

CITY OF BELLEVUE  
BELLEVUE PLANNING COMMISSION  
MEETING MINUTES

May 13, 2015  
6:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall  
City Council Conference Room 1E-113

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chair Laing, Commissioners Carlson, Hamlin, Hilhorst, Tebelius, deVadoss

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Commissioner Walter

STAFF PRESENT: Paul Inghram, Nicholas Matz, Department of Planning and Community Development

GUEST SPEAKERS: None

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:40 p.m. by Chair Laing who presided.

2. ROLL CALL

Upon the call of the roll, all Commissioners were present with the exception of Commissioner Hilhorst, who arrived at 6:59 p.m., and Commissioner Walter, who was excused. Liaison Councilmember Stokes was unable to attend.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT – None

4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion to approve the agenda was made by Commissioner Carlson. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Hamlin and it carried unanimously.

5. COMMUNICATIONS FROM CITY COUNCIL, COMMUNITY COUNCILS, BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS – None

6. STAFF REPORTS

Chair Laing stated that Commissioners Hamlin and Tebelius, whose terms were coming to an end, have been instrumental in some of the city's most significant planning efforts in recent years. He said Commissioner Hamlin had provided keen insight and thoughtful direction on a range of planning efforts over the course of the last eight years, during which time he also served on the Eastgate/I-90 citizen advisory committee. Commissioner Tebelius served as chair of the Planning Commission in 2013 and 2014 and worked on issues such as the Shoreline Master Program and the Comprehensive Plan update. During the respective terms of the two Commissioners they both did a great deal to reach out to the public to get their perspectives and went so far as to hold Commission meetings away from City Hall. In addition to the Shoreline

Master Program and updating the Comprehensive Plan, both Commissioners worked on the plan amendments for the Eastgate/I-90 project; the single family room rentals code amendment; the recreational marijuana and medical cannabis code amendments; the Camp and Conference Center code amendment; the Eastgate auto sales code amendment; the Horizon View rezone; and a host of other code amendments.

Commissioner Tebelius said what made her tenure on the Commission interesting was the degree to which there was agreement around the table. She said she learned from Commissioner Hamlin a great deal and found great pleasure in serving on the Commission.

Commissioner Carlson commented that Commissioners Hamlin and Tebelius always came to meetings well prepared and informed. He said he also learned a lot from both.

Commissioner deVadoss said he learned from Commissioner Tebelius to do his homework before the Commission meetings from how high she set the bar. He also acknowledged Commissioner Hamlin for his commitment to stand up for what he believed in.

Chair Laing said one of his favorite experiences was working with Commissioner Hamlin on difficult issues having to do with the Shoreline Master Program. He said that experience highlighted Commissioner Hamlin's thought process. Commissioner Hamlin at times found himself taking a minority position, but in every instance his reasons for doing so were clearly thought out and explained.

Chair Laing said that Commissioner Tebelius always set a high bar in being prepared for meetings. Commissioner Tebelius is excellent at getting people to think hard about their own positions.

Comprehensive Planning Manager Paul Inghram said he had enjoyed his time working with both Commissioners Hamlin and Tebelius. He said he appreciated both for coming to the table and clearly expressing their respective opinions.

Senior Planner Nicholas Matz voiced his appreciation for the unique viewpoints both Commissioners Hamlin and Tebelius brought to the table.

Mr. Inghram reported that progress is being made by the Council on some key items. The Comprehensive Plan update is moving forward toward the deadline date of June 30.

At its meeting on May 18 the Council is slated to pass the Shoreline Master Program to the Department of Ecology. At that same meeting the Council will be working on downtown livability, following which the issue will be on the Commission's plate.

## 7. PUBLIC HEARING

### A. St. Luke's Lutheran Church Annual Comprehensive Plan Amendment - Final Review

A motion to open the public hearing was made by Commissioner Tebelius. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Carlson and the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Matz briefly reviewed the materials included in the Commission packets and the two-part Comprehensive Plan amendment process.

Mr. Matz said the proposed St. Luke's amendment involves a 4.3-acre site that is currently designed Single Family-Medium. The request is for a map change to Multifamily-Medium. The applicant's stated purpose is to increase opportunities for affordable housing to serve and practice inclusivity for all people, and to seek partnerships to encourage and build economic diversity. The applicant is working with Imagine Housing, a non-profit organization that develops affordable housing on the Eastside, to construct multifamily housing on the church campus.

