of units and when it might be constructed.

Mr. Norm Hanson, 3851 136th Avenue NE, called attention to the February 11 revision of the Utilities Element and reminded the Commissioners that the existing policy that encourages the

undergrounding of communication lines has been on the books for 20 years and has not resulted in any instances of communication lines being undergrounded. The reason is the Land Use Code allows providers to bypass the policy if they claim a hardship. On 140th Avenue NE to the north of NE 44th Street there are four communications lines, some of which are very large, located overhead. In some areas the electrical distribution line was put underground but the communication lines were not undergrounded at the same time. The policy needs to be revisited if the vision for the future of Bellevue includes having all utility lines underground. Half of Bellevue has no utility poles. UT-X21 calls for supporting neighborhood efforts to underground existing electrical distribution lines, but the policy should include transmission lines. When streets are widened, there should at least be a requirement to put in all of the conduit to make undergrounding later possible.

Mr. Warren Halvorson, 2701 NE 32nd Place, said a number of recommendations were made to the Utilities Element policies by a group of residents from Bridle Trails, Somerset, Woodridge, Newcastle, Lake Lanes, and the Coalition of Eastside Neighborhoods for Sensible Energy. He thanked the Commission for patience, encouragement and support. He noted that 148th Avenue NE between NE 8th Street and NE 16th Street is about to be changed considerably because of the installation of new electrical facilities. The amount of work that has been done is impressive, but the tradeoffs made are not so impressive. One of the tradeoffs will be a payment to the city in the amount of \$895,000 for the removal of 295 trees, further eroding the city's tree canopy which over the years has dropped from 60 percent to 36 percent. The Comprehensive Plan includes the objective of increasing the overall tree canopy. The project is set for a mediation process, but there is little confidence that the process will protect the neighborhoods. Puget Sound Energy's Energize Eastside project anticipates putting the new transmission line on 100-foot poles, which are taller than the existing tree canopy. The fact is the rate of electrical usage growth has dropped considerably in recent years, and that argues against the need for a new transmission line with such large poles. At a recent Council meeting Mayor Balducci did an excellent job of looking at all the aspects of electrical usage and the status reports. She made the point that once the studies are all in hand they should be operationalized. The end result should make the community better, not business as usual.

Ms. Osha Morningstar, 10022 Meydenbauer Way SE, #315, suggested that equity, equal opportunity, accessibility and sustainability engrained in everything the city does. With regard to housing, the city could benefit from having a housing task force focused only on Bellevue, and even neighborhood by neighborhood, to assure equal opportunity for all. She said she lives in Section 8 housing but will have to move if the rent exceeds 40 percent of her income. With all the new apartments and condominiums being constructed in the city, people are losing the ability to grow their own food. Bellevue has only two pea patches and each has a waiting list. A certain amount of park land should be opened for pea patches for the benefit of many. The city could also benefit from having more free or low-cost cultural opportunities. If the Tateuchi Center receives public funding, there should be programs offered that are accessible to all income levels. Bellevue offers some programs that are not widely known, including the naturalist program and a free composting program. A college internship should be created to go out and teach people about the different programs and services. In addition to the recycling containers available across the city, there should be compost bins, especially in parks where people have picnics. There should be mandatory composting for restaurants.

Mr. Faisal Jaswal, 4452 Factoria Boulevard, said he works for Bellevue College. He said the college is looking at possibly three phases of dorm construction, with the first phase breaking ground in 2017 for a 350-bed facility, with 20 percent of the units designated as affordable.

There are opportunities for a partnership between the college and the city given the tie between transportation and affordable housing.

Commissioner Carlson asked what percentage of the study body lives within three miles of the campus. Mr. Jaswal said the college has those numbers and that he would be happy to provide them to the Commission.

Commissioner Walter commented that Bellevue College actively recruits and draws a number of international students every year. She said the college has the responsibility of making sure those students will be housed either on campus or in safe and legal situations. Mr. Jaswal said the college would like to see housing available for all students, not just for international students. The initial housing will be targeted to the international community.

Commissioner deVadoss asked how Bellevue College compares to similar colleges across the country with respect to its investment and focus on housing. Mr. Jaswal allowed that Bellevue College has been slower than its sister colleges in the Puget Sound area in that regard. It has been very difficult because it is nearly unaffordable to buy land and develop housing students can afford to pay for in the Bellevue community. Nonetheless, over the past ten or fifteen years the college has been buying adjacent properties with an eye on developing them for student housing.

