



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Minutes

4:00 PM September 22, 2021

Virtual Meeting Using Microsoft Teams

1. ROLL CALL

Council: Brent Lenssen, Kyle Strengholt, Gary Bode, Mayor Korthuis

Staff: Heidi Gudde, Dave Timmer, John Williams

Chamber of Council: Gary Vis

Guests: Karsten Wise, Mary Lou Childs, Dianna Graeber, Will VanderHage

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a. Community Development Committee Meeting 7-21-21 Minutes Approved

3. DISCUSSION ITEMS

- a. Dianna Graeber addressed the CDC regarding her concerns about the appearance of the City. Her concerns included trailers parked on the street for long periods of time, failure to collect garbage in residential areas, vehicles parked the wrong direction on Front Street.

Graeber suggested that the Police's volunteer group, Stars, could offer more warnings to on-street violations.

Mayor Scott and the CDC discussed exemptions which may have been issued for trash collection and reached out to Nooksack Valley Disposal to find out how many have been issued.

Dave Timmer noted that letters regarding misc. debris is the most frequently sent out violation letter. That, as well as inoperable vehicles is the most frequent.

Staff available to address specific violations if reported.

Request to be made that Public Safety Committee discuss on-street violations.

Graeber noted that she would like to become more involved in City meetings.

- b. Hazard Pay Presentation from the United Food and Commercial Workers International Union 