

**CITY OF MONROE
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
Monday, November 5, 2018**

The regular meeting of the Monroe Planning Commission was held on **Monday, November 5, 2018 at 7:00 p.m.**, in the City Hall Council Chambers at 806 West Main Street, Monroe, WA 98272.

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Tuttle called the meeting to order at 7:01p.m.

ROLL CALL

Planning Commission Secretary Leigh Anne Barr called the roll.

Commissioners Present: Chair Tuttle, Commissioner Bull, Commissioner Jensen, Commissioner Rousey, Commissioner Fisher, Commissioner Duerksen and Commissioner Stanger

Staff Present: Community Development Director Ben Swanson, Principal Planner Shana Restall, Consultant Lindsay Brown and Secretary Leigh Anne Barr

COMMENTS FROM CITIZENS

NONE

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Bull moved to accept the October 8, 2018 meeting minutes as written. Motion seconded by Commissioner Fisher. Motion carried 7/0.

PUBLIC HEARING

NONE

OLD BUSINESS

1. Unified Development Regulations (UDR) Design Standards Chapter

Principal Planner Shana Restall added land disturbing activity to the design standards chapter. The goal is to preserve a more natural grade onsite by encouraging daylight basements and tuck under garages. Larger walls would still be available when necessary, but the criteria will be stricter for allowing the larger walls. Planning Commissioners would like to see clearer requirements in the grading standards. The Planning Commissioners were concerned that the new standards would make grading site too cost prohibitive. Community Development Ben Swanson explained that the biggest cost in the development of a project is often the hauling on and off of soils and that with proper planning, these standards could actually help reduce costs for developers. Commissioner Rousey suggested different requirements for short plats to help keep costs down on smaller developments.

Principal Planner Shana Restall asked for feedback on wall materials when the wall is visible from the right of way. Chair Tuttle and Commissioner Rousey were concerned about making too specific of requirements and Chair Tuttle would like to use an incentive to the wall materials. Commissioner

Duerksen concerned about the safety of larger walls and is in favor of stricter wall height restrictions. Director Swanson reminded Commissioners that an incentive approach is difficult because with creativity comes complexity which can make code requirements difficult to interpret. Director Swanson suggested more flexibility on individual lots and keeping stricter requirements for public or right of way spaces.

Commissioner Jensen suggested adding a requirement that a portion of the development budget be devoted to art in order to make developments in Monroe more unique.

2. Unified Development Regulations (UDR) Temporary Use Chapter

Chari Tuttle announced that will be passed.

3. Unified Development Regulations (UDR) Tree Retention Chapter

Consultant Lindsay Brown complete the tree retention chapter and will be working on several other upcoming code chapters. Consultant Brown recommended starting with gentle tree retention regulations. Since the requirements are new, Consultant Brown would recommend some public outreach when the new code is going into effect. The regulations are based on tree canopy requirements with the goal of allowing planners to determine compliance without going out into the field. Consultant Brown explained that most cities conduct a tree canopy survey as a starting point for their tree retention code requirements. Consultant Brown asked Planning Commission if they would prefer to start with a City wide tree survey or use a percentage requirement instead. Commissioner Fisher would like to start with a tree survey to give the City a way to enforce the new requirements.

Chair Tuttle asked Staff if the new chapter is favorable for enforcement. Principal Planner Restall believes the chapter will be able to be enforced as it is currently written.

Consultant Brown suggested stricter tree protection measures during construction. There are many options available. Commissioner Stanger is satisfied with this requirement if it is consistent with other jurisdictions in the surrounding area.

The Commissioners asked if there were any species restrictions. Consultant Brown clarified that currently the chapter does not have any species specific requirements. Commissioner Bull suggested additional protection measures for trees that are deemed significant.

Planning Commissioners discussed different requirements for trees nominated as heritage trees, but after discussing the goals of the heritage tree program, they decided against additional requirements for heritage tree removal.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Unified Development Regulations (UDR) Administration and Enforcement Chapter

The materials for this chapter were not yet ready for Planning Commission.

2. Unified Development Regulations (UDR) Comprehensive Plan Amendments Chapter

Senior Planner Restall noted that this chapter is heavily regulated by the Growth Management Act. City staff accepts comprehensive plan amendments once a year as the City does not have the staff support to take them year round. Consultant Brown explained that much of the chapter is the same as it currently exists with the excess language removed in order to make the chapter more compact and clear.

Commissioner Jensen is concerned that the 12 month long process is too long. Director Swanson explained that the State allows for faster timelines with emergency amendments. Director Swanson also reminded Commission that the comprehensive plan amendment process is not meant to be easy as it requires a deep look at the proposed changes and how they would affect the City as a whole. Commissioner Jensen asked if the noticing process is a state requirement and Consultant Brown informed Commissioners that currently the advertise period is very generous for citizens.

Commissioner Stanger moved to extend the meeting past 9pm at 9:02pm. Motion seconded by Commissioner Bull. Motion carried 7/0.

DISCUSSION BY COMMISSIONERS AND STAFF

Secretary Leigh Anne Barr announced that the November 19th meeting will start at 6:00pm and there will not be a meeting next week.

Director Swanson reminded Commissioners that the joint meeting City Council and Planning Commission will be in December. It is not a mandatory meeting but a possible quorum announcement will be posted.

Commissioner Rousey attended the 522 coalition meeting last Thursday. Commissioner Rousey felt it went really well and had a good turnout.

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Duerksen made a motion to adjourn at 9:12pm. Motion seconded by Commissioner Fisher. Motion carried 7/0.

Bridgette Tuttle
Chair

Leigh Anne Barr
Planning Commission Secretary