



**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT  
501 North Anderson Street, Ellensburg WA 98926**

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**MINUTES OF ELLENSBURG CITY PLANNING COMMISSION**

**Date and Time:** Planning Commission meeting of June 25, 2020 at 5:45 p.m.  
**Place of Meeting:** City Council Chambers, Ellensburg City Hall  
**Present:** Beverly Heckart, Fred Padjen, Gayl Curtiss, George Bottcher, Ed Harrell, Geraldine O'Mahony  
**Absent:** Gretchen Thatcher (excused absence)  
**Others Present:** Community Development Director Kirsten Sackett; Planning Manager Jamey Ayling; Council Liaison Stacey Engel; 1 member of the public

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**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Vice-Chair Padjen called the meeting to order at 5:49 pm.

**2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Commissioner Bottcher moved to approve the agenda. Commissioner Curtiss seconded. Motion passed with all in favor.

**3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Commissioner Curtiss made a motion to approve both sets of minutes from the regular meetings of December 12, 2019 and May 7, 2020 with noted corrections. Commissioner Bottcher seconded the motion. Motion passed all in favor.

**4. NEW BUSINESS**

None.

**5. OLD BUSINESS**

a. Discussion on Zoning District and Permitted Use Ordinance

Director Kirsten Sackett provided a synopsis and background of the priorities that were selected, and the workplan that was developed, following adoption of the 2017 comprehensive plan. She reminded the commission about the work that was completed up to this point. It was stated that in 2018 that City Council developed a list of priorities, two of which were to update the zoning district boundaries and permitted use charts. These two priorities would be the focus of this meeting.

She reminded the Planning Commission that they had held 10 works sessions from August 2018 through January 2019 to review the boundaries of the zoning districts and review the permitted uses in each district. A draft proposal was created and shared with City Council on April 1, 2019. Outreach to the community then began in May 2019, with 3 public workshops held to collect feedback, in addition to an online survey. The results of the surveys were shared back with the public at a 4<sup>th</sup> workshop held on July 9, 2019 at Hal Holmes. A summary report was provided at July Planning Commission meeting, which led to further review to incorporate community feedback. The Commission recommendations were shared with Council in October 2019, at which time Council provided general support of the work completed to date. The Planning Commission held additional meetings in the fall, leading to the draft document for review at this

meeting. Sackett also shared that during this time the State passed bill E2SHB, intended to help communities with developing affordable housing. This bill would allow certain ordinances to move forward without requiring SEPA review.

Commissioner Padjen asked about parking requirements around duplexes and such. Sackett mentioned that former long-range planner Angela San Filippo had conducted a large parking study which was shared with City Council at a previous retreat. That item was discussion only and this current ordinance does not currently propose any parking changes. However, it is still in the work plan for later discussion.

Other items discussed included allowing residential scale uses in the Residential Office (R-O) zone. Much discussion focused on uses allowable in the freeway interchange areas. Sackett reminding the commission of the meetings when San Filippo utilized the large use charts and graphs to compare the allowable uses in each zone. The result of these discussions was the proposal to combine the Commercial Highway (C-H) and Commercial Tourist (C-T) zones. The Commission also looked at permitting some light manufacturing in the new mixed-use zones.

Sackett listed the action items that will facilitate implementation of the goals and policies of the comprehensive plan. She then started screen sharing of the ordinance for view by the Commissioners and explained the next step will be to send it out for SEPA and public comment, then to the Department of Commerce for a 60 day review, and then back to public hearings with the Planning Commission, and finally to Council for adoption.

Before moving into more detailed discussion, introductions occurred. Jamey Ayling Planning Manager was introduced as the new Planning Manager, and Stacey Engle as the new Council liaison to the Planning Commission. James Rivard was introduced as an interested land owner in attendance, who has been following this process all along.

In terms of providing input throughout the meeting, Sackett said she would scroll through the document in order, and any changes could be made in track changes. She explained that the ordinance was written in numerical order of the code citation, so it began with the definition changes in ECC 15.130. Any language proposed to be added to the code would be shown as underlined, and any language proposed to be deleted would be shown with a strike-through.

Commissioner Curtiss asked about the proposal to strike out the term “research and development” from the definition of light industry. Commissioner Padjen also questioned this and felt that the term should remain in the definition. Discussion ensued and it was determined the commission would like to leave “research and development” in the definition of light industry.

