

**CITY OF KALAMA
PLANNING COMMISSION
JANUARY 10, 2019**

OPENING

Chairperson Fortuna opened the meeting at 6:00 p.m. Commissioners present were Susan Langham, Craig Frkovich, Joy Greenberg, Dan Ohall and Lynn Hughes. Commissioner absent was Patrick Harbison. Staff present was: City Planner John Floyd of McKenzie, Secretary Susan Junnikkala, Kelly Rasmussen Public Works Director and City Administrator Adam Smee. Members of the audience are listed on the sign-in sheet.

MINUTES

Chairperson Fortuna asked the Commission if they have reviewed the minutes of October 11, 2018. Commissioner Hughes made a motion to approve the minutes. Commissioner Greenberg seconded the motion and the motion passed with all in favor.

PUBLIC HEARINGS – None

NEW BUSINESS – None

UNFINISHED BUSINESS – Economic Development Code Review – Height Limits in the C-1: Central Business District Zone.

Chairperson Fortuna asked Planner Floyd to give a review of his staff report. Planner Floyd reported that on October 11th the Planning Commission considered draft text changes to the Kalama Zoning Ordinance to increase the existing height limits north of Geranium street from a maximum of 3 stories/45 feet, to a maximum of 50 feet and no limit on the number of stories. Feedback provided by the Planning Commission was that this was not sufficient to achieve city goals, and that height limits should be more aspirational and have a clear relationship to the slopes above downtown. This included a suggestion that maximum height might relate to the elevation of 2nd street, in order to preserve the views of existing homeowners along the bluff and reflect the natural terrain in the architecture of downtown.

These changes are being considered by the Planning Commission as part of the implementation of the Downtown Revitalization Study completed in 2017. The study found a majority of the existing buildings within the study area to be one-story in size. Of the 46 inventoried, only 12 were two-story and only one was three-story (Poker Pete's Tavern).

1. The study also found the buildings along First Street have low visibility from I-5 due to their orientation towards First street, and visual separation from one of the city's biggest amenities, the Columbia River.

2. The report did not specifically recommend increasing the allowable building

¹ City of Kalama Downtown Revitalization Study (DRS), Page 10.

height limit, but such an increase could be supportive of community goals as it could facilitate a greater density of jobs or housing within the zone, would make the buildings more visible from I-5 to increase profitability, and enhance a sense of place by providing views to and from the river. Raising the existing height limits could also make the CBD more attractive to potential developers looking to invest in Kalama.

CONTEXT

As noted in the table below, the Kalama Zoning Ordinance establishes maximum height limits for new construction. These limits range from 35-40 feet in residential zones, and 35-45 feet in the City’s commercial zones. In some zones, such as the C-1 Central Business District, there is also a cap on the maximum number of stories (no more than 45 feet and 3 stories).

Existing Height Limits in the Kalama Zoning Code	
Zoning District	Maximum Permitted Height
Low Density Residential (R-1)	35 Feet
Medium Density Residential (R-2)	35 Feet
High Density Residential (R-3)	40 Feet and no more than 4 stories
Central Business District (C-1)	3 stories or 45 feet
Highway Commercial (C-2)	3 ½ stories or 35 feet
Industrial (I-1)	No more than 3 ½ Stories and 45 Feet
Mixed Use	
Residential	45 Feet*
Commercial	45 Feet*
Business	45 Feet*
Industrial	60 Feet*

** Increases in height above allowable height limits in the MUC Zoning District may be approved by planning commission through the master planning process only when it can be shown that the increase will be compatible with the surrounding buildings, other buildings and uses in the master plan, and consistent with the remaining design elements of 17.25*

For an example of what a 45 feet structure looks like, the new McMenamins Kalama Harbor Lodge was approved at 45 feet in height, with the building height measured from the average point of the eaves and ridge of the gabled roof.

DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

In considering changes to height limits, staff investigated existing data sources regarding the elevations of N. 2nd Street. No existing surveys of the roadway were available, but Google Earth and field reconnaissance with an altimeter established the following approximate elevations. For reference, N. 1st Street has an approximate elevation of between 22 and 26 feet above sea level.

