

# FIFE CITY COUNCIL/PLANNING COMMISSION JOINT MEETING

## MEETING MINUTES

**Fife City Hall  
Council Chambers**

**Date: April 29, 2008  
Time: 7:00 p.m.**

### **CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL**

Mayor Johnson called the special joint meeting between the City Council and the Planning Commission to order at 7:07 p.m. with the following Councilmembers and Planning Commissioners present: Mayor Johnson, Mayor Pro Tem Rob Cerqui, and Councilmembers Richard Godwin, Glenn Hull, Butch Brooks, Nancy de Booy, and Kim Roscoe

Planning Commission Chairman Gerald Albertson and Commissioners, Richard Garchow (8:01 p.m.), Jeffrey Brown, and Jim Call.

Excused: Commissioners Shannon Thornhill and Grant Neilson.

Staff present: City Manager Steve Worthington, Assistant City Manager Jim Reinbold, Community Development Director Carl Smith, Public Works Director Russ Blount, City Attorney Gregory Amann, Parks and Recreation Director Kurt Reuter, Planner 1 Chris Pasinetti, and Recording Secretary Danielle Gardea.

### **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Councilmember Roscoe led the pledge of allegiance.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

#### **Zoning Areas Discussion**

Director Smith reported the objective of the meeting is for the City Council and the Planning Commission to discuss zoning areas within the City. There have been concerns by both the Council and the Planning Commission about potential conflicts between more intensive zones and less intensive zones, which might be the area to begin the discussion. Staff provided some map resources in the agenda packet. Staff is available to answer questions.

Chair Albertson reported in January, the Planning Commission agreed to form a subcommittee to review zoning districts and consider zoning changes. Each month, the Commission is reviewing several zoning districts. The subcommittee reviews the zoning districts in more detail followed by a presentation to the Planning Commission to receive feedback. The Commission has not agreed on any particular zoning district but has developed some conclusions on some zones. For example, there are zoning districts that include old categories of use with staff striking some old use categories and including new use categories. The intent is to have a final discussion and vote on the categories.

Planner Pasinetti said the Planning Commission and subcommittee began their review with the lowest intensity zoning districts and are working toward the highest intensity zones. The review began with single family and small lot residential, with no changes. The Commission worked through Medium and High Residential Density, Neighborhood Residential, Neighborhood Commercial, and Community Commercial. The next meeting of the Commission will include suggested changes from the subcommittee meeting for the Commission's review.

Chair Albertson said the Commission will continue reviewing the categories and provide some input on overall zoning. He said his concern as a resident of the City is that the City appears to have many industrial uses abutting residential uses. He said he would like those areas to include some transition between the two uses. However, the issue is that most of the City is built out with fewer areas remaining. The goal is to identify areas where change might be applicable to consider a transition between the two uses.

Planner Pasinetti commented that there is cumulative-style zoning that begins with single family and works toward industrial. Single family residential is allowed in most zoning districts, which is a conflict by allowing single family residential in high intensity commercial zones.

After all the zones have been examined and recommendations rendered, the next step is to look at the zoning map and consider where zoning changes should occur.

Councilmember Roscoe asked whether steps of intensity were acted on several years ago. Manager Worthington verified that it related to pyramid zoning. He said it has some advantages and disadvantages. The pyramid zoning approach includes a base level of use with increased allowances in each successive level. Councilmember Roscoe said she believed it pertained to placing Community Commercial uses between Industrial and Residential uses. City Manager Worthington referred to policies in the agenda packet that were adopted in the City's comprehensive plan in 2001 or 2002 that speaks to the issue.

Commissioner Call commented that the City has zones that could be considered buffers but they either have not been used or used in other areas because of the definitions involved. Given the activity with annexations and other issues, changes might appear to be a good idea but he suggested delaying any changes until some of the other projects are completed.

Director Smith reported the City's doesn't have much vacant land and the opportunity to rezone is limited.

Chair Albertson reported the Commission discussed the area near 48<sup>th</sup> and 70<sup>th</sup>. There are many conflicts already existing with current development projects. Many of the neighborhoods already have a mixed situation.

Director Smith reported the area surrounding 48<sup>th</sup>, 45<sup>th</sup>, and 70<sup>th</sup> primarily consists of older uses with one exception. No projects would be halted in midstream if the area was rezoned. The developer has a building permit ready but is still in plan review. Director Smith pointed out the location of the Martin project. The project is a flexible space that could be divided into smaller tenant spaces. There are two buildings. One is 20,000 square feet and the other is 18,000 square feet. Uses could include light manufacturing or storage.

