



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

MINUTES

4:00 PM July 17, 2024
2nd Floor Conference Room, City Hall

1. ROLL CALL

Council: Kyle Strengtholt, Gary Bode, Brent Lenssen, Mayor Scott Korthuis

Staff: Mark Sandal, John Williams, Heidi Gudde, Jon Hutchings

Guests: Teri Treat (Inn at Lynden), Tammy Yoder (Downtown Business Association)

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a. Community Development Committee Meeting Minutes of 5/22/24 approved as presented.

3. DISCUSSION ITEMS

- a. Downtown Directory Sign by the DBA. Tammy Yoder talked with group about a wayfinding sign that the CDC and the full Council had previously reviewed. Yoder expressed concern that they would not be able to list all businesses as some of the previous feedback from the CDC had suggested. Yoder asked that the DBA, with feedback from the hotel and the city, decide who puts on the sign.

Bode agreed that you do not want every business on the sign because it would become difficult to read.

Location of the sign is still being decided. The 5th Street corner is, as Yoder stated, the busiest downtown but the corner by the Chamber of Commerce office was also being considered. Yoder, who worked for the Chamber for years, stated that many people don't realize the Chamber office is there and thought that a sign on this corner would also be underutilized.

Yoder is aware of the need to maintain the vision triangle at intersections. She intends to talk with Public Works about the location and the method of installation.

CDC had some design suggestions regarding height and asked about the change out of revision to the panel. Short-term revisions can be done with stickers, but overall replacement of the panel can be done periodically.

Conclusions: CDC asked that the trail location be added to the sign. Yoder to work with city staff on the location and method of installation through a street encroachment permit.

- b. **EV Charging Stations Downtown:** Teri Treat from The Inn at Lynden join the group to talk about progress on a potential partnership with the City for installation of EV charging stations downtown. Treat indicated that EvoCharge was her top choice after a considerable amount of research. She passed out a memo to summarize steps toward installation.

Treat stated that she appreciated this company as it provides fast charging stations and would allow the Inn to track the use of the station. (It is unknown how often the EV station at the 7th street parking lot is being used.) A single station would provide two charging stalls. It has 25-foot retractable cords that make them more accessible and tidier than non-retractable stations. The preferred location would include moving a light pole but would create an additional parking stall. Treat to meet with PSE on a grant program and discuss the location.

The City is not being asked to fund the project. Cost is about \$12,000 for the charging stations. The hotel would have ownership of the equipment and would supply the power. They would be able to give passes to their guests if needed. The location would be on city property but, as proposed, could create an additional parking stall. The hotel would get some revenue from the charging station but the parking stalls would be open to the general public. Although the property is public the charging stations and software would belong to The Inn at Lynden.

In the future, other new locations may include a charging station near the restroom.

An existing parking agreement is in place for The Inn and Treat is interested in renewing this agreement. She suggested that perhaps the renewed parking agreement be amended to include the EV charging stations.

Conclusions: Teri Treat to continue to pursue the installation of EV charging stations and report back to the City with the long term intentions of an agreement for installation within city right-of-way.

- c. **Parking Management:** Treat reported that her conversations with businesses downtown are open to self-regulation regarding parking on Front Street. Business were supportive and felt it was a reasonable request to have employees park elsewhere. However, the follow up question to that is “where then should we park?”.

Conclusions: Next steps - work with City staff to identify alternative areas for downtown employees / business owners to park rather than on Front Street – identify on a map so it is easy for business owners to distribute to employees.

- d. **Impact Fee Exemptions for Affordable Housing.** Mayor Scott reported to the group that current programs that offer relief on utility connection fees and/or impact fees include Kulshan Community Land Trust and Housing Authority of Whatcom / Skagit County. Lenssen reported that WA home prices have increased 44% in 4 years.

Public Works reviewed fees and found that if this unit is considered “additional units” rather than part of the “first five”. CDC agreed that this unit could be considered “additional units” and the related cost savings realized.

