



City of Bellevue Planning & Zoning Commission Minutes of Meeting April 1, 2024

The meeting was called to order at 5:41 p.m. Commissioners present were Alexis Lindberg, Eric Grootveld and John Kurtz. Also present was Shelly Shoemaker, City Treasurer, and Errin Bliss, Bliss Architecture.

Attending Via Zoom: Courtney Long and Jerry Grebenc, Great West Engineering, Diane Shay, Bellevue City Council and Tony Evans, Idaho Mountain Express.

1. NOTICE AND HEARING COMPLIANCE:

The regular meeting notice and agenda were posted in accordance with Idaho Code §74-204 within forty-eight (48) hours prior to the meeting at City Hall, Bellevue Post Office and on the City's website and emailed to the Idaho Mountain Express on March 26, 2024.

Commissioner Lindberg moved the notice was posted in compliance with Idaho Code §67-204. Commissioner Grootveld seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

2. CALL FOR CONFLICT (as outlined in I.C. 74-404): None

3. PUBLIC COMMENT (for items of concern NOT on the agenda): None

4. APPROVAL OF PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES of March 4, 2024.

Commissioner Grootveld moved to approve the Planning and Zoning Commission Meeting Minutes of March 4, 2024. Commissioner Lindberg seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

5. DISCUSSION OF BUSINESS CORE OVERLAY DISTRICT:

Courtney and Jerry introduced themselves and noted that Great West Engineering (GWE) only works for local governments, including comprehensive plans, parks, trails, and daily planning services.

Commissioner Kurtz started the discussion by explaining that this whole process is new for the Planning and Zoning Commission (the "Commission") and that the Commission needs to understand the contract with GWE. The Commission is learning as we go and will plan on asking their questions through City staff for this process to be cognizant of costs. He explained that although Bellevue is a part of a larger community of resort towns, Bellevue seems to be more "working class" citizens, but still facing pressures similar to those of the north valley. GWE might want to review the other four communities in the Valley on this topic, although Bellevue wants to remain independent for what is right for the City. So, figuring out the Business Overlay District is important and previous versions presented to the Commission seem quite complex. As far as history for GWE to review, minutes from City Council meetings might provide some information. He then asked GWE how they would like to proceed.

Jerry Grebenc explained that Michelle Vest Snarr will be the point of contact for the City, and he plans to have a clear line of communication and workflow on all documents to be sure everyone is on the same page.

Courtney commented that GWE has initial thoughts and ideas on how to move forward, but that GWE wants to be mindful of the history behind this matter, understand the community mindset and in the process, be efficient with time and money, all while complying with governing laws. GWE is here to serve the City. She noted that GWE has read all the information Michelle gave them and that it sounds like the Commission wants to get back to the original intent and goals and move forward from there.

Commissioner Kurtz then opened the floor for public comment, especially regarding any history to share on this matter.

Tony Evans, Idaho Mountain Express (IME), pointed out that a possible resource for historical information is in the archives of the IME because he has reported on City business for many years.

Diane Shay stated that she is willing to have more detailed conversations with everyone. She recalls that in 2020 she was looking at density allowed, and that the City didn't have any provision for multi-family housing. The only definition for multi-family housing was a duplex. She drafted proposed language for multi-family housing, and it went back to the Commission for revisions and then she retired. At that point, it appears the project stalled, and the Commission was left without direction.

Jerry responded that zoning is complex enough and the simpler and clearer we can make it, the better.

Commissioner Kurtz noted that at one point there was discussion about extending the overlay district to light industrial zoning. If the City is going to amend or make a new ordinance, he would prefer to do it once and do it right. He asked GWE what their thoughts are on extending the overlay?

Jerry noted that they do not see a lot of residential use in light industrial except in communities where a live/work concept works. It is a policy decision of the City. Zoning codes should be flexible and if the City can get through this process for the business district, you can amend the zoning map for overlay districts.

Diane supported the concept of accessory dwelling units in light industrial.

Errin Bliss, Bliss Architecture, stated that over the last five months he has been to at least three City council meetings on this issue and the same for the Commission meetings. He has a client wanting to submit an application for a live/work three-story building on Main Street. They originally applied for a zone change but then were told to submit a text amendment to the City. He and his client just want to see this move forward as they are stuck and unable to build their project. He suggested focusing on the business district first. Further, he brought a text amendment to the Commission last November that simply allows for mixed use buildings in the business district, which is allowed in many cities. Bellevue does not currently allow mixed use buildings in the business district. He will submit that text amendment as a follow-up to this meeting.

Commissioner Kurtz noted that it would make sense to focus on the business core overlay district and that it is unfortunate it is taking so long to make progress.

Commissioner Lindberg suggested that they start with the draft documents and discuss priorities and focus from there.

Courtney commented that it gets complex with higher density and live/work scenarios. At first look, she wondered why an overlay is proposed versus a text amendment to the code. What if GWE drafted a downtown business district and allowed for more density? Housing is not usually an overlay, but it can be a part of zoning district regulations. Layers can get confusing for everyone.

There was brief discussion on parking restrictions, the mentality of downtown dwellers and attracting the local workforce for housing versus short-term rentals. The Commissioners all agreed they do not want to see the area become a short-term rental market.

There was brief discussion on density requirements, or lot size requirements, open space requirements, setbacks and viewsheds. Viewsheds affect height restrictions. Flexibility can be written into the text. Diane noted the unique topography on the West side of downtown where the streets dead end due to a steep incline. Perhaps there is room to provide open space in these areas. Creative ideas at this stage are encouraged.

Commissioner Grootveld stated that he is not supportive of more restrictions like requiring a resident to have a business in the City. What this amendment might offer is affordable housing for workers who now commute from Shoshone. Commissioner Kurtz agreed and then asked how you would enforce restrictions like that. The consensus was that the City does not have the staffing and resources to enforce such restrictions.

The discussion also included ideas on whether to require minimum square footage and variety of unit sizes within a project. It was concluded that developers might tend to do what makes sense for each project. Again, the suggestion of fewer requirements was advocated.

The discussion then turned to how best to proceed. Does the Commission want an overlay or a text amendment? As the Commission was open to the most efficient way to move forward, it was determined to proceed as a text amendment, starting with the 2020 version prepared by Diane Shay. GWE will also review the minutes of this meeting and talk to Diane Shay as part of the process. GWE will then prepare a draft text amendment for the Commission's review and comment on May 6, 2024. GWE plans to have a draft to the Commission by April 29.

Commissioner Lindberg moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:00 p.m. Commissioner Grootveld seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

APPROVED this 15th day of April, 2024.



Commissioner Kurtz



Shelly Shoemaker, City Treasurer