Commissioner Hilhorst said she was encouraged to hear things are moving forward toward having some student dormitories developed. She suggested inviting Bellevue College to attend a future meeting of the Commission to answer some specific questions and to share as much detail as possible on the efforts to create student housing.

Ms. Stephanie Dow, a student at Bellevue College and an intern in the office of student legislative affairs, said she is passionate about affordable housing, student housing, and transportation. She said a low-income friend and her mother moved to Bellevue several years ago to be closer to medical facilities. They wanted to rent near Bellevue College where the friend is a student but failed to be chosen in the housing lottery, leaving them currently without a place to live. There is a real need for affordable housing in Bellevue. Bellevue College has a lot of students without cars and that makes public transportation vitally important. Having a transit center near the college is also very important. The Transportation Element calls for a system of connected pedestrian and bicycle facilities, and that is a good idea.

4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion to approve the agenda was made by Commissioner Hamlin. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Carlson and it carried unanimously.

5. COMMUNICATIONS FROM CITY COUNCIL, COMMUNITY COUNCILS, BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS – None

6. STAFF REPORTS - None

7. STUDY SESSION

A. 2015 Annual Comprehensive Plan Amendment Applications

Senior Planner Nicholas Matz informed the Commission that the state guideline for adopting the ten-year update to the Comprehensive Plan, which must be completed by June 30, is somewhat at odds with the annual amendment process, which runs from January to November. The only option available given the conflict is to speed up the annual process without failing to provide ample opportunity for public participation and public hearings. To that end the first full review of the applications will occur in April and final review and the public hearing will be scheduled for May. The annual amendments will then be wrapped into the overall Comprehensive Plan update for a single action by the City Council.

Mr. Matz said two applications had been submitted. The first, St. Luke's Lutheran Church, seeks a change from Single Family-Medium to Multifamily-Medium on the 4.3-acre site which currently has a church and related uses. A concurrent rezone application has been submitted as well. The stated purpose for submitting the application is to increase opportunities for affordable housing to serve and practice inclusivity for all people and to seek partnerships to encourage and build economic diversity. The applicant has indicated an intent to work with Imagine Housing to construct multifamily housing on the church campus. If the amendment is adopted and the site is rezoned, the allowed density would be up to 20 units per acre.

The property is surrounded on three sides by existing multifamily housing and a little bit of office, and it is bordered on the west by Bellevue Way. Mr. Matz said the recommendation of staff was not to expand the geographic scope for the application.

The second application, Public Storage, seeks a change from Office/Limited Business (OLB) to Light Industrial (LI) for a 2.9 acre site on 118th Avenue SE in the Richards Valley subarea. The site is currently developed with a storage/mini warehouse use. A concurrent rezone application has been filed as well. The applicant's stated purpose is to reconcile the existing zoning designation, which causes the existing use to be nonconforming, with the current and long-term future use of the site which will allow the property owner to invest capital in aesthetic and structural improvements to the building and site and decrease impacts on Mercer Slough. If the amendment is adopted and the rezone is approved, the site will permit light industrial uses.

The Commissioners were informed that in making a recommendation with regard to expanding the geographic scope, the focus is on similarly situated properties. Mr. Matz noted that the three properties to the north of the subject property have similar uses and are nonconforming in OLB. Each is comparably sized, borders Mercer Slough, and gains access off of 118th Avenue SE. The recommendation of staff was to expand the geographic scope to include the three properties to the north.

Commissioner Hamlin asked if public comment had been received regarding the St. Luke's application. Mr. Matz said the response following posting of the notification has centered on questions about what the applicant intends to do on the site.

Commissioner Walter commented that many years ago she attended a church that elected to put affordable housing on a part of the church site. She said the use was fully compatible with the church use. Many of the security issues associated with affordable housing were addressed by having the units behind the church.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Carlson, Mr. Matz said the local neighborhood is both active and engaged. St. Luke's and Imagine Housing have proactively been engaged in outreach to the surrounding community.

There was consensus in favor of the recommendation not to expand the geographic scope for the St. Luke's application.

