

**Ellensburg City Planning Commission – Regular Meeting Minutes  
September 7, 2011  
City Council Chambers**

Members Present: Chair Bruce Simpson, Bill Beattie, Beverly Heckart, Gretchen Thatcher  
Members Absent: Vice Chair Sarah Bedsaul, Bob Hood, Fred Padjen  
Others Present: Planning Supervisor Lance Bailey, Gordon Thatcher

Chair Bruce Simpson opened the meeting at 6:00p.m.

**Minutes:**

The Commission had some comments they wanted to add in order to clarify the minutes from the August 25<sup>th</sup> meeting.

**Section 15.53.020(B)(2) - Franchise Architecture**

- 1) It was suggested that there are examples of existing franchise buildings that are not distinctively “franchise” and are adaptable for future businesses. If there is to be a section in the new code regarding franchise architecture, maybe some examples of these building could be incorporated into the code.
- 2) Ellensburg does not have an actual building or design theme. So it’s difficult to say what couldn’t be built because there aren’t examples of a theme or design to make review decisions. A lack of theme is the catalyst for the Commission’s comments about the difficulty of defining what could and could not be approved under the proposed language. Having said that, it is not being suggested that Ellensburg adopt some kind of theme.
- 3) Should we treat franchises any differently than any other business when it comes to building design? Under the proposed code changes all new development will already have to meet a variety of design requirements – site orientation standards, architectural requirements and signage.

**Public Meeting:**

**Review of Draft Land Development Code Update – Article 5 (continued)**

**15.53 Building Design**

- 1) Section 15.53.040(D) It is unclear what criteria were used to designate the “high visibility street corners” in Figure 15.53.040(D)(2). Along Main St. practically every corner, particularly at a traffic light is highly visible. On Canyon Road, all corners at Mt. View, Umptanum Rd. and the freeway entrance exits are highly visible. Along University Way, all the way from the freeway through Brick Rd., practically all four points at every corner are highly visible. There's also a

highly visible corner at the junction of Railroad and Fifth Aves. The designation of highly visible corners appears to be sporadic rather than systematic.

- 2) Planning Commission does support designating high visibility street corners. It was discussed to potentially add an 8<sup>th</sup> element to the list in Section 15.53.040(C). Landscaping was discussed as a possibility, but not ultimately considered the best idea because it can be too subjective and temporary.
- 3) Every street corner in the downtown area should be designated as a high visibility street corner.
- 4) Section 15.53.040(F) The required plaque should be located near the main entrance.
- 5) Section 15.53.050(D) The Commission really supports this section

#### **15.54 Housing Type Standards**

- 1) Section 15.54.020(B)(1) This section should include clear directions that the front door must be positioned in front of the garage. At least part of the reason for setting the minimum garage setback at 25 feet is to prevent it overpowering the pedestrian entry to the house. The front of the garage should be set back further than the actual front door of the house. Figure 15.54.020(B) shows this, but the text does not require it.
- 2) Section 15.54.030 The requirement to setback the garage further than the front door should be included for duplex and triplex designs.
- 3) Section 15.54.040(B)(6) While the Commission supports the idea of protecting the privacy of the neighbors of an accessory dwelling unit, it was suggested to include landscaping to meet the visual barrier requirement. How do you define “solid”? Another suggestion is to include language that vegetation is encouraged when this requirement is met by constructing a fence.
- 4) Section 15.54.060(E) There was concern expressed that as the requirements are written, that some of the most recognized historical townhouse designs wouldn't be allowed. There are town houses in New York, Baltimore, Annapolis, Washington, D. C., Boston, Philadelphia, London, Bath and other places where every single house is the same as its neighbor and, when the row is skillfully executed, it looks very good.
- 5) Townhouses are typically not very accessible and are not a good option for anyone with physical limitations. Encouraging diversity in design, such as the examples in Figure 15.54.060(E)(2) with the mix of one and two story units, is a very good idea. Accessibility needs to be taken into consideration when creating standards for all housing types. The Commission had a discussion on the concept of universal design – designing homes and environments that are universally usable by everyone, regardless of physical ability or stage of life. There is nothing in the new

code that is aggressive or even mentions accessibility. The Commission was provided with a handout on the concept and practice of “visitable homes, visitable communities”. The Commission discussed the possibility of including some kind of density bonus option for incorporating universal design elements into new development. It was further suggested that there be a requirement for all housing types that at least one entrance be designed with no steps.

- 6) Section 15.55.030(E)(1) 1 bicycle parking space for every 5 vehicle spaces is too low. It seems like a very car dominated ratio. It is suggested to at least double the requirement, to 2 bicycle spaces for every 5 vehicle spaces.

### **15.56 Signage**

- 1) Section 15.56.050(A). Signs in general should be strictly regulated in the R-O zone. It's best not to permit monument signs there at the present time. The RO zone is primarily residential and the signage should reflect that.
- 2) Section 15.56.060(C) Definitely no pole signs in the R-O zone. If we have to have pole signs, then 35 feet high should only be allowed in the C-T zone and not in any of the others. There needs to be a stipulation here that allows us over time to eliminate the 100 ft., high signs. For example, when the owner changes, when the sign changes, when the function changes, the 100 ft. high pole sign should be removed. As it stands now, the 100 ft- high pole signs severely damage one of the finest tourist attractions/sights in Ellensburg--the view from Canyon Road toward the mountains.
- 3) Section 15.56.070 The Commission support allowing wall signs in the C-C zone.
- 4) Section 15.56.180(A)-(C) The R-H zone needs to be included in the text.
- 5) Section 15.56.180(E) The text of this paragraph needs to more clearly describe what is required.
- 6) Section 15.56.180(G) It should be considered to eliminate this section, or at least change the language to differentiate between signs and banners. Signs can be designed to be permanent, whereas banners normally aren't.

### **Next Meeting:**

The Planning Commission's next meeting will be scheduled for either 9/14 or 9/15. An email will be sent out to everyone to gauge availability for those two days.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:23pm.

Respectfully submitted  
Lance Bailey, Planning Supervisor