The recommendation of staff is to approve the proposed amendment. The amendment is consistent with the goals and plans of the city and is directly responsive to Comprehensive Plan policy implementing infill development. Religious institutions are evolving uses in communities and neighborhoods. Their evolving missions now include such things as affordable housing and other social service and community uses that have not previously been associated with the primary use. Under the city's policy framework, changes to the primary use must be reviewed to determine how well the new focus will mesh with the surrounding land uses.

Commissioner Tebelius asked if there is a limit to what a religious institution can propose for their sites. Mr. Matz answered that the site-specific Comprehensive Plan amendment process allows for looking at the property in the larger context while solving the issues for the particular property. There is policy direction to treat the infill development like any other infill development in a residential neighborhood.

Continuing, Mr. Matz said the stated purpose and intent for the Comprehensive Plan amendment is consistent with general policies for site-specifics. The same is true for the land use policies. The proposed redevelopment will maintain compatible use and design; reduces the regional consumption of undeveloped land; and provides for a broad range of housing choice. The proposal meets the interests and changed needs of the entire city. The process has been appropriate for each of the times religious institutions have sought a land use role in providing affordable housing.

In the opinion of the staff, the proposal meets the decision criterion for addressing significantly changed conditions since the last time the Comprehensive Plan map or text was addressed. The core issue is that there has been a transition and evolution of the community-based missions of religious institutions that has not been anticipated by the Comprehensive Plan. City policy has just begun to look at the roles of what are essentially non-traditional providers.

Staff believes the site is suitable for development in general conformance with adjacent land uses and the surrounding development pattern. There is a potential for increasing PM peak trips, but that increase would occur whether the site is used as a church plus multifamily or entirely for multifamily housing, and the increase would not fail the concurrency test.

There are critical areas on the eastern side of the site but as proposed there would be no encroachment that would compromise the area.

The proposal demonstrates a public benefit enhancing the public health, safety and welfare of the city by addressing the need for affordable housing.

Pastor Red Birchfield, interim pastor for St. Luke's Lutheran Church, said the church is committed to addressing homelessness and to being a good partner in the neighborhood. The church hosts Sophia Way, a homeless shelter for women. There is a changing role for churches

in the community beyond providing handouts and support, and St. Luke's wants to be part of the solution to homelessness. The church believes it has both an opportunity and a responsibility to help build up the community common good.

Ms. Cybil Glasby, director of housing development for Imagine Housing, asked the Commission to recommend approval of the Comprehensive Plan amendment for St. Luke's Lutheran Church. She said the church reached out to Imagine Housing about a year ago with a desire to do more to benefit the community. The identified goals were to increase the opportunity for affordable housing, to serve and practice inclusivity for all people, and to seek partnerships to encourage and build diversity. At the time Imagine Housing, St. Luke's and SMR Architects conducted a feasibility study to ensure that the church's site could accommodate affordable housing without encroaching on environmentally critical areas. The study identified the existing parking lot at the rear of the church as capable of accommodating between 59 and 60 apartment units. The development of affordable housing is consistent with several Comprehensive Plan policies.

Mr. Demian Minjarez with SMR Architects emphasized that the proposal is compatible with the surrounding built environment in line with policy LU-9. Policy S-NB-12 calls for providing housing opportunities for a broader cross section of the community, which the proposal does. A number of other Comprehensive Plan policies are directly addressed by the proposal. St. Margaret's church went through a very similar process in 2007 with a similar proposal. The Commissioners were shown a map of the St. Luke's site on which the proposed building site was indicated. The proposal addresses a growing need for affordable housing and the role non-traditional providers can play.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Hamlin, Mr. Minjarez said the church footprint will change and result in making it more efficient. The church currently has a lower level that is separate from the church. What is currently a community room will become an open space enclosed courtyard, and all program space for the church will surround it.

Commissioner Hilhorst observed that Imagine Housing recently was involved in a similar project in Kirkland. She asked if concerns were voiced in regard to that project about increased traffic, and asked what the projections are for the number of residents for the St. Luke's project that will have their own cars. Ms. Glasby said the anticipation is that there will be between a half and three-quarter parking space for every apartment. Everyone was amazed to see how many people living in the project in Kirkland chose to get rid of their cars. That project has 58 units and 44 parking spaces, but with the units fully leased only 38 of the spaces were reserved; since then, the number of reserved parking spaces has fallen to 33. She said she did not know how many trips per day those 33 cars add to the roadway system.

