

CITY OF MEDINA
Planning Commission Meeting

October 28, 2014
6:00 p.m.

*Medina City Hall Council Chambers
501 Evergreen Point Road*

CALL TO ORDER

The Planning Commission meeting of October 28, 2014, was called to order at 5:57 PM by Chair Nunn.

ROLL CALL

Present: Chair Heija Nunn, Jeanne Carlson, Peter May, Mark Nelson, Peter Papano, Randy Reeves and Shawn Schubring

Absent:

Staff Present: Robert Grumbach, Development Services Director
Donna Goodman, Development Services Coordinator
Michael Sauerwein, City Manager
Tom Early, City Tree Consultant

Tree Committee Present:

Alex Morcos, Council Member
David Lee, Council Member
Robert Rudolph

ANNOUNCEMENTS (5:58 PM)

Grumbach announced that the City Council will hold a hearing on the 2015 budget at their November meeting.

City Manager Michael Sauerwein provided an update on the recent storm power outage and cleanup activities.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION (6:02 PM)

The following residents testified:

- Kay Koelemay supported changes to the tree code but maintained that the current character of the city should be preserved. She stressed that changes should be based on scientific information on management of an urban forest.
- Sheree Wen addressed safety concerns with large trees and owners' rights to manage their own properties.

- Patrick Moran spoke regarding a tree in his yard that he felt was dangerous, but could not be removed due to the mitigation costs.
- Doug Hutson addressed the overcrowding of trees on his property as well as safety and nuisance trees, and expressed that people should be able to decide what to do on their own properties.
- Kim Bentz addressed the results of the tree survey and urged the commission to relax the tree code since most respondents requested that property owners be allowed more control.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES (6:30 PM)

MOTION MAY / SECOND NELSON TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FOR THE SEPTEMBER 23, 2014, PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING AS WRITTEN. APPROVED 7 – 0. (6:31 PM)

PUBLIC HEARINGS

None

OTHER BUSINESS

1) Phase Two Tree Code Update Discussion

Grumbach stated that his objective for this meeting was to discuss the work program, establish a goal statement, and to define some of the terms to be used. He presented a written purpose statement for consideration, which had been formulated by the Tree Committee, and requested that the commission set a standard to maintain, decrease or increase the overall tree canopy.

City Council and Tree Committee member Alex Morcos addressed the commission, explaining that the Tree Committee was not formed to replace the work of the Planning Commission, but to support their work. He reported that they met nine times on a weekly basis and reviewed what surrounding cities are doing. They also talked to citizens and held open houses at City Hall and at Overlake Golf & Country Club.

Morcos discussed the objective of encouraging people to keep trees while also giving property owners the freedom to do what they want on their property. He suggested that the current code does not serve the purpose that was intended since the tree canopy has been reduced over the past ten years.

Discussion followed on the language in the goal.

May thanked the audience for participating and submitting comments and thanked the Tree Committee members for their continued discussions. He suggested that the

commission should be careful about the proposed additional language regarding giving property owners flexibility since people interpret that differently. He expressed that it was generally a good statement, but that actions should be encouraged, not canopy. He added that long-term retention and planting of trees should be the objective rather than encouraging the canopy, which is not actionable.

Papano was in general agreement with Morcos' comments.

Carlson supported May's comments that the goal should be performance based.

Schubring suggested they need to find a way to maintain the appearance of the community long-term, but to encourage rather than mandate tree preservation.

Reeves commented on the wide spectrum of input received from citizens, some diametrically opposed, that had been coalesced into a unified purpose. He suggested that they should combine what is in the comprehensive plan where appropriate with the ideas of preserving the current aesthetic and stewardship, using a system of encouragement and incentive rather than penalties and fees.

Nelson summarized that citizens value trees and landscape, but also value views and open space and the ability to manage their own properties. He shared that public opinion had shifted since he last worked on this issue and presented a proposed revision to the goal statement.

Nelson also shared a document from Clyde Hill, an urban forestry plan that was created by a resident who had obtained a grant for the project. He suggested that such a document might be added to Medina's work plan.

City Tree Consultant, Tom Early, addressed what Seattle is doing in formulating an urban forestry plan and that this type of document would be helpful in guiding the drafting of an ordinance.

Grumbach added that such a plan would help the City to manage public property.

Chair Nunn suggested that much of the character of the City is due to the understory plantings, which the tree canopy analysis does not address. She added that she would like to see a shorter goal statement, but liked introducing the concept of view corridors and a plan for public spaces.

May stressed that the goal should be short, simple and direct. Then the commission should move forward with the idea that they could always come back and revise it. He suggested that all the elements people are proposing ought to be addressed, but not in the goal statement.

Grumbach again indicated that he needed direction whether the tree canopy should be increased, maintained or decreased before he could move forward with writing additional language for the commission's review.

Further discussion followed among commission members.

Chair Nunn opened the discussion once again to audience members and the following residents testified: Sheree Wen, Doug Hutson, Paul Saad and Amin Kapoor.

Following audience testimony, further discussion took place on the goal language.

Grumbach suggested that the commission could move on to the project tasks at the next meeting. He added that he could propose for discussion language that would follow the goal in the form of "Intent" and that most of the concerns expressed would be addressed and incorporated.

2) Planning Commission Meeting Schedule for Remainder of 2014

Discussion ensued on the scheduling of meetings for the remainder of the year due to the upcoming holidays. The consensus was that the Planning Commission would meet on the following dates:

- Wednesday November 12th at 6:30 PM
- Tuesday, November 18th at 6:00 PM
- Tuesday, December 2nd at 6:00 PM

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION MAY / SECOND REEVES TO ADJOURN THE OCTOBER 28, 2014, PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING. APPROVED 7 - 0. (8:07 PM)

The next Planning Commission meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, November 12, 2014, at 6:30 PM.

Minutes taken by:



Donna Goodman
Development Services Coordinator