With regard to the Public Storage application, Mr. Matz explained that the uses on all three sites are nonconforming to the OLB designation. It is likely the uses were in place before the current zoning was established. The staff analysis will highlight the uses that would be allowed under the requested designation and zoning.

Commissioner Hamlin asked if any public comments or questions had been received since posting notice. Mr. Matz said there had been none to date.

Commissioner Hamlin agreed with the proposal to expand the geographic scoping.

Commissioner Tebelius said she was heartened to see a request to add light industrial zoning given how much has been lost.

Commissioner deVadoss said as the process moves forward he would be anxious to hear from the parks department and others about how Mercer Slough would be benefited or impacted by the proposed change.

There was concurrence to expand the geographic scoping as recommended by staff.

Comprehensive Planning Manager Paul Inghram said the public hearing would be scheduled for April 8.

B. Comprehensive Plan Update

Mr. Inghram called attention to the full set of public comments received to date regarding the Comprehensive Plan update. He noted that staff have been working through the plan to catch any of the technical changes and is preparing a comprehensive list for the Commission's review. Ultimately the consultant will be asked to do a final run-through to make sure things are right.

Mr. Inghram said the public comments have fallen into some specific categories. Some have been general in nature and either are supportive or negative. Other comments fall into the category of questioning how the policies will be implemented. Still other comments have included specific requests for changes and the question for the Commission is whether or not those changes should be made.

Commissioner Tebelius said she was surprised to see how many anonymous comments were included in the catalog of comments, and said it also was not always clear if those making comments are in fact residents of Bellevue. While most of the comments are well-founded, the Commission is not able to do anything about many of them, particularly those that involve budgeting decisions.

Commissioner Tebelius called attention to the Introduction and Vision section and said it appropriately reflects a broad approach to Bellevue. She recommended making no changes to it.

Commissioner Hilhorst concurred. She noted that even though the word "equity" is not used, the spirit of equity is echoed throughout.

Mr. Inghram noted that during the joint boards and commissions meeting the suggestion was made to include the four-page summary in the introduction. Commissioner Tebelius said the plan is set up to be cohesive and the summary could end up being misinterpreted.

The Commission turned next to the Citizen Engagement Element. Mr. Inghram said there was a public comment made about effective communication, to which Commissioner Hilhorst noted there was no suggested revision included beyond establishing a specific communication protocol. She said she saw no reason to make a change and the other Commissioners concurred.

Mr. Inghram said Councilmember Robertson made the suggestion to support outreach in languages other than English which had not been directly addressed. There was agreement that there is nothing preventing the city from doing that and no changes to the Citizen Engagement Element were needed.

Mr. Inghram said the specific comments made relative to the Land Use Element centered on the Crossroads-Bel-Red boundary, the impact of development on the Unigard site, increasing the allowed FAR for BR-MO zone, and the downtown boundary. These comments were consistent with the draft. A comment with a proposal to change the designation for the St. Luke's Lutheran Church site is addressed by an annual amendment request before the Commission. There was consensus no changes were needed to the Land Use Element.

With regard to the Neighborhoods Element, Mr. Inghram said some comments made were specifically in support of it while others were more general. None of the comments, however, proposed changes to the document. The consensus was that no changes should be made.

Mr. Inghram said there were comments made about addressing life cycle costs in the Capital Facilities Element. He noted that there are several places in the policies where capital project costs and efficiencies are discussed. Commissioner Carlson pointed out that there is nothing in the Comprehensive Plan that prevents those issues from being taken into account. There was consensus not to make any changes to the element.

Mr. Inghram noted that a number of comments had been received regarding the Utilities Element, most of which addressed the issue of undergrounding utility lines. He suggested that there is general agreement about the intent to mitigate and underground where feasible. The question is how can the city achieve more undergrounding of existing lines and new lines when proposed, and better mitigation where undergrounding is not possible. The comments have included proposed new policies and changes to some of the draft policies. One of the most significant new policies in the draft is Policy UT-X19 which focuses on identifying a funding source.

Commissioner Carlson suggested amending Policy UT-X21 to read "Support neighborhood efforts to underground existing electrical distribution lines and transmission lines where a significant number of neighborhood residents have demonstrated a willingness...." Mr. Matz cautioned that the change would run afoul of the existing tariff structure. The desire is to explore other mechanisms to address undergrounding. The policy language proposed by the commenter is aspirational but gets ahead of trying to identify different ways to address funding, which is the focus of UT-X19.