Commissioner Tebelius asked if it is known where the residents of the Kirkland project work. Ms. Glasby said no study has been done to determine that. It is known that most of the applicants were from Eastside zip codes.

Commissioner Tebelius asked if there is any legal impediment to allowing only local residents or residents with an Eastside zip code to rent the affordable housing units. Ms. Glasby said that restriction likely would run afoul of the Fair Housing Act.

Ms. Glasby said Imagine Housing typically tries to create communities that serve people with a range of incomes. Two-bedroom apartments rent for between \$530 per month and \$1100 per month and are affordable under the federal guidelines to those with household incomes of about

\$21,000 per year at the low end and \$43,000 at the high end.

Commissioner Tebelius said the community has voiced concern over the fact that the proposal has moved ahead on a very fast track, and some have complained they were not notified. She asked what outreach efforts were undertaken. Pastor Birchfield said two public forums were conducted, both of which were announced through direct mail to the neighborhood. Notice was also posted to the church's reader board. The intent has been to be thoughtful and responsible partners in the community by providing vigorous opportunity for people to engage in the conversation.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Tebelius, Pastor Birchfield said the church intends to be part of a larger partner board, one that will involve members of the community, focused on supporting and empowering the residents who will be moving toward stabilizing their lives and becoming full citizens of the community.

Ms. Judy Buckmaster, 746 128th Avenue NE, said she is an employee of the Bellevue School District but was not present speaking for the school district. She said she has been a member of St. Luke's for over 30 years. The Bellevue School District is nationally recognized with all of its high schools ranked very high nationally. The district, however, deals with the same issues all other districts deal with, including homelessness. A February 2014 article in *Crosscut* magazine reported the district's homeless liaison as saying there had been an increase of 26 homeless students over the past year, bringing the total to 157 students. That figure has since risen to 213 children in the district who do not have fixed or affordable housing. The St. Luke's project is an answer to the growing affordable housing problem being faced by the Eastside. Churches and religious groups on the Eastside are stepping out of their comfort zones and out of their buildings in seeking to understand what they can do to make their cities better places to live. The homeless students in the district do not hail from some other place, they are Bellevue children.

Ms. Heather Erickson, 9818 NE 31st Street, said she works as a counselor for the Bellevue School District at Newport High School. She said one family with a student at the high school for some time lived in a car; they have recently found affordable housing at St. Margaret's church. She said the status quo does not yield growth and vibrancy. Bellevue has been willing to take a close look at what it takes to grow and change and stay vibrant, which is something to be proud of. Students are affected significantly when life circumstances outside their control get in the way. Students from middle-income homes whose families have for whatever reason lost their homes experience lowering grades, become withdrawn, experience trouble in social circles. Everyone is called to do what they can do. People have stepped forward and offered homeless families a place to stay in their basements. The district has stepped up to give homeless students food, clothing, school supplies and vouchers. St. Margaret's church stepped up and figured out a way to create some affordable housing. Recently Washington State University stepped outside its comfort zone and accepted a homeless student who did not look good on paper. Everyone can do something. The alternative is watching as families live in their cars on the streets.

Ms. Janet Jelleff, 10620 NE 28th Place, spoke as a member of the Northtowne Neighborhood Association steering committee. She said the concerns of the organization had been submitted to the Commission in writing prior to the public hearing. The group has worked with the Transportation Commission to see a study conducted on Bellevue Way NE because of concerns regarding pedestrian safety. The sidewalks are not in good shape, especially on the east side of Bellevue Way NE. The group is not opposed to the affordable housing project at St. Luke's but is concerned with how fast it is being pushed. The church tried to reach out to the neighborhood

but not everyone was contacted. Many of the letters mailed out by the church went to the occupants of multifamily units who really have no vested interest in the area. Northtowne is an old area with small streets and no sidewalks. A lot of traffic is passing through the neighborhood because of NE 24th Street and that is making it dangerous for the kids who play on the streets after school. More time is needed to delve into the issues and the specific impacts the project could have on the neighborhood.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Carlson, Ms. Jelleff said the concern of the Neighborhood Association is the number of cars that will be going in and out of the complex from Bellevue Way NE. The area is served by bus transit but it is not known if service will need to be increased to accommodate the residents.

