

MINUTES

PLANNING COMMISSION

Hybrid Meeting – In Person and Virtual

City Council Chambers: 321 E 5th Street, Port Angeles, Washington 98362

February 22, 2023 at 6:00 P.M.

REGULAR MEETING

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Stanley opened the regular meeting at 6:06 P.M.

ROLL CALL

Commissioners Present: Benjamin Stanley (*Chair*)
Andrew Schwab (*Vice Chair*)
Richie Ahuja
Tammy Dziadek
James Taylor
Colin Young

Commissioners Absent: Marolee Smith – excused

City Staff Present: Patrick Bartholick (*Development Services Specialist*)
Ben Braudrick (*Senior Planner*)
Chris Cowgill (*Assistant City Attorney*)
Holden Fleming (*Housing Coordinator*)
Calvin Goings (*Assistant City Manager*)
Norman Gollub (*Interim Director of Community and Economic Development*)
Mike Sanders (*Fire Marshal*)
Zach Trevino (*Assistant Planner*)
Eric Walrath (*Engineering Project Supervisor*)

Public Present: Neva Anderson, USCG Commander Roger Barr, Katie Blöse, D. Carson, Chelsea, Chris, Beau Clark, Katie Connors, Lincoln Erickson, Frank McPhee, Jim Haguewood, Keith Halsey, Gilliam, Joey Gamino, Kurt Hansen, Abraham Hedlin, Kelly Johnson, Peter Johnson, Brian M., Julie Maron, Don Nivens, Magdalena Pendergrass, Peter, Annie O'Rourke, John Ralston, Brian Reid, Angie Robar, Betsy Robbins, Carolyn Wait, Colby Wait. Other individuals were present in the publicly accessible room without having signed in.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair Stanley opened the meeting to general public comment.

No comments were provided during the general public comment period.

Chair Stanley closed the meeting to general public comment.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Young moved to approve the minutes from the February 8, 2023 special meeting and the February 8, 2023 regular meeting of the Planning Commission. The motion was seconded and passed by unanimous consent (6-0).

CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARING

1. Pursuing Housing for All – Title 17 Port Angeles Municipal Code (PAMC) Amendment Process (PZ 23-01)

Chair Stanley introduced the item, noting that it is a continuation of a public hearing that began on February 8, 2023 to discuss proposed Title 17 PAMC amendments. He explained that the amendments are meant to increase housing supply by allowing for four units on one 7,000 square foot lot in the R7 zone, offer greater flexibility for the construction of infill middle housing, and provide a regulatory pathway for temporary and emergency housing. He noted that the Commission may make a recommendation to the City Council following the public hearing.

Planners Braudrick and Fleming introduced the item by providing an overview of changes that have been incorporated into the draft code amendments since the public hearing began. Changes were reviewed using a slide show presentation that summarized the addendum to the PZ 23-01 staff report. Staff provided an explanation of each section of Title 17 PAMC to which changes were made to ensure that the Commission understood how staff responded to public and Commission input received on February 8, 2023.

The presentation ended with staff providing recommendations that the Planning Commission may consider adopting as a motion.

Chair Stanley opened the public hearing.

The following individuals provided comment:

- **Commander Roger Barr** explained that the United States Coast Guard is facing challenges securing housing for local service members. He provided details illustrating the magnitude of the current crisis. A housing market survey and analysis was conducted which determined that there is a community housing shortfall of 139 units for all members. Projections show that in 2027 the number of units available to service members will still fall short of need. Over one-third of service members are paying for housing above what their housing allowance covers. Additionally, temporary lodging expense for service members is typically only for 10 days, but the local base was granted an extension to allow members to stay in a hotel for up to 60 days while they look for housing, since affordable housing is the biggest challenge facing the base in establishing new service personnel locally.
- **Brian M.** stated that Commissioner Schwab was qualified for the City Council position that was recently vacant.
- **Pete Johnson**, Human Resources Manager for McKinley Paper Company, explained that the company has grown since 2019 and now has about 200 employees. The local housing situation makes it difficult for prospective employees to find housing, which harms the company's ability to provide affordable housing for entry-level employees. He considers housing the top priority issue faced by the local economy.
- **Christeal Milburn**, a Port Angeles homeowner, explained that she observes most of her friends in their 20s through 40s struggling to find housing in Port Angeles. Most people find housing through friends and families. She appreciates the effort to make the PAMC more flexible.

