

**CITY OF BLAINE
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
Thursday, December 8, 2016
7:00 PM
Van Tabb - Chair**

A. CALL TO ORDER: 7:00 PM

B. ROLL CALL:

PRESENT: Calvin Armerding, Ken Ely, Van Tabb, Richard May, Kevin Owens, Sue Sturgill

ABSENT: John LeBrun

STAFF: Community Development Director, Michael Jones
Community Planner II, Alex Wenger
Community Planner I, Madeline Ottley

Commissioner LeBrun asked to be excused prior to the December 8, 2016 Planning Commission meeting.

C. AUDIENCE COMMENTS: None

D. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

1. Wharf District Master Plan Update – Comprehensive Plan Amendment

MOTION BY COMMISSIONER ARMERDING, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER ELY TO CLOSE SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN TESTIMONY, FAILED (1-4-1, ARMERDING ABSTAINED).

Mr. Wenger presented photos submitted by Sundance Yachts of their Clubhouse facility in Portland.

Commissioner Armerding highlighted three issues in relation to the proposed amendment which includes impact to views, trust in the Port of Bellingham's intentions, and if the amendment is approved the type of development which may occur.

The Commission then discussed the proposed amendment and possible alternatives to the proposed amendment.

Commissioner Ely questioned if there is an alternative for allowing Sundance Yachts to develop their facility if this amendment is denied.

Mr. Wenger responded, stating that if Sundance Yachts were to apply under the existing Wharf District Master plan the applicant would be required to meet the criteria for a

Variance Permit; if they wanted to exceed the allowable height limit. Mr. Wenger added that meeting the criteria for this proposal would be difficult.

Mr. Wenger also highlighted the issue of marine related uses within Mariner Village, which currently is not allowed within Mariner Village. For these reasons the proposed amendment has been made.

The Commission further discussed the proposed amendment.

Commissioner Ely stressed that no land use development application has been made in regards to the Sundance Yachts.

Commissioner May noted that the proposed amendment could be approved with restrictive conditions to prevent potential negative impacts.

Sylvia Goodwin, Applicant and Port of Bellingham Planning Director – Ms. Goodwin stated that The Port and Sundance Yachts has signed an 80-year lease agreement, with the stipulation that Sundance Yachts must expand its facility or the lease can be terminated.

Commissioners Owens inquired about the other types of uses that would be allowed in the amendment is approved.

Mr. Jones responded, stating a wide range of uses could be allowed like a fish processing or ship building facility, but all uses would be required to be water or boat related. Mr. Jones also notes that the allowable use language could be amended, for example non-industrial marine related uses.

Mr. Wenger then presented the supplemental staff report, clarifying information regarding the proposed amendment and alternatives based on the record developed at the December 1, 2016 public hearing.

Mr. Wenger highlighted four alternatives to the original proposed amendment.

The first alternative is to recommend relocation of the proposed development to the Shipyard Industrial Park and Dakota Commons.

The second amendment is to recommend relocation of the proposed development to the west side of Milhollin Drive, where the web lockers are located.

The third alternative is to restrict marine-related uses to the east side of Milhollin Drive require a commercial component to any new marine-related development, or further amend the approval language to restrict use.

The fourth alternative is to allow marine-related uses, condition additional uses in relation to the marine-related use and adjust height limits to shift the tallest buildings adjacent to the railroad tracks and lower height limit next to Milhollin Drive.

The Commission then discussed the possible alternatives and benefits to the community.

Commissioner Owens inquired about how the City of Blaine Economic Initiative relates to this proposal.

Mr. Jones responded, stating that Economic Initiative is more focused on economic development through investment in public infrastructure and capital facilities, compared to private investment.

Commissioner Owens stated that marine related uses are not incompatible with commercial and other uses, and provided the example of Portland Maine and San Francisco.

Commissioner Sturgill expressed her concern with the proposed amendment and how the original concept of the urban village may be affected.

Commissioner Armerding suggested that the use only change on the east side of Milhollin Drive.

MOTION BY COMMISSIONER ARMERDING, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER OWENS TO AMEND THE APPLICATION TO ALLOW NON-INDUSTRIAL MARINE RELATED USES ON THE EAST SIDE OF MILHOLLIN DRIVE WITHIN PLANNING AREA THREE OF THE WHARF DISTRICT MASTER PLAN, APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY (6-0).

Commissioner Armerding asked Sundance Yachts to speak to the necessity of a 55-foot high building for their proposed building expansion.

Mr. Rick Buck of Sundance Yachts – Mr. Buck stated that the idea is to create an L shape building abutting Marine Drive and Milhollin Drive, with their parking facility located within the area allowing for a maximum height of 25 feet. Mr. Buck also stated that the building needs to be 55 feet high in order for the business model to work.

The Commission had a discussion with the Applicant and Sundance Yachts about possible alternatives to the proposal, which resulted in creation of Exhibit X.

MOTION BY COMMISSIONER ARMERDING, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER ELY, TO MODIFY THE APPLICATION TO REFLECT MAXIMUM ALLOWABLE HEIGHTS AS REFLECTED IN EXHIBIT X, APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY (6-0).

MOTION BY COMMISSIONER ARMERDING, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER MAY TO LOWER MAXIMUM ALLOWABLE HEIGHT LIMIT ON THE WEST SIDE OF MILHOLLIN DRIVE TO 25 FEET, AS REFLECTED IN EXHIBIT X, APPROVED (5-0-1, OWENS ABSTAINED).

MOTION BY COMMISSIONER MAY, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER ARMERDING, TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF THE PROPOSED COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENT, AS AMENDMENT, APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY (6-0).


The Commission directed staff come back with information regarding design standards in relation to development within Planning Area 3 of the Wharf District Master Plan.

E. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS: None

G. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

MOTION BY COMMISSIONER MAY, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER ARMERDING TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF DECEMBER 1, 2016, APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY(6-0).

H. ADJOURNMENT 9:28 PM.



Van Tabb, Chair
Calvin Armerding



Michael Jones, Staff

Planning Commission minutes of December 8, 2016, to be approved at the January 12, 2017 Planning Commission meeting.