Ms. Leslie Scofield with St. Luke's Lutheran Church explained that the process was sped up in order to accommodate the schedule for updating the Comprehensive Plan. She said the intent of the church was to make sure that all living in the area received notice of the proposed action, and any who were missed were missed inadvertently. The mailing list was provided by the city and included all addresses within 500 feet of the church property. At the first meeting with the public, only 13 persons showed up even though some 500 letters were sent out; only six showed up to the second meeting. The conclusion reached was that there was little interest or concern on the part of those living closest to the church. Once the affordable housing project is completed, Imagine Housing and St. Luke's will operate separately.

A motion to close the public hearing was made by Commissioner Tebelius. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Hilhorst and the motion carried unanimously.

#### B. Public Storage Annual Comprehensive Plan Amendment - Final Review

Motion to open the public hearing was made by Commissioner Tebelius. Second was by Commissioner Hilhorst and the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Matz said the proposal for the 2.9-acre site on 118th Avenue SE contemplates amending the map designation from Office Limited Business (OLB) to Light Industrial (LI). The current use on the site is a storage service and the applicant's stated purpose is to reconcile the existing zoning designation, which causes the existing use to be nonconforming, with the current and long-term future use of the site, allowing the property owner to invest capital in aesthetic and capital improvements to the building and site, decreasing impacts on Mercer Slough. The site is situated in the Richards Valley subarea and is immediately surrounded by a mix of OLB, LI, Office, Multifamily-Medium, and publically designated multifamily and single family. One of the primary issues is that mix of designations are not necessarily aligned with the underlying land uses.

The geographic scope was expanded during the threshold review stage to include similarly situated properties. The expanded scope takes in 7.9 acres and includes the Davy Tree property and a vacant property that previously was used for solid waste disposal and recycling vehicle storage. Following action by the Council to move ahead with the expanded scope, notice was sent to all property owners involved, but no response has been received.

Mr. Matz said the recommendation of the staff was to deny the application and to not amend the Comprehensive Plan.

The property owner and the staff are acutely aware of the issues surrounding the areas. During the threshold review stage the Commission expressed a desire to understand the potential impact on Mercer Slough of the full range of light industrial uses that would be allowed if the amendment were to be approved.

Mr. Matz said Comprehensive Plan amendments involve specific sites, yet it is necessary to look at the broader consequences of what could happen as a result of changing the land use designation for specific sites. He pointed out the Public Storage site on a map, the surrounding designations and uses, and the close proximity of the Mercer Slough wetlands to the various sites.

Chair Laing noted that there are not in fact wetlands on the Public Storage site, and that there is a partially developed property to the south of the geographic scope area.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Carlson, Mr. Matz said the applicant's stated purpose is to redevelop the site under an LI designation because the storage use is permitted by right in the LI district. As an alternative, the city believes the site can be redeveloped under the existing OLB framework, though an additional level of regulatory review would be required in association with the conditional use permit. A Comprehensive Plan amendment creates a different circumstance about what the long-range and appropriate set of land use designations consist of.

The concern the city staff are raising with their recommendation of denial is the LI designation itself and all the uses that are permitted outright under the designation. When it is not possible to quantify the potential uses, concerns are raised with regard to policy and plan consistency with regard to where LI uses are situated. The ability to redevelop the site exists under the OLB framework, though any redevelopment would require moving the development boundary back from the wetland boundary. Because the other sites have the same circumstances associated with them, the same sense of the appropriate long-range view for the area and the consequences for Mercer Slough is in play whether they develop individually or as a whole.

Commissioner Hamlin pointed out that for purposes of the Comprehensive Plan amendment, under the expanded geographic scoping the focus is on all three properties, not just the Public Storage site. The expansion leaves open some unknowns as to what could happen, particularly so given that the other two property owners have not responded. Mr. Matz concurred but pointed out that the concerns of staff are the same for the Public Storage site alone as they are for all three properties.

Commissioner Tebelius voiced the need to have light industrial land in the city of Bellevue. Absent properties with that designation, the city will not have such things as auto repair and maintenance facilities which every city needs. Light industrial land has largely been eliminated from the city. Mr. Matz agreed but said there is policy support for not allowing the designation on the subject properties. The site is not currently designated light industrial even though the existing use is one that is permitted outright in LI. The Richards Valley subarea plan and the Comprehensive Plan suggest that there is something else in mind for the area other than light industrial uses, namely the OLB. Access is lacking to the larger subarea question of where light industrial would be appropriate.