Mr. Inghram pointed out that the proposed policy is aimed at supporting neighborhood efforts,

but undergrounding a transmission line is not within the realm of possibility for a neighborhood effort. The proposed policy language could set up something that simply cannot be achieved.

Commissioner Hamlin agreed with the aspiration of getting utility lines undergrounded, and said he understands there is a cost involved. Pushing for undergrounding should be done where possible and within reason. The Commissioners concurred.

There was agreement not to include the issue of transmission lines to Policy UT-X21.

With regard to utilities siting and development, Mr. Matz explained that in 2008 a whole new section was created in the Land Use Code that specifically deals with electrical facilities regulation and sensitive siting regulation. Some of the proposed revisions relative to the Utilities Element come up against the fact that there are already requirements in the code, such as pole height. It would be premature to state in policy what the regulations already address.

Mr. Inghram said some of the suggested policy revisions reach toward requiring cost efficiency rather than promoting or encouraging it.

Mr. Matz said that the purpose of enacting regulations is to require energy efficiency and conservation where such investments are cost effective.

With regard to regional utility facilities, Mr. Matz said the city is keenly aware of the fact that Seattle City Light and Olympia Pipeline have facilities that run through the city. The facilities do not serve Bellevue residents and the city does not have the oversight authority it has with other utilities. The city has a franchise agreement with Olympic Pipeline and has regulatory authority over things like vegetation management for Seattle City Light. The idea behind the proposed change of Policy UT-X24 is to make it clear that the city does take proactive steps through the applicable regulations. The city does not have an operational oversight role to play. There was agreement to revise the policy as suggested.

Mr. Matz explained that an extensive amount of work had been done around Policy UT-69. He suggested there was no need to amend the policy. There was agreement to make no change to the policy.

Mr. Inghram noted that quite a few comments had been made about transportation policies, some of which extended beyond the limits of the plan. He said the opinion of staff was that the policies do a good job of covering all the bases ranging from operations and maintenance to mobility and access to neighborhood traffic concerns. The Commissioners were reminded that the Transportation Facilities Plan is regularly updated which provides for the opportunity to address specific projects; work to update the Transportation Facilities Plan is in fact currently underway, and work to update the pedestrian/bicycle plan is about to get under way.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Walter, Mr. Inghram said the Transportation Element is the biggest element and has the greatest number of policies. It covers everything from streets to pedestrians, bicycles and multiple modes of transit. One of the ideas behind transportation master planning, which is a new aspect of the Transportation Element, is to fold the numerous transportation planning efforts into a more cohesive whole.

Commissioner Tebelius said the Transportation Element as drafted is not as she remembered the Commission approving it. For example, Policy TR-11 calls for working with other jurisdictions

to implement programs to limit the supply of commuter parking. She said it was her understanding the Council had said that was not going to happen, and said she did not remember the Commission approving the policy. Additionally, she said people are generally not worried about having bike lanes or sidewalks, they are worried about traffic. There is nothing in the transportation policies about focusing on car trips and making them more efficient. Requiring Bellevue Square to establish a parking tax and to reduce their overall number of parking spaces will kill the use.

Commissioner Walter concurred. She noted that she had come out strongly against the policy during the deliberations and also provided testimony before the Transportation Commission with the same argument.

Commissioner Carlson commented that there is an interesting experiment going on between the cities of Seattle and Bellevue relative to the issue of parking. Seattle has a deliberate strategy aimed at discouraging the use of automobiles, and the strategy includes discouraging parking. New developments do not even have to provide parking spaces. Driving lanes are being converted to bicycle lanes, turning lanes, and even parklets, which are parking strip sized parks. Bellevue has taken the view that retail is the economic driver and parking should be plentiful and accessible to accommodate retail shopping. The parking has all been provided by the private sector, and Bellevue's approach has worked. Bellevue's downtown is far more robust than Seattle's downtown. Policy TR-11 looks like Seattle's strategy grafted into Bellevue's transportation plan. He moved striking it in its entirety.

Commissioner deVadoss said it was not his recollection that the draft language was approved by the Commission. He echoed the comments made by Commissioners Tebelius, Walter and Carlson.