- **Abraham Hedlin**, a local homeowner and business owner, is interested in subdividing his property and constructing multi-family housing that would be allowed by the proposed amendments. He explained that five units on a single lot would cause him to be ineligible for residential financing, so he is in favor of the proposed amendments that would allow him to pursue an alley-street subdivision.
- **Beau Clark**, a local housing provider, supports the proposed changes because they would ease the provision of housing by facilitating an increase in density.
- **John Ralston** supports the proposed changes as a way to provide additional affordable housing units. Increasing density will still be subject to dimensional and design standards.
- **Julie Maron** is hoping that accessory dwelling units will be subject to restrictions that will prevent them from being converted to short-term rentals. **Chair Stanley** responded to state that the Commission is not considering restrictions on short-term rentals at this time.
- **Katie Blöse** expressed that upon moving to Port Angeles in 2019, she found housing to be unaffordable, forcing her family to live in a hotel until an ADU became available. She identified lack of access to affordable housing and general unaffordability as two main barriers for medical professionals. She expressed support for the proposed amendments, which would increase options and help solve the housing crisis.
- **Colby Wait** noted that some of his concerns have been alleviated by attending the meeting. He is concerned about housing supply and expressed a need for affordable housing. He explained that new units need to be made available to local workers instead of used as short-term rentals. He expressed the importance of ensuring that temporary housing does not become permanent.
- **Don Nivens** explained that the solution to Port Angeles' housing problems must be local, as investors from elsewhere are not coming. He believes the proposed code amendments are a step toward addressing the housing shortage. Allowing multi-family will enable developers to feasibly construct high-quality units.
- **Carolyn Wait** stated that it is unclear whether we are trying to provide affordable housing or extremely low income or no income housing. She explained that alley access lots throughout the City may diminish quality of life for residents. The City should better utilize underutilized land for infill instead of promoting RV occupancy.
- **Keith Halsey**, local homeowner and ADU resident, explained that his short subdivision process with the City is taking almost a year. He expressed support for the proposed amendments as creating potential for growth.
- **Joey Gamino** supports the proposal, as he has many friends who are struggling to find housing. He has concerns about how the proposal will be implemented but is in favor of affordable housing.
- **Chelsea Winfield** was unable to live in Port Angeles for a time due to safety. It took her one year to find a rental when she eventually moved to the City. She explained that managing short-term rentals has enabled her to continue living in her home.
- **Lincoln Erickson**, local landlord, is in support of the proposed changes. He noted that bottlenecks limiting development include the length of time it takes to obtain engineered plans and the complexity of the development process.
- **Katie Connors**, Clallam County employee, has been unable to purchase a house and noted that her income is moderate. She asked how lower-income workers can afford housing in the current market. She advocated for walkability and bicycle use in addition to the proposed code amendments.
- **Neva Anderson** advocated for open space and the maintenance of the local environment. She stated that open space outside the City could be developed as an alternative to increasing density within the City.
- **Frank McPhee** noted that most public comments submitted during this process have pertained to topics other than housing. City work should be restricted to sewer, streets, and

safety. High interest rates and cost of materials and labor cause affordable housing to be difficult to construct even with the proposed code amendments. He stated that it is wrong to scatter smaller units throughout single-household neighborhoods.

- **Steve Luxton** noted that the Commission has the choice between walkable neighborhoods or suburban sprawl and a green future or pollution. He asked whether the American system is working for people and noted that local workers need help. He noted that the proposed amendments do not benefit corporate landowners exclusively and advocated for increased density as a way to maximize the efficient use of infrastructure.

Chair Stanley officially closed the public hearing.

Following public comment, the Commission continued their discussion of the proposed draft code amendments. Commissioners provided suggestions and observations regarding the draft code. The Commission's discussion focused on several aspects of Title 17 PAMC that had been mentioned during the public hearing, including whether the proposed temporary housing standards should be removed from the draft code and considered at a later time.

Commissioner Young motioned to strike the proposed changes to Section 17.96.075 – Temporary Use Permits from Municipal Code Amendment No. 23-01. The motion was seconded and failed (2-4) through a roll call vote, with Commissioners Taylor and Young voting in favor.

Vice Chair Schwab motioned to recommend the approval of Municipal Code Amendment No. 23-01 to City Council as written including any minor changes required to maintain consistency with all titles and chapters of the Port Angeles Municipal Code, along with the list of future recommendations for Municipal Code changes as identified in Appendix E of the staff report. The motion was seconded and passed (6-0) through a roll call vote.

STAFF UPDATES

City staff provided the following updates to the Commission:

- **Planner Braudrick** thanked the Planning Commission for the time they have dedicated to considering Municipal Code Amendment No. 23-01, noting that further code amendment proposals are forthcoming based on identified City Council priorities.
- **Planner Braudrick** stated that the first Planning Commission meeting in March may be cancelled to allow the Planning Commission to take a break.
- **Planner Braudrick** explained that staff is working on climate resiliency planning and will be presenting new information to the Planning Commission in April and May about how climate resiliency will be integrated into the Comprehensive Plan.
- **Planner Braudrick** suggested that the Planning Commission select someone to represent the Commission at the City Council meeting on March 7, 2023 at 6:30 PM and provide comment about Municipal Code Amendment No. 23-01. The Commission discussed who should serve as the representative. **Vice Chair Schwab motioned that Chair Stanley be designated to represent the Planning Commission during the comment period at the next City Council meeting. The motion was seconded and passed 5-0-1 through a consent vote, with Chair Stanley recused.**

REPORTS OF COMMISSION MEMBERS

- **Commissioner Ahuja** requested that staff provide general information about how the City handles finance at an upcoming meeting, with a focus on how debt is structured in the City.

Director Gollub confirmed that staff could collaborate with the City Finance Department to prepare information about this topic.

- **Commissioner Taylor** announced that he had attended the Sequim Home Show and presented Municipal Code Amendment No. 23-01 to all the builders at the event. **Planner Braudrick** responded by noting that City staff will be attending the Port Angeles Home Show on March 18 and 19, 2023.
- **Commissioner Dziadek** reported that Fayetteville, Arkansas and Burlington, Vermont became among the first cities in the country to have eliminated minimum parking requirements.
- **Commissioner Young** confirmed that he had been reappointed to the Planning Commission for another full term on February 21, 2023.

ADJOURNMENT

Vice Chair Schwab moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously (6-0).

The meeting adjourned at 8:53 P.M.

Zach Trevino, Secretary

Ben Stanley, Chair

MINUTES PREPARED BY: Zach Trevino, Secretary