

December 5, 2017

The Scandia Planning Commission held their regular monthly meeting on the above date.

Greg Amundson began his term as newly appointed Planning Commissioner.

The following were in attendance: Commissioners Greg Amundson, Jan Hogle, Travis Loeffler, Tom Noyes and Chair Dan Squyres. Staff present: City Administrator Neil Soltis, City Planner Sherri Buss and Deputy Clerk Brenda Eklund.

Chair Squyres called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA, MINUTES

Noyes, seconded by Loeffler, moved to approve the agenda as presented. The motion carried 5-0.

Commissioner Hogle noted 2 corrections to typographical errors on page 4 of the November 14, 2017 meeting minutes. **Noyes, seconded by Loeffler, moved to approve the November 14, 2016 Work Session meeting minutes as presented and the November 14, 2017 meeting minutes as amended. The motion carried 5-0.**

DISCUSSION ON AMENDING CHAPTER 1, SECTION 8.0 OF THE DEVELOPMENT CODE RELATED TO PROCEDURES FOR THE REVIEW OF CONCEPT PLANS FOR CONDITIONAL USE

At their August meeting, the Commissioners discussed adding an optional concept plan review for conditional use permit procedures to the development code. It was reasoned to be beneficial in providing feedback and general direction to applicants in the early planning stages. Planner Buss prepared a draft ordinance amendment to add language for an optional pre-application conceptual review with staff and the ability to refer the concept plan to the Planning Commission or City Council for discussion and non-binding advice before an application for a CUP is made.

Commissioner Hogle asked if there could be any downsides to this. Costs to the applicant were recognized, and compared to present fees for pre-application sketch reviews of subdivisions. Buss explained that staff now does an early review with applicants, up to one hour of time at no charge. A concept review may take more staff time and would be charged to the applicant. Staff will work on an appropriate fee to be added to the city's application fee schedule. Chair Squyres noted that a concept review is optional and applicants could go right to the CUP application procedure if they choose.

Commissioner Amundson stated that with his experience as a builder, this is a really good idea for providing builders with direction and to identify issues before costs to prepare plans are invested. Buss agreed that this could identify bigger issues upfront and be provided to the applicant before they proceed ahead to an application.

Commissioners were in consensus to prepare the ordinance amendment for CUP concept reviews for a public hearing at the January 2, 2018 Planning Commission meeting.

DISCUSSION ON AMENDING CHAPTER 2 OF THE DEVELOPMENT CODE TO REGULATE ACCESSORY SOLAR ENERGY SYSTEMS

Based on the Council's repeal of the community solar garden ordinance in September, there was discussion to update the section of the code that permits accessory solar systems that primarily generate solar energy for the primary use on the property, and not part of a subscriber system. Planner Buss presented a draft ordinance regulating Accessory Solar Energy Systems (SES) with performance standards. Commissioner Hogle noted that this could discourage small installations that are not so obtrusive as the multi-megawatt systems which impact the landscape. Buss stated that the Council has made a decision to get out of the business of community solar gardens but is seeking to adopt an ordinance that would allow for solar as an accessory use to homes or businesses.

The Commissioners discussed key issues, such as limiting the size of ground-mounted solar installations. It was noted that a residence typically installs a 10kW system, comparable to approximately 700 square feet of panels – the size of a 2-car garage. As businesses could require greater electrical consumption, Buss suggested that individual limits be set for residences and businesses. It was confirmed that agriculture operations could be defined as a business. The Commissioners concluded that businesses could utilize rooftop operations as well, and that all ground mounted installations be limited to a footprint of 800 square feet. Ground mounted systems in excess of 800 square feet would require a conditional use permit to allow for conditions to minimize impacts.

The systems would be allowed in all districts, including shoreland. Squyres noted that the solar installations still have to meet setbacks from lakeshore. It was determined that the solar panel installations would not count toward lot coverage provided that permanent vegetation is established beneath the panels, nor would they count towards the limits of size and number of accessory structures on a property.

Discussion on screening concluded that it would be required for an SES located on a lakeshore parcel, if within 100' of a road right-of-way, or if the SES requires a conditional use permit. The Commissioners noted that property owners should be encouraged to place the systems in the rear of the property, away from views from roadways.

Commissioners were in consensus to prepare the accessory solar ordinance for a public hearing at the January 2, 2018 Planning Commission meeting.

DISCUSSION ON SHORELAND MANAGEMENT ORDINANCE UPDATE

Planner Buss led the discussion on the working version of the shoreland ordinance based on the discussion from the last meeting. A diagram of building height was shown based on both the DNR's definition and the City's current, more conservative definition. It was decided to keep the city's definition in the ordinance and allows a maximum building height of 35', as the DNR example illustrated that a potential 2-story walkout could be measured as 37'.

In Section 4.23 Land Use table, duplexes would be allowed, but triplex and quad residential were eliminated. Discussion on further defining types of commercial uses allowed in lakeshore such as restaurants concluded that only water-dependent commercial uses be permitted with a CUP. In the question of land uses for river and stream classifications using the current text language or a table listing uses from the DNR model, Commissioners recommended the language that states uses be consistent with the underlying zoning district. The Committee reviewed the DNR map of public waters noting that the ordinance would need to be revised to be include all of the listed public waters.

Buss noted that last month the Commissioners recommended that both the DNR standards and the City's current standards for lot area and width be included in the draft ordinance for public hearing to get public feedback on whether the smaller lot sizes as acknowledged by the DNR would be acceptable, or should development around lakes be limited. Buss explained that the table for sewer lot will be added to Section 6.2 since the MPCA has determined that lots that have access to the City's 201 system meet the DNR's definition of sewer lots.

In discussing increased densities of residential PUD's in Shoreland, the Commissioners concluded to allow this because at least 50% of the site must be dedicated to permanent open space.

Buss reviewed the changes to the wetland section in 6.4 to reflect an exception for setbacks from small wetlands, limited encroachment into small wetland areas, and clarifying that man-made wetlands, such as infiltration basins, are exempt.

Language was added to the diagram illustrating lowest floor elevation in Section 6.43 to state "OWHL as determined by the DNR". This text was also added to definition #30 to be consistent.

Buss noted the recommended changes to Section 7.0 to replace vegetative screening with impervious cover in 7.12, adding text to 7.23 that the area of stairways, lifts and landings are included as impervious, and deleted 7.23 which would have allowed water-oriented accessory structures.

Discussion will continue with Section 8.0 of the ordinance update at the January 2, 2018 meeting.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Administrator Soltis stated that sections of the updated Comprehensive Plan will soon be coming to the Planning Commissioners for their review. Squyres noted that Mayor Maefsky recommended that they review the current Comprehensive Plan.

ADJOURNMENT

Loeffler, seconded by Noyes, moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Eklund
Deputy Clerk