Councilmember Roscoe asked about the zoning for the area. Director Smith replied that it's zoned Industrial.

Director Smith commented about the action of rezoning and how property owners who perceive loss of value will let the Council know how they feel about the action. It is considered a strong action for the Council to take and sometimes, property owners believe their property suffers loss of value.

Commissioner Call said one of the adjacent properties has been rezoned three times in the last year.

Councilmember Roscoe said at one point staff was considering moving forward with zoning because of the potential of 70<sup>th</sup> becoming a commercial corridor because of the Canyon Road extension. It was about the City being proactive in terms of what Puyallup was going to develop along the road. Director Smith commented that if the bridge is replaced and SR 167 is extended then all that access south of Fife will come through the City. Commercial would make sense in that location.

Mayor Johnson confirmed the Council discussed that option in the past but there was a lack of support for a zoning change. The City may be at a point now where the action could be reconsidered.

Chair Albertson said as a resident of the City he would like to see the residential area extend down along Levy Road with some softening of uses along the road to make a better transition.

Director Smith commented that if the area was zoned for Community Commercial it would be consistent with the east side of 70<sup>th</sup> where the City property is located. That would allow for single family homes and a range of retail and commercial uses.

Councilmember Godwin asked how to handle industrial businesses currently located in the area. Director Smith said that's always the issue as those uses are grandfathered if the zoning district changes. If a property gave up its use for a year and vacated the property, after a year, their rights under the grandfather clause no longer applies.

Director Smith stated that ideally the property would have more valuable uses resulting as an incentive to redevelop. Land will become more valuable.

City Manager Worthington referred to a potential rezone along 70<sup>th</sup> Street on the west side from Industrial to Community Commercial. He questioned what that rezone would mean to the City and what would happen to the area that is currently Waste Connections. Waste Connections has a long history and most development has occurred around them knowing that they are located there. Waste Connections is a heavy industrial use with a number of inputs, such as noise, odors, and level of operations. The business is unlikely in the near term to undergo any redevelopment other than increasing intensity of use. Changing the zoning to Community Commercial has the potential of having the next-door neighbor as a residential use because Community Commercial allows Single Family Residential. Currently, the code allows residential to a medium density commercial operation, which is probably the best buffer. That has been one of the challenges in the code. When the code was developed, the community envisioned more residential housing. Consequently, only one zoning district doesn't allow single family housing.

Councilmember Roscoe asked whether that's the issue the Commission is currently working on to remove residential in some zoning districts. Planner Pasinetti said a recent recommendation removes single family residential and duplex from Community Commercial. Commissioner Call commented there would be two functions for the City – either business or residential. The Commission is trying to remove some of the mixes out of the commercial zones by removing residential from commercial zones and commercial uses from residential zones.

Councilmember Brooks requested clarification on the area under consideration for changing to Community Commercial. He asked whether there has been consideration to change densities and zoning on some of the Community Commercial properties along 48<sup>th</sup>. There are a number of residential units in the area and there are a number of properties that could be developed as residential. Commissioner Call advised that the subcommittee is not at a point to recommend zoning changes. Councilmember Brooks said there appears that there is the

potential for some of the Community Commercial properties to develop as residential, which he likes. Chair Albertson agreed. The Planning Commission is still focusing on individual zoning uses and is in the process of removing or adding zoning categories.

Director Smith said if there was support for more residential in the area, there is the option of preserving the corridor along 70<sup>th</sup> that is more commercial. It could be an overlay removing some of the more intensive Community Commercial uses. There are ways to pursue that kind of approach.

Councilmember Godwin said there appears to be a problem with that suggestion as American Fast Freight already has a planned warehouse. To make that area residential is the conflict the Council is trying to avoid. Residents will be looking at a docking station. It doesn't make sense to place residential in the middle of an industrial area. Commissioner Call commented that the City is small and the structure of the valley puts a large impact on the residents. Buffers and siting of facilities make a large difference.

Councilmember Hull commented there is not much that can be done unless the buffers are increased from zone to zone.

Director Smith mentioned the placement of berms. Berms do not block noise but they do create a barrier.

Commissioner Call commented on restricting hours of operation for businesses. Director Smith replied that most companies already have set hours of operation. Commissioner Call asked about the rights of existing properties and their ability to have protections from noise, odor, and preservation of aesthetics.

Councilmember de Booy asked whether there are any requirements for constructing berms or sound barriers. Director Smith replied that there are different requirements for different situations. A table is included in Chapter 18 that is used in those situations. The intensity of the use determines the requirements.