Commissioner Hamlin disagreed. The draft policy came from the Transportation Commission which spent a great deal of time working to develop the policies in the Transportation Element. The policies have in fact been very deliberately developed. Bellevue's vibrant future will be based on multimodal approaches to getting around. The city has been so focused over time on cars that it has failed to look at other modes of transportation. Taking the wider view is only prudent. Those who live and work in the downtown need safe options for getting around, including walking and biking. Small pocket parks are awesome ways of beautifying the downtown and making it vibrant.

Commissioner Carlson observed that in recent years there has been an increase in travel by bus, and light rail is coming to town as well. Those modes will continue to be part of the transportation picture for Bellevue. The problem with Policy TR-11 is that it is punitive. Commissioner Walter agreed.

Commissioner Tebelius said that she remembered the Planning Commission taking a look at what the Transportation Commission submitted for policies in the Transportation Element and having real concerns about their focus. The Planning Commission concluded that the focus of the policies was wrong for Bellevue, that one mode should not be emphasized over another. She said she did not see any of the changes recommended by the Planning Commission reflected in the draft.

Mr. Inghram pointed out that ultimately the City Council has the final say on what policies to include. The Planning Commission has the opportunity to strike Policy TR-11 and to make other

changes to the element as it sees fit, and the Transportation Commission has the opportunity to make its case to the Council to include the policies as drafted.

The majority of Commissioners agreed to delete Policy TR-11. Commissioner Hamlin disagreed with the majority and advocated for keeping TR-11.

Turning to economic development, Mr. Inghram noted the suggestion had been made to encourage working with non-profit agencies to train and hire people with disabilities. He noted that there is general but not specific support in the draft policies addressing persons with special needs. There is policy language in support of educating and training generally, and there is a policy in the Human Services Element that talks about encouraging services that support the workforce in maintaining and advancing employment opportunities.

Commissioner Tebelius asked if including language as proposed by the commenter would require the city to get into the business of training and hiring people with disabilities. Mr. Inghram said the policy in the Human Services Element encourages but does not require the city to make specific investments. One option would be to add something to Policy HS-16 along the lines of "...including those with those with special needs and disabilities...."

There was consensus to include that language in Policy HS-16.

Mr. Inghram noted that the overwhelming number of comments regarding the environment were about tree retention. Some of the comments addressed non-policy issues. Two policies in the Environmental Element, EN-X3 and EN-X10, specifically address the tree canopy and avoiding the impacts associated with a loss of the tree canopy.

Commissioner Walter referred to the statement made during public comment that the proposed new transmission line project will be paying something like \$895,000 as a fee in lieu of mitigation for removing so many trees. She asked if the city will be using those dollars to replant trees. Mr. Inghram said it was his understanding that the fee in lieu is based on covering the cost of planting new trees.

Mr. Matz added that the construction of a new transmission line will require the removal of trees, and he pointed out that new trees will not be planted in the right-of-way through which the new line will run. The required mitigation is focused on dealing with the impact of the loss of tree cover, which will be addressed by planting new trees elsewhere. He allowed that major public projects have resulted and will result in the loss of trees, and the policies seek to balance that by tracking tree cover and replacing what is lost.

Commissioner Hilhorst pointed out that while there are restrictions on developers regarding the clearing of land, the same restrictions do not apply to homeowners. There have been several cases where developers have asked the private property owners to clear the land ahead of finalizing a sale. She asked if that gap has been closed by the draft policy language. Mr. Inghram allowed that he was not able to answer the question precisely. He agreed to seek an answer based on what the code says.

With regard to the Urban Design Element, Mr. Inghram noted that a comment had been made about the shopping street designation for 130th Avenue NE and 120th Avenue NE, and there was a separate comment regarding building height that was more focused on the downtown design guidelines. The shopping street designations stem from the Bel-Red planning effort and are

consistent with the Bel-Red plan. The concern about building heights is an issue to be addressed when the code and design guideline changes for the downtown are reviewed.

There was agreement not to make any changes to the Urban Design Element.

Mr. Inghram noted that comments had been received that referenced what turned out to be an incorrect map. Comments were also received regarding subarea boundaries being different from those on the Neighborhoods Areas map. The problem is that the Neighborhoods Areas map boundaries have been drawn to better correspond to neighborhood areas, but the subarea boundaries will continue to relate to the older and partially out of date subarea plans until they are updated. He said clarifying text could be added to explain why the maps are different. The Commissioners agreed that should be done.