Mr. Matz commented that Public Storage is responding to changes in their business world. Downtown residents desire having nearby convenient and attractive storage facilities. One thing

the city is currently wrestling with is the consequences of redevelopment around light rail stations, and the East Main station redevelopment area is located just north of SE 8th Street close to the subject property. Putting LI on the subject property would foreclose the ability to have a conversation about what would be more appropriate on the subject property, the corridor in which it lies, and the Richards Valley subarea generally.

Mr. Inghram said part of the issue goes to the question of whether or not the full range of LI uses should be allowed on the subject properties given the broader context of the residential communities to the east and west, Mercer Slough and the Environmental Education Center to the south, and the redevelopment area to the north..

Commissioner Tebelius commented that driving through the area it feels totally disconnected, even though on the map the area appears to be very connected.

Mr. Inghram said OLB allows for moderate office buildings, some hotels, and some other related businesses. The storage use can be continued under the designation, though as a nonconforming use.

Mr. Matz reiterated the recommendation of the staff to deny the application. The current use is allowed under the present designation and can be expanded without a Comprehensive Plan amendment. The Richards Valley subarea plan is admittedly long in the tooth but it still poses pertinent questions. The OLB designations occurred in 1981 and continue to be relevant to the intent of the plan. There continues to be an unmet community need in terms of a vision for the portion of the subarea in which the Public Storage site is, but LI is not part of that equation. LI uses are not consistent with the subarea vision; while the subarea talks about a mix of light industrial uses as appropriate in the lower elevations, it also talks about sensitivity to natural constraints, which includes the Mercer Slough. LI would create the potential for impacts that would be incompatible with the Mercer Slough and the surrounding office and residential development that exists. While the site may be suitable for an expanded storage use, the applicant has not demonstrated how site development would accommodate other potential uses. The application does not demonstrate a public benefit necessary to assure the public's health, safety and welfare.

Mr. Mitch Johnson, 10539 NE 25th Street, said there is a specific purpose in mind for how the Public Storage property should be redeveloped, and that is the reason why a Comprehensive Plan amendment has been sought. Part of the reason for not wanting to go through the conditional use permit is the uncertainty of that process. Changing to LI will yield more certainty. The site is fairly narrow. Directly to the south is LI and directly across the street to the east along 118th Avenue SE is LI as well. It is anticipated that with redevelopment will come a requirement for an additional buffer along the western property line to protect the Mercer Slough in line with the 2012 stormwater regulations and SEPA requirements. The intent is to replace the row of drive-up buildings with a three- or four-story climate-controlled building. That would reduce the traffic that goes to the rear of the site, and would produce smaller units which are more popular. The majority of customers currently come from the western neighborhoods and from the downtown and include both residential and commercial interests.

Mr. Greg Kletzly, 1804 Blenheim Drive East, Seattle, explained that the storage business has a capture area of roughly three miles. He said the industry has experienced a lack of zoned land for storage use; that has resulted in very little new supply to keep pace with the current demand. The current facility is both unattractive and obsolete. To meet customer needs, the facility needs



to be brought up to modern standards, and that represents a changed condition.

Mr. Johnson said Public Storage is a large property owner in the city with over eight properties and cumulatively over a million square feet of land. All of the storage facilities in the city are over 93 percent occupied.

Mr. Kletzly the property is under the ownership of a real estate investment trust. Such entities are typically not sellers of real estate. Accordingly, redevelopment of the site is viewed as a long-term capital investment.

Mr. Johnson said rezoning to LI will allow redevelopment of the property with a multistory storage facility. One public benefit would be an increased setback to the Mercer Slough. It will also provide customers with a modern facility. There is LI to the south and the east and LI is the appropriate designation for the site.

Mr. Kletzly expressed a desire to limit the geographic area to the Public Storage site only as a way to potentially offset the concerns staff has with the geographic expansion. A change to LI would bring the site into conformance with the property directly to the south and all of the properties directly to the east.

Mr. Johnson said the side yard setbacks will govern how wide a new building can be, and increasing the buffer to the west will further limit the building footprint.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Carlson about redeveloping under the current OLB, Mr. Johnson said there is uncertainty associated with the conditional use process. LI allows the storage use outright. Mr. Kletzly said another driver under OLB is the 30-foot setbacks which would effectively eliminate a third of the middle building and would yield an inefficient building. It would physically be possible but economically infeasible to redevelop under OLB.

Mr. Keltzly said the increased buffer area would become stormwater detention and the area for cleaning stormwater before it is discharged into the system.