Planner Pasinetti explained if it is property in the same zone with the same land use the buffers are small. Buffers are larger when there are different abutting land uses.

Councilmember Hull asked about the potential of requiring maximum buffers and reducing the buffer requirements dependent upon the abutting use. Councilmember Roscoe said that approach could be subjective. Chair Albertson said the Commission is reviewing individual zoning

categories and extended buffers could be recommended depending upon the category. Councilmember Roscoe commented that adjusting buffers is similar to zoning because it basically results in lessening the amount of usable property. There are issues with any approach.

Director Smith commented that in May, staff is presenting some amendments to the noise code. The noise code attempts to strike a balance in terms of rights. Noise is a difficult area to regulate. There are maximum allowed limits pertaining to decibel levels. Maximum allowed limits will be measured in decibels.

Councilmember Roscoe questioned at what point is there the recognition of where Fife is located and what kind of community it can or can't be. Fife is an urban area, which is difficult for some people to accept. The reality is to consider the City's location. Commissioner Call suggested there should be some control over what occurs within the City's boundary. The City has worked to acquire park land for the future and it may be necessary to purchase more land to accommodate buffers.

Director Smith commented on the work underway by the City Attorney to limit the amount of noise from back up alarms on trucks. Recommendations will be brought to the Council with the understanding that there is also a safety factor involved.

Commissioner Call mentioned the possibility of buying development rights in certain areas. Director Smith replied it's a costly undertaking and requires a willing seller. Transfer of Development Rights is not an option for Fife as an urbanized area.

Councilmember Godwin suggested looking at Fife's history to understand Fife today. Other communities do not experience the same conflicts. Most other communities are planned. He suggested greed prevailed and development was allowed to go unchecked. The Council is now faced with the task of undoing the damage. Owning a home in Fife subjects the property owner to some extent of industrial noise, dust, or odors. He said he doesn't believe the situation is fixable at this point.

Councilmember Hull said he understands the importance of the past and history. However, it's not possible to change the past. What is important is providing the information to citizens so they can be informed about impacts when purchasing property in the City.

Councilmember Brooks suggested the importance of looking at the big issues. Part of the issue is perception. The City has some issues and in hindsight can likely say it wasn't the best decision. He said he agrees with much of the comments. There is a point in time when a person

moving into a residential dwelling must take responsibility for their actions. As a City, efforts are underway to mitigate past decisions but that there are still pockets of residents throughout the City that the City can still work on improving their quality of life. He said he likes the concept of commercial along 70<sup>th</sup> Avenue as well as addressing the area in the south part of town. There are areas that the City can enhance the quality of life.

*Commissioner Garchow arrived.*

Mayor Johnson commented that Fife is unique with its parks and open areas. He expressed concerns about the Firwood neighborhood, which is a nice neighborhood. However, current zoning within that area will result in residents losing pride in ownership leading to a decline in property values. He suggested focusing on the area. The noise ordinance will be a factor with the mix of industrial uses. The Wills neighborhood has a great deal of remodeling occurring and steps should be taken to protect those types of neighborhoods.

Councilmember de Booy said the Council has done a great deal of work. She would like to see residential move towards the south end of the City. Industrial is along 70<sup>th</sup> and is where it should remain. She asked how farmland is classified. Director Smith replied that agriculture is considered a low intensity use and is allowed in all zoning districts.

Director Smith said it appears there is interest in the southeast corner.

Mayor Johnson said he would like to see the areas west of 70<sup>th</sup> and south of American Fast Freight transition to residential uses.

Councilmember Cerqui asked about the impact to the tax base when property is rezoned. City Manager Worthington advised that at the densities allowed for residential, the City would benefit from residential. However, the cost of service is higher and the net result in revenue is less. Warehouses do not contribute much to the City's tax base. Many of the properties look like warehouses but are actually light manufacturing with a relatively high property value for tax purposes as well as a having a job base.

City Manager Worthington said there appears to be potential conflicts and opportunities along 70<sup>th</sup>, north of Murray's, and north of 48<sup>th</sup> (undeveloped lots).

City Manager Worthington suggested the City needs to come to grips with the fact that single family residential is not the desired use for all areas of the City and that there are some limits. Including appropriate buffers

through zoning can help.

Director Smith advised that staff can continue working on zoning based on feedback from the Council and the Commission.

Councilmember Roscoe expressed appreciation for the Commission's work.

Chair Albertson acknowledged the work of Planner Pasinetti.