Approximate Elevations – N. 2 nd Street			
Intersection	Approximate Elevation	80% of Approximate Elevation	60% of Approximate Elevation
Kingwood Street	193 ft.	154	116 ft.
Juniper Street	178 ft.	142	107 ft.
Ivy Street	129 ft.	103	77 ft.
Holly Street	110 ft.	88	66 ft.
Geranium Street	77 ft.	62	46 ft.
Fir Street	72 ft.	58	43 ft.
Elm Street	61 ft.	49	37 ft.

As discussed at the October meeting, the Planning Commission may wish to take a similar approach as with multi-family housing and maker-space buildings, and limit changes to the historic core. As such, the following changes are recommended:

- Increase the maximum height south of Geranium Street from 45 to 50 feet, to provide more flexibility in roof forms for new development and make three-story commercial development more viable. This is based on the following plate height assumptions for new development.
 - 15 feet for the ground floor
 - 10.5 feet for residential upper stories
 - 14 feet for commercial upper stories
- Progressively increase the height limit north of Geranium Street in proportion to the increased elevation of Second street. The purpose for this is to allow the height of future buildings to mirror the height of the surrounding landscape and take advantage of views across the Interstate Highway, but in a manner respectful of existing views of the river from above, and of the bluffs from below.
- Proposed maximum heights are approximately 68% to 77% of the corresponding intersection elevations for N. 2nd Street.
- Hard limits are proposed to provide the desired certainty for developers that the Planning Commission requested on October 11th.
- Removal of the three-story limit for properties north of Geranium Street.

Changes consistent with these recommendations can be found in the amended code language below. All changes are marked with **red font** and underlining.

Table 17.26.040-1 Density and dimensional standard

Zoning Standard	Central Business District	Highway Commercial

Minimum lot size (square feet) Development must conform to lot width, depth, yard setback and coverage standards.	No Limitation	5,000 sq. ft.
Minimum Setbacks* (feet): Front Side Rear *Measured from the nearest wall or corner to the appropriate property line.	No limitations ¹ No limitations ² No limitations ³	15 ft No limitations ⁴ No limitations ⁵
Minimum Lot Frontage on Public Street Non-Residential Uses	20 ft	20 ft
Maximum Building Height Building height transition required when abutting to any residential district	3 Stories or 45 50 ft ¹ / <u>60 ft²</u> No	3½ Stories or 35 Yes
Lot Coverage* (Provided the applicable setbacks are observed) *Measured by Foundation plane as % of site area.	No Limitations	No Limitations
Build-To Line (feet): New Buildings Only: At least one primary building entrance shall be built no farther from the street of the physical address's right-of-way than the build-to line; except where a greater setback is required for a Planned Street Improvement, then the build-to line increases proportionately.	0 ft May be increased when pedestrian amenities are provided between a primary building entrance and street	60 ft

¹Buildings located south of Geranium Street subject limited to three stories and no more than 50 ft.

²Buildings located north of Geranium Street may be constructed to any number of stories, provided they comply with the following maximum height limits:

- 60 feet North of Geranium Street
- 75 feet North of Holly Street
- 90 feet North of Ivy Street

17.08.070 - Building height.

"Building height" means the vertical measurement from average grade at the front of the house to the highest point of the roof beams in the case of flat roofs, to the deck line of mansard roofs, or to the center height between eaves and ridges for gable, hip or gambrel roofs. For this purpose, the level of the eaves shall be taken to mean the highest level where the plane of the roof intersects the plane of the outside wall on a side containing the eaves. The maximum building heights set forth in this Title shall be measured utilizing this definition. Chimneys, ventilators, antennas, skylights or solar panels shall not be considered part of the height limit. Domes, towers, or spires which are the integral part of churches or religious buildings shall not be subject to these limitations.

Chairperson stated that Planner Floyd did a nice job on this report.

Commissioner Frkovich asked if 50 feet would be too tall south of Geranium Street. Chairperson Fortuna suggested maybe doing a gradual increase as you go North following the terrain. The Commission was in favor of this. The Commission also suggested that on the East Side of North First allowing the height to be higher than on the West Side.

The Commission would like to have a public hearing at the next Planning meeting.

STAFF REPORTS – None.

ADJOURNMENT

Chairperson Fortuna adjourned the meeting at approximately 7:00 p.m. These minutes are not verbatim. They are a general overview of what took place. An audio tape or video may be made available for listening upon request at City Hall during normal business hours.