Commissioner Curtiss expressed concern that the light manufacturing zone would include restaurant and ancillary uses. Commissioner Heckart reminded them they had large discussion about ancillary restaurants, and it was decided they were a good idea in these areas. It would allow for restaurants in closer proximity to the employees of the light manufacturing facilities. Further discussion ensued and Sackett displayed the light industry category of the use table and reviewed which uses were permitted. Commissioner Curtiss revisited the definition. The ancillary uses has a comma that wasn't seen. It was decided to leave this section as is, and there were no more questions pertaining to the definition section of the ordinance.

Sackett then moved to ECC 15.300 and pointed out that the new mixed-use zones were incorporated into the chapter. The general purposes were listed first, followed by the new mixed-use zones of Neighborhood Center Mixed Use (NCMU) and Regional Center Mixed Use (RCMU). The proposed edits looked acceptable to the commission. Sackett displayed the GIS maps to explain the connection between zoning, and the future land use designations found in the Comp

Plan. Commissioner Curtiss was curious if we needed to designate which interchange the mixed-use zone is appropriate for, and Sackett explained that the RCMU zone could be requested at either interchange.

Sackett moved on to the permitted use tables, which included the two new neighborhood center and residential center mixed-use zones. She explained how the table works in regard to the “P” (permitted), “C” (conditional use), and “A” (accessory) designations. Duplexes in the Residential Suburban (R-S) and Residential Low (R-L) zones previously included conditions, but those were struck so that duplexes would be allowed outright without conditions in those two zones. Sackett said that this includes eliminating the size restriction foot note for the R-L zone. She explained that the size of homes or other structures is always restricted by minimum densities and setbacks combined with the open space and parking requirements.

Moving on to the nonresidential use table, Sackett said that the biggest change was eliminating the Commercial Tourist (C-T) zone. Anything zoned C-T would become Commercial Highway (C-H) instead. For the most part, uses previously allowed within either of the zones would be allowed in the C-H. Other changes were the new columns in the table to include NCMU and RCMU. Scrolling through the table, Sackett pointed out that the term “general services” was removed, and more specific uses were added to the use chart, including automobile fueling stations. Sackett also reminded the Commission that they created a separate category for “brew pubs and bars” apart from “restaurants”. Small scale coffee houses had also been listed as permitted in the RS and RL zones with new conditions. “Personal service establishment” was added to the R-L zone with footnote 3. Sackett pointed out that “laundromats” was now its own use, after being pulled out of the previous “general services” category. In addition, “places of assembly” was added to C-H zone.

Commissioner Heckart asked about the allowance of 20,000 square foot buildings in the R-S zone. Sackett explained that with footnote 5, these uses would only really be allowed on the perimeter of the zoning district. Commissioner Heckart is still puzzled about allowing 20,000 square foot buildings in this zone. Commissioner Harrell feels like it is fine the way it is listed. The commission said they would look at this at a later date as they don’t have all the information. Sackett asked the Commission to discuss it now so the ordinance can be moved forward. Commissioner Heckart said the minutes for the PC meetings were not available on the website, and the agendas prior to January 2020 were not available. She said this makes it difficult to remember past discussions around 20,000 square foot buildings. More discussion ensued and it was determined that the existing footnotes and building height restrictions would keep these uses from overwhelming these perimeter areas. Staff will check into the issue with viewing the agendas and minutes and make sure that they are available on the website.

Returning to the changes in the nonresidential use chart, Sackett point out that large scale offices and mini warehouses had changes that were proposed in the ordinance. She said that James Rivard had joined the meeting, as he wanted to speak about the mini warehouses and fruit stands. Mr. Rivard said that he interpreted the code to say fruit stands are currently allowed uses, but he was concerned that with the change from C-T to C-H the fruit stand wouldn’t be allowed anymore. He feels it should remain an allowed use. He also talked about ministorage warehouses. Mr. Rivard said his preference would be to conceal the ministorage units behind retail development in phases. He suggested that perhaps ministorage units should be allowed as conditional use if they are screened behind retail. Another option would be to allow temporary uses of ministorage.

Commissioner Heckart asked to define the fruit stand, and what type of building was he referring to. Rivard said he would start with a tent-like structure and move to something like the Thorp fruit stand, as it appears to be quite popular. Sackett read the definition of fruit stand, stating that it is

building structure or land area for use of produce grown *on site*. Rivard's request would be permissible as retail.