Commissioner Garchow commented on the extension of SR 167 and that the highest and best use along that corridor is likely commercial in terms of sales tax revenue and property tax revenue. Second behind commercial is industrial. This is a perfect time for developing ideas for making changes. He commented on the work the City has done in developing trails and bike lanes. The concept of relocating Murray's is a good one for redeveloping the area as single family and multi-family.

**RECESS:**

**The meeting was recessed from 8:30 p.m. to 8:50 p.m.**

**Sustainability**

City Manager Worthington reported each January the City Council begins the process of establishing goals for the next year. During this year's planning retreat, there was interest in sustainability. Sustainability has multiple meanings and definitions. City Manager Worthington referred to information provided to the Council from the cities of Portland and Olympia on sustainability. One common definition is meeting the needs of the present while increasing the availability of future generations to meet their own needs. Some of the key values involve universal responsibility and interconnectiveness of items.

Mayor Johnson said sustainability is a new goal for City Council which factored in discussions pertaining to the creek and a holistic approach to stormwater. He referred to the City of Olympia's approach to sustainability and reviewed a list of sustainable actions the City of Olympia is pursuing for increasing sustainability within city government and community:

- Work with other agencies to restore Budd Inlet
- Use porous pavement to minimize stormwater runoff
- Convert city vehicles to biodiesel/electric cars
- Purchase green power for city utilities
- Work towards zero waste through recycling
- Promoting tree planting and preservation
- Provide grants to neighborhoods for sustainability projects
- Focus for a walkable community

Commissioner Call said he would like the Council to pursue sustainability in purchasing of products and services. The City's efforts provide a good example to the community. Sustainable efforts will cost more in the future if steps are not taken today.

Councilmember Roscoe shared information she discovered on the internet when researching crime on trails. She found a document on sustainability. She suggested working very carefully with the Planning Commission to not sugar coat the issue or insist that all policies must be examined from a sustainability standpoint. She cautioned about the importance of pursuing sustainability in city government through a meaningful way that produces results rather than glorifying it as a new tag line.

Mayor Johnson referred to Olympia's development of a matrix that uses a red light, green light approach to sustainability.

Chair Albertson suggested another important factor is awareness of what other communities are doing and awareness of what's available. The City needs to be realistic and utilize sustainability as a good business practice.

City Manager Worthington said there is much information on the web as well as several cities that are leading the effort on sustainability. Most of the information is hosted on their municipal website. He noted the City of Austin, Texas has reduced its carbon footprint over a 10-year period.

Chair Albertson suggested identifying certain areas and establishing a goal to work towards accomplishing the goal.

Councilmember de Booy said "sustainability" is a catch phrase and it even could be interpreted as "learning, consciousness, and lasting." She suggested designating certain areas and then tracking progress. The Council could develop a plan with several goals to achieve. The City should be specific and let the community know where the goals were achieved

Commissioner Call suggested requiring the use of pervious materials. As more municipalities use the material, costs will begin to decrease.

Councilmember Roscoe reported Tacoma Power pursued a customer approach for conservation of power resulting in the layoff of some employees because the program was so successful.

Commissioner Garchow suggested considering the installation of electrical charging stations for vehicles. There will be a need for that in

the future.

Councilmember Hull said tax incentives will prompt people to find ways to conserve and practice sustainability. However, in some subdivisions, bylaws and homeowner associations prohibits green practices.

Councilmember Godwin commented on an acquaintance who lives in Tacoma and strived to convert his home to green practices including solar power. The City has cited him for violation of the zoning code. It's important to ensure the City adopts codes supporting sustainability practices.

Chair Albertson said it's important to place a value on things that didn't have value before.

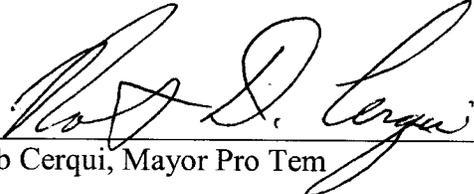
Commissioner Garchow suggested including information about sustainability in customer utility bills.

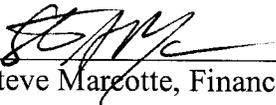
Commissioners and the Council reviewed information from Portland and Olympia on sustainability. Mayor Johnson referred to the Council's draft statement on sustainability for the City.

City Manager Worthington said it's important to have a shared understanding of what sustainability means to the City and what values are important to the City. The information will be helpful to the directors to begin crafting programs supporting sustainability efforts and values. The next opportunity for discussion is scheduled at the Council's June budget retreat.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**With there being no further business, Mayor Johnson adjourned the joint meeting at 9:30 p.m.**

  
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Rob Cerqui, Mayor Pro Tem

  
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Steve Marcotte, Finance Director