Conclusions: City to draft a response to the land owner who is requesting relief that will (1.) explain the cost savings related to the “additional units” rate, and (2.) give them the connections to resources to seek assistance.

- e. **Pepin Creek Re-cap of concerns.**

Williams asked the Council members if they had questions or concerns related to the Pepin project beyond those raised at the last Council meeting. Staff will be preparing information for the Council-requested workshop. Those mentioned at the Council meeting on July 15 were summarized and listed on the executive summary.

Members of the CDC asked about the status of permits for the creek infrastructure. Sandal and Williams discussed the SEPA approval on the creek channel – which has been completed. Staff noted that if the City is successful in getting federal funding then we need to be prepared to address the requirements that come with federal funding. The requirements will vary depending on the amount of the award and how it is administered. Some federal funding is administered through State agencies like the Department of Transportation. The channel portion that has been constructed to date and the Main Street bridge has worked well in periods of high water flow. The final permitting for the relocated outflow

of Pepin to Fishtrap was discussed. Staff anticipates this will be a lengthy permitting process.

Hutchings discussed with the CDC the ability of the Pepin project to be developed incrementally. He noted the properties on the south end of the Subarea which are queued to develop. These properties have access to sewer connections without the need for a pump station and are closest to the city center. The landowners and developers of several of these properties have had conversations with City staff about performing construction in lieu of paying impact fees. This is beneficial to both the City and the developer as it gets the infrastructure in place sooner so that it can be utilized by new development and it's done at a lower cost because public projects cost more than private projects given factors like prevailing wage, etc. Staff has calculated that these properties accommodate about 350 housing units – primarily single family and townhomes. This represents a few years of housing supply.

Hutchings noted that it is crucial for the city to be able to deliver to developers, the plans that are needed to extend infrastructure projects – so that they can be built in lieu of impact fees.

For development beyond those that are within 'reach' of existing sewer lines, engineering review of the sewerage plan currently underway. Existing Sewer Pump Station #4 is also under review as it is reaching the end of its life span with the intention of this update to include an up size to accommodate the next 10-15 years of growth.

Additionally, the engineering to determine the type, size and location of the Parkway bridge is needed. Staff intend to keep working with property owners regarding what sort of dedications of ROW will be needed for the bridge project as it is in a critical juncture of creek and roadway in the south-central portion of the Subarea. Transportation funds secured through Larsen's office are anticipated to finance the design of the bridge and the Parkway section.

Generally the CDC expressed concerns that the development of the Pepin Subarea infrastructure may be a disproportionate burden to the community as a whole. Bode expressed concerns that it would 'raise everyone's rates'. Staff indicated that the additional transportation impact fee that was put in place for Pepin was meant to prevent that from happening. Additional information can be shared at the workshop.

Conclusions: Staff to give an update on funding requests at the workshop. Date of the workshop to be sometime within the week of August 26. CDC indicated support for a lunch workshop that extended

into the afternoon. The City Clerk to follow up with Council members on which day of that week would be best for Council members.

- f. **Proposed Amendment to the City's Sign Regulations.** Not discussed at this meeting. Public hearing is slated for August 5th.

4. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

- a. 2nd Quarter Monthly Development Update. Briefly discussed code citations that were noted on the report.
- b. Community Development 2024 Budget Review. The group briefly discussed the upcoming budget initiatives. Gudde indicated that the largest new expense would be funding the update to the Transportation Element. She reported that we have gotten reimbursement from the Department of Commerce for ongoing work on the Comp Plan update. This first of 2 reimbursements totaled \$62,500. Other notes – legal expenses are down for the department in 2024 and implementation of SmartGov is going well. Implementation costs were allocated to the Planning Division although the software will also be used by Building, Public Works, the Airport management, Police, Fire, and Code Compliance. Gudde noted that the ongoing software maintenance fees, about \$26,000, should be allocated to all users in the upcoming year.

Next Meeting Date: August 21, 2024