

**CITY OF KALAMA
CITY COUNCIL
FEBRUARY 24, 2010**

JOINT CITY COUNCIL PLANNING COMMISSION WORKSHOP

Mayor Pro Tem Chuck Hutchinson opened the workshop at 6:05 pm. Councilmembers present were Adam Smee, Dominic Ciancibelli, Chuck Hutchinson, Don Purvis, and Bud Gish. Mayor Pete Poulsen arrived at 6:15 pm. Planning Commissioners present were Don Mathison (Chairman), Kimberly Sullivan, Kevin Wade, Jeremy Somogye, Alex Spencer, and Dena Diamond-Ott. City staff present were Assistant Public Works Director Kelly Rasmussen and Clerk/Treasurer Coni McMaster. City Planner Matt Hermen was also present. Members in the audience are listed on the sign in sheet.

PARKING CODE UPDATE

City Planner Matt Hermen gave an overview of the recommended changes to the parking code the Planning Commission is making. These include reductions of non-public areas from the square foot calculations for parking requirements for restaurants and other businesses, adding a review process to allow for alternative plans to be presented, counting on-street parking within 200 feet of a business, adding parking lot standards. Councilmember Chuck Hutchinson asked if the number of employees was included in any of the calculations. It is not, but it is assumed that business owners will want parking for customers and encourage their employees to park in the outer areas. It was also noted that the code will not apply to those improvements or additions that are less than 1000 square feet or the expansion is less than 25% of the original size. The alternative plans will have an administrative review by the City Planner and many factors will be considered including hours of operation and size of the business.

Mayor Poulsen noted that the Planning Commission has done another outstanding job addressing code issues. Planning Commission Chairman Don Mathison noted this was over a period of 6 months. The SEPA review has been completed, and the Public Hearing held. This revision sets standards that address the issues within the Central Business District and sets it apart from the areas further out. Those outer areas may be developed in the future and the code addresses that as well. Chairman Mathison acknowledged the work of City Planner Matt Hermen who due to budget constraints was not able to attend all the meetings, but was able to take all the Commission's comments and concerns and draft them into a usable code.

The discussion included how to utilize areas that could be available after regular business for the restaurants and taverns. This would include driveway aprons for places like the hardware store warehouse. This would create some enforcement issues, and would require code amendments and signage. It was also noted that there are some dead areas around the bulb-outs that could be used for motorcycle parking. Assistant Public Works Director noted the City has to follow the state traffic requirements when laying out the parking. Planning Commissioner Jeremy Somogye suggested the City check out the

fire codes as well when looking at these areas. Some of the issues regarding enforcement are traffic code issue rather than zoning.

Chairman Mathison stated the draft code would be submitted to the Council for approval.

DOWNTOWN DESIGN/HISTORICAL STANDARDS

Mayor Poulsen opened the discussion stating the City needs to address the downtown to preserve it and clean up what we have. This could be either thorough historical standards or design standards. Councilmember Dominic Ciancibelli noted that when he was on the Planning Commission they had attempted to establish some visual standards as recommendations and not code requirements. The City would be better off working to get some areas cleaned up. With the Downtown improvements nearing completion, it would be good if the property owners downtown would clean up and paint some of the buildings. The City has all kinds of architecture, so there really isn't a historic period they can claim for setting up historical design standards.

Mayor Poulsen wondered if providing incentives would help to motivate some to clean up their properties. Planning Commission Chairman noted that Kelso had a grant program a few years back. It provided 50% funding for qualified businesses to use toward painting the buildings. It was noted that the City needs to hear from the business and property owners on what they would like to see for the downtown. Do they want it like it is? Do they want it to just happen as it grows? Would they like to see it something very strict like Leavenworth or something less restrictive? Commissioner Dena Diamond-Ott noted that the City should lead by example and work on their buildings. Mayor Poulsen indicated he is working on just that. The current economy is a factor in what the City can do and how it can address the issues with the property owners. He would like to look for some grant funding to help.

What can the City do about the buildings that are not well maintained? This would be more maintenance/nuisance code issue that would not be within the Planning Commissions review. The Commission is planning on working on revising the Sign code next, but does the City Council want them to work on historic or design criteria instead? The discussion lead to a consensus that a design code of some kind would be better than adding historical criteria into the code due to the complex requirements both state and federal have on historical areas. The discussion diverted to the issue of how the downtown could grow. It is land locked to some degree to any area for physical growth. It was noted that one need would be to find something that would set Kalama apart from other small cities. Commercial growth will happen in areas further south and north from the core area.

Mayor Poulsen noted that the Port of Kalama will be coming to the City to request annexation into the City for the large area north of the City limits. This will involve some review by the Planning Commission as to what the proper zoning and land uses would be as well as some code development for addressing shorelines and flood zones. These are

issues the Port and County are at odds over due to code interpretations. The Port is proposing light industry and commercial for the area. It is hoped that the uses would help to compliment the downtown core area only a mile away. Commissioner Somogye noted that Battleground had recently opened a shopping area that was away from the downtown, but they were seeing benefits from it in the old town area. The discussion continued addressing the need to provide services that will keep people in Kalama. With no land available close in, it makes this a challenge. To grow and expand, Kalama will need to think beyond the 4-block area. There was some discussion on what would make Kalama a “destination.” This could include the many outdoor opportunities for fishing, rafting, walking, observing wildlife, or the antique stores or other unique stores.

Clerk/Treasurer Coni McMaster noted that the sign code is in great need of revision, but if the Council wants the Planning Commission to work on the design issues, it could be put on hold. Chairman Mathison noted that some of the sign code revisions could be used to develop concepts for addressing future business development. It was suggested that perhaps a committee could be formed for working on the preliminary design issues and the Planning Commission go ahead with the sign code review.

City Councilmembers Dominic Ciancibelli and Don Purvis agreed to head a design committee. Planning Commissioners Jeremy Somogye and Alex Spencer volunteered to serve as well. City Planner Matt Hermen that a lot of what is being discussed could lead to a Comp Plan amendment. It was agreed that would be a likely outcome. The City needs to look at getting the areas available for commercial growth to compliment each other. Other issues that were of concern regarding traffic, nuisance, or building maintenance would be addressed by other areas of the code that staff would look at. There was some discussion that enforcement is an issue and needs to be more consistent.

Mayor Poulsen adjourned the meeting at 7:53 pm. These minutes are not verbatim. A copy of the tape can be made available for listening.

Pete Poulsen - Mayor

Coni McMaster - Clerk/Treasurer