With regard to Policy S-EG-26, Mr. Inghram said the focus is on maintaining trees in the entire Eastgate area, but the amendment made to it made it focused on just the commercial corridor. He suggested the policy language should be tweaked so as to avoid losing the emphasis on the entire subarea. The Commissioners concurred.

Mr. Inghram said a commenter suggested adding an eastbound ramp to I-90. While that might be a good idea, it is beyond the city's purview.

Mr. Inghram said a variety of different general comments had been received. Some were about Energize Eastside which from a plan perspective are addressed in the Utilities Element. There were comments made about public safety as well as how the plan is formatted. Staff did not see the comments as suggesting any particular change to the plan. Staff also has compiled a list of typographical errors and technical corrections to be made; they will be shared with the Commission.

There was agreement the Commission would not need to meet on March 18.

8. OTHER BUSINESS - None

9. PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Osha Morningstar, 10022 Meydenbauer Way SE, #315, reiterated her proposed to include the notions of equity, equal opportunity, accessibility and sustainability to the vision statement. Most people with access to the Comprehensive Plan will choose to read the vision statement and the introduction section for each element, but not the entire document. People do not realize the importance of equity, equal opportunity, accessibility and sustainability until they is compromised. The city should take on the important issue of training and hiring people with disabilities. Transportation is also vitally important to the city, especially being able to get around by car; not everyone can access the bus. Protecting the tree canopy is very important. Replanting trees that have been removed is essential, but everything possible should be done to protect mature trees as they are most efficient and helping to clean the air.

Mr. Andy Swayne with Puget Sound Energy, 355 110th Avenue NE, said he served on the team that designed and permitted the Energize Eastside project. He said the project is currently before the City Council for consideration as to whether or not it should be approved based on the recommendation from the hearing examiner. The fee in lieu is based on city policy that puts a value on trees removed from city property and rights-of-way. There is a formal process in place

for determining the value of the trees. They could choose to do a number of things with the fees paid in lieu. In the case of Energize Eastside, if the project is approved, the money will be used to buy and replace as many trees as possible throughout the project corridor and adjacent to it. If there are funds left over, it will be allocated to other parks and tree-related projects. Much of the vegetation to be removed from the transmission line corridor will be replaced with shrubs and trees that have maximum heights that are compatible with the transmission line. There has been much review by the parks and planning departments.

Commissioner Walter asked if some of the large trees to be removed could in fact be saved and replanted elsewhere. Mr. Swayne said he would pass on the comment. He allowed that the approach would have implications for the value issue and the fees paid in lieu. Replanting mature trees would need to occur outside of the corridor.

Commissioner Hamlin asked if the replacement trees include a mix of maturities. Mr. Swain said how well mature trees do when planted depends on the species. Some species must be planted when they are smaller.

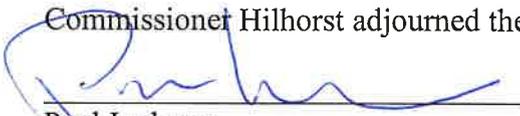
Ms. Wendy Brawlt with the Bellevue College BFET employment and training program explained that her focus is on workforce retraining based on certain eligibility factors. She said many of the students are challenged by transportation and housing issues. The fact is that not everyone has car or the ability to get around by car and as such transportation alternatives are very important. Housing and transportation are issues that are linked in many ways.

Mr. Thomas Corsini said he is a student at Bellevue College and is in his last quarter of television services. He said for the past year he has been part of a crew that manages the streaming of the City Council meetings every Monday night. He said he is also a parishioner of St. Luke's Lutheran Church. He voiced his support for the Comprehensive Plan amendment submitted by the church. He said the need for affordable housing is as high as it has ever been. He said the Commission would benefit from hearing from staff how many people in Bellevue qualify for affordable housing. Many elderly living in the city are being taxed out of their own homes.

10. ADJOURN

A motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Hamlin. The motion was seconded by Commissioner deVadoss and it carried unanimously.

Commissioner Hilhorst adjourned the meeting at 9:20 p.m.


Paul Inghram
Staff to the Planning Commission

5/13/2015
Date


Aaron Laing
Chair of the Planning Commission

5/13/15
Date

* Approved as corrected April 8, 2015