Mr. Rivard went on to explain his proposal for a temporary zoning request for ministorage, that would be allowed for 15 years and which would leave the front open for retail store along the street frontage. He was working with a developer who liked the idea, but removing the conditional use for mini storage facilities from C-H has eliminated this as a possibility.

Commissioner Padjen asked how to frame this discussion. Sackett explained that a conditional use request comes before the commission and they are able to assign conditions. However, the question before the commission is whether they want to change the recommendation to no longer allow mini storage units in the C-H zone. Commissioners Heckart and Bottcher did not agree to re-insert the mini storages in the C-H zone. Commissioner Padjen also likes the chart the way it is. A suggestion was made that staff can inform City Council about the struggle of what to do with the mini warehouses as a CUP in the C-H zone. Commissioner Heckart wants it out; Commissioner Bottcher said he would be okay with it, if the storage use is tucked behind retail, otherwise he would leave it out; Commissioner Padjen in, Commissioner Harrell said no; Commissioner Curtiss wants to leave it out, Commissioner O'Mahony agrees take it out. In the end, all Commissioners were in agreement to keep that language as found in the packet. They do not want to allow ministorage units in the C-H zone, even with a conditional use permit. Mr. Rivard appreciated the commission hearing him out.

Sackett went over the new category of light manufacturing and the industrial uses, and then described the changes in the Special Uses chart. It now includes small scale indoor recreation uses 2000 sq ft or smaller. Recreational vehicle parks, parks and playgrounds would be allowed in the mixed-use zones. Commissioner O'Mahony was concerned about why we would allow recording studios or performing arts in some residential zones, but not allow museums. Sackett and the other commissioners remembered the discussion about museums tending to attract larger crowds. By listing them as conditional uses the Commission could assign conditions and provide better control. O'Mahoney described her travels around the world, and her visits to many museums inside small structures that were previously houses. Commissioner Heckart feels that the category for art will cover Geraldine's vision like in Ireland. It was suggested that with Commissioner O'Mahony's suggestions, they could list museums as conditional use in the residential zone.

Sackett suggested that they could add a footnote to the chart referring to small scale museums, 2000 sq ft or smaller. Commissioner Heckart made a motion to allow museums, and Sackett asked for clarification that the uses should match the chart for the arts category.

Council liaison Stacey Engel asked if children's museums fall under museums, or do they fall under recreation. Commissioner Curtiss is concerned with the traffic impacts of allowing museums in the residential zones. Commissioner Heckart said the conditional use will control that. The footnote limiting size to 2,000 square foot could determine which ones are permitted out right. Commissioner Bottcher thinks that leaving it as a conditional use would help control the use. The entire Commission agreed that the museums should follow the same use allowances as the performing arts category. Museums had not really been discussed in the past, but they deserve the same criteria as other similar uses. There was discussion on whether they clarify the definition of a theatre, but the Commission did not feel it needed to be vetted any further. The Commission concluded discussion on the use charts at 7:43 pm.

Sackett moved the discussion along to the Building Setback and Intensity Standards section of ECC 15.320. She explained that the column for R-O zoning had been removed from the residential use column and inserting in the new mixed-use table. Within the Nonresidential use

table, C-T, C-C and CCII were also relocated to the mixed-use table. The columns for the two new mixed-use zones include new information regarding height and setbacks, etc.

Commissioner Heckart said she gets very uncomfortable with taller buildings near the historic district. She would prefer them to be 45 feet not 60 in the C-C zone. Commissioner O'Mahony echoed the concerns of Commissioner Heckart. The rest of the commission was fine with the 60-foot height restriction. Commissioner Curtiss asked if we could discuss with the affordable housing commission to allow those affordable housing units to allow a density bonus to go up higher than 45 feet.

Sackett suggested that the Commission conclude the discussion for the night and meet again in two weeks to finish reviewing the rest of the ordinance language. July 9 is already a regularly-scheduled date for the Commission. The next review would include amendments to the sign code and the zoning boundary amendments. The Commission agreed they should conclude for the night.

Sackett explained that we will continue to meet virtually for at least the next meeting, and possibly beyond, due to the current OPMA restrictions and meeting space availability. The commission agreed that virtual meetings are okay, but that they would appreciate hard copy handouts. Sackett said those could be made available for pick-up at City Hall.

It was confirmed that July 9<sup>th</sup> would be the next Planning Commission meeting.

## **6. ADJOURNMENT**

Acting Chair Padjen thanked staff for their work and adjourned the meeting at 8:03 pm.