

Planning Commission Regular Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, September 16, 2015
7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
Town Hall Meeting Room

Note: The Action Minutes represent a summary of presentations given and actions taken. For a more detailed record, the audio recording of the meeting can be accessed through the City Clerk's Office, City of University Place. Contact Emy Genetia at (253) 460-2511.

1. **Call to Order (7:02)** Chair Quisenberry called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

2. **Roll Call (7:02)**

Planning Commission Members Present

Mr. Cliff Quisenberry – Chair
Mr. Frank Boykin – Co Vice Chair
Mr. Steve Smith – Co Vice Chair
Mr. Chris Barrett
Mr. Diogenes Xenos
Mr. Morry Stafford
Mr. Tony Paulson

Planning Commission Members Absent

Staff Present

Jeff Boers, Principal Planner
Becky Metcalf, Project Assistant

3. **Approval of Minutes (7:03)**

MOTION: by Commissioner Xenos and seconded by Commissioner Boykin to approve the minutes of September 2, 2015 as submitted. Motion passed.

4. **Public Comment (7:03)**

There being no public comment on any item not appearing on the agenda for this evening's meeting, Chair Quisenberry stated the Public Comment section of the meeting was closed.

5. **Discussion: Tree Retention Code Amendments (7:03)**

Principal Planner Boers provided background on and summary of this item. Additional information has been received from the City of Portland following the distribution of the agenda packet, and that information has been summarized in a memo that was distributed to the Commission at tonight's meeting. The memo is included with the minutes as Attachment 1.

Commission discussion and comments included:

- Consider looking at total site area and percentages, rather than the artificial divisions of perimeter and interior trees.

- It would be difficult to determine percentage of tree canopy when there are various sizes of trees included in the canopy, as the smaller, unregulated, trees would be excluded before determining the area of the canopy.
- If Option 4 on page 3 is used, consider eliminating the individual trees provision and only require retention of a percentage of the canopy. It may be helpful to require that nuisance trees are removed first before determining the canopy.

There was a discussion regarding the difference between nuisance and invasive trees. Invasive trees come from outside of the region and take over. Nuisance trees are troublesome for various reasons.

Commission discussion and comments included:

- Portland focuses more on invasive trees, and have a very poorly and seldom used list of nuisance trees.
- Specify that invasive and nuisance trees are not considered trees for the purposes of regulation. Both should also be defined.
- Staff will request more information and clarification from Portland as far as administration of their provisions.
- Does allowing the removal of 4 trees per year cause problems for Portland? If not, Commissioner Stafford would be supportive of a similar limit in University Place.
- Maintaining neighborhood character is a reason for tree retention policies. We have nothing regarding neighborhood character in our policy. Ask Portland how the consideration of neighborhood character works for them.
- Where is the wildfire hazard zone in Portland? The Chambers Creek canyon seems to have the characteristics to be identified as a wildfire hazard zone.
- Commission consensus is Options 1 through 3 on page three of the 9/16/15 memo should be included in the City's tree retention policy.
- Discussion followed regarding Option 4. It was suggested that the option be reworded to specify a canopy of "regulated trees". Also, delete the phrase that talks about "75% of the trees". Increase the percentage of the tree canopy to be retained from 30% to 35%.
- Add an Option 5 that is just the retention of a specific number of trees.

Discussion then moved to the draft of Tree Retention Code Amendments.

Commission discussion and comments included:

- The tree topping definition is given from the viewpoint of a professional arborist. Staff will develop a more understandable definition to replace the technical one given here.
- Add a table of nuisance trees that can be added to over time.
- Discussion followed as to whether trees in public right of way and city property should come under these policies. The City should set an example.
- How controversial is Portland's removal allowance of three trees per year?
- How is enforcement handled? An honor system is assumed, and enforcement is mainly complaint-based.
- The message needs to be forwarded to Council that all of this is meaningless without enforcement.
- Much of the public does not realize that there are tree retention guides.
- Commission consensus is to retain the significant tree definition and comments, but do not address further. Identify this issue to the City Council.

6. Staff Comments (8: 59)

None.

7. Commission and Liaison Comments (8:59)

None.

8. Adjourn

MOTION: by Commissioner Xenos, seconded by Commissioner Barrett to adjourn the meeting. Motion to adjourn was approved unanimously. (8:59)

Submitted by:

Becky Metcalf, Project Assistant
Community and Economic Development

Approved as submitted: October 7, 2015