Chair Laing asked when the current buildings were developed, who the owner was at the time, and who owned the land when the current OLB zoning was determined for the site. Mr. Kletzly said the property was developed with the current use in 1977 by Sureguard. Sureguard and Public Storage merged in 2006. He said he did not know who owned the site when the OLB designation was given to it.

Mr. Johnson said redevelopment of the site will benefit the environment and will bring economic benefit to the city by creating jobs, taxes, agency fees and increased property taxes.

Answering a question asked by Chair Laing, Mr. Johnson said a rezone application was filed along with the application for a Comprehensive Plan amendment. He said no conditions have been contemplated that would allow only a public storage use to be constructed on the site, but added that Public Storage would be willing to do so.

Mr. Kletzly said the storage use currently on the site totals roughly 70,000 square feet. Under the redevelopment proposal, that would increase to about 130,000 square feet.

Commissioner Carlson asked about the concern voiced by staff that changing the designation could change the economics of the property by opening the door to other allowed uses. Mr. Kletzly allowed that the concern is a valid one, particularly in relation to Mercer Slough. The notion of a contract rezone would be very appealing to Public Storage and would assure that the storage use would continue on the site. He pointed out, however, that the economics of the storage use, given the ability to go vertical, will trump practically any other land use.

Motion to close the public hearing was made by Commissioner Carlson. Second was by Commissioner deVadoss and the motion carried unanimously.

## 8. STUDY SESSION

### A. St. Luke's Lutheran Church Annual Comprehensive Plan Amendment - Final Review

A motion to recommend approval of the St. Luke's Lutheran Church Comprehensive Plan amendment to change the Comprehensive Plan designation from Single Family-Medium to Multifamily-Medium on 4.3 acres at 3030 Bellevue Way NE was made by Commissioner Hilhorst. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Carlson.

Commissioner Hamlin asked if for some reason the church decided to cease operations, what the maximum build out of the site would be under the Multifamily-Medium designation. Mr. Matz said the designation applied to the size of the site would yield 86 units. However, because of the wetland constraints, overall development would at the most yield between 62 and 68 units.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Hamlin, Mr. Matz reminded him that at the Comprehensive Plan amendment level there is no specific proposal on the table. Staff did, however, calculate trip generation given the likely uses. Given the applicant's stated intent, PM Peak trips would be added, but not to the level that would trigger anything, thus the conclusion is that during development review it will be possible to mitigate them under the city's codes and regulations.

Commissioner Carlson pointed out that the site is well served by transit. As such it is suited to an affordable housing use, particularly so given that low-income residents often do not have a car.

Commissioner Tebelius asked if recommending approval of the Comprehensive Plan amendment would set a pattern for other religious institutions to follow. Mr. Matz pointed out that the Holy Cross Comprehensive Plan amendment proves that not all similar proposals receive approval. The framework for the site-specific Comprehensive Plan amendment process gives the city the ability to look at each site separately and to reach conclusions separately.

Commissioner Tebelius commented that for the most part religious institutions located in neighborhoods are quiet places. Usually the sites are quite large. She asked if the applicant has discussed the intent to continue with the church use and to not convert the entire parcel to multifamily housing. Mr. Matz reminded her that in changing a designation the current use is not the issue. If the designation is changed and the current church use continues, the anticipation is that about 58 housing units will be developed. Should the church use go away, the site could support 10 or 15 units more than that, all of which would be consistent with the surrounding multifamily developments. The church has owned the property for 25 years and it is a consistent part of the church's mission to look at how it might continue to use the site.

Commissioner Tebelius said there is a some indication that for some churches membership is decreasing, and as a result the institutions are looking for ways to reduce their expenses by selling land or giving it up to other uses. She asked if there was any sense that costs were driving the church's decisions. Mr. Matz said he could not speak to that as he had no firsthand knowledge.

Commissioner deVadoss asked why the church site has a single family designation when the immediate surrounding properties are all multifamily. Mr. Matz speculated that church sites in the past were largely designated for low-density residential as that was the predominant land use. Mr. Inghram added that until recently churches had no motivation to seek a change to their underlying zoning.

Chair Laing stressed for the benefit of the audience that the Commission was looking to make a recommendation on the highest level of abstract land use regulation, namely the Comprehensive Plan. There is another component which brings things more into focus, and that is the zoning. Where changes to the Comprehensive Plan are made, a change to the zoning must be made as well. It is not until those things happen that an application can be submitted for an actual project which will then be subject to various reviews and notice.

The motion carried unanimously.

#### B. Public Storage Annual Comprehensive Plan Amendment - Final Review

A motion to recommend approval of the Public Storage Comprehensive Plan amendment to change the Comprehensive Plan designation from Office Limited Business to Light Industrial on 7.3 acres at 1111 118th Avenue SE, 969 118th Avenue SE and 1021 118th Avenue SE was made by Commissioner Tebelius. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Hilhorst.

Chair Laing sought a friendly amendment to reduce the geographic scope of the recommendation to the applicant's subject site, and to include a recommendation that if the Comprehensive Plan amendment is adopted any rezone be conditioned to limit the site to storage use.

Chair Laing said any recommendation relative to the rezone would go forward to the Council as an advisory addendum.

As maker of the motion, Commissioner Tebelius accepted the friendly amendment. As seconder of the motion, Commissioner Hilhorst did as well.

Chair Laing said the case appears to be one in which the city changed the zoning on the site which resulted in the storage use nonconforming. There is policy in the Environmental Element of the Comprehensive Plan that talks about redevelopment as a way of reducing the amount of impervious surface and better stormwater quality. It will be a win for the environment to allow for the redevelopment in line with what the applicant has indicated. There are significantly changed circumstances in terms of a diminishing LI land supply and in terms of the zoning having been changed on top of an established use. There also would be significant public benefit from having the storage use close to where city actions have concentrated multifamily uses.

Commissioner Carlson allowed that the argument made by staff that changing the designation could lead to something other than a storage use and the possibility of property speculation was

very intriguing. He allowed, however, that the response by the applicant that the storage use is in fact the highest and best use carried the day. He asked staff if under the current code restrictions the applicant could in fact develop what they have indicated they want to see on the site. Mr. Matz said the argument made by the applicant was that the dimensional requirements of OLB could be met but it would be economically unfeasible to do so. The recommendation of the city is that the dimensional requirements can in fact be met. The OLB has deeper setbacks and less allowed floor area and staff calculated that OLB would allow roughly 90,000 square feet. Under LI there could be closer to 140,000 square feet of total space. Staff made no indications of how that space could be packaged.

Commissioner deVadoss asked about the small strip of LI land to the south of the subject property. Mr. Matz pointed out that clearly something by way of land designation was tried in the past to encourage a variety of uses to move towards OLB given that there are several properties with uses that are not consistent with the underlying zoning. The site is constrained by wetlands and could redevelop with LI uses, but only in accord with required setbacks. It would be a question for the property owner as to whether redevelopment would pencil out. Mr. Inghram added that the likelihood of someone tearing down an existing office building and be faced with redeveloping with a smaller footprint seems low.

Commissioner Hamlin voiced his full support for narrowing the geographic scope to the subject property only. He also said that because there is LI to the south it makes more sense to change the designation to LI on the subject property. The fact that the owner is ready to move forward with improving the site by removing impervious surface and meeting all buffer requirements represents a public benefit.

Commissioner deVadoss asked staff where they would stand given the amendment to the motion. Mr. Matz said staff would be reluctant to support a contract rezone. He stressed that going forward that portion of the motion will be advisory only. The difficulty lies in the nonconforming use provisions, not the conditional use permit process.

Mr. Inghram said the staff recommendation that has been made is part of the record. It is based largely on the fact that LI represents a range of uses that largely are not appropriate on the subject site. One option would be to discuss with the Council ways to fix OLB as opposed to moving forward with the Comprehensive Plan amendment. Staff is not opposed to the storage use continuing or redeveloping on the site.

The motion carried unanimously.

9. OTHER BUSINESS - None
10. DRAFT MINUTES REVIEW
  - A. January 14, 2015

A motion to approve the minutes as submitted was made by Commissioner Hamlin. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Hilhorst and it carried without dissent; Commissioner Tebelius abstained from voting.

- B. April 8, 2015

A motion to approve the minutes as submitted was made by Commissioner Tebelius. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Hamlin and it carried unanimously.

11. PUBLIC COMMENT - None

12. ADJOURN

A motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Hamlin. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Tebelius and it carried unanimously.

Chair Laing adjourned the meeting at 9:07 p.m.



Paul Inghram  
Staff to the Planning Commission

7/22/2015  
Date



Michelle Hilhorst  
Chair of the Planning Commission

7/22/15  
Date

\* Approved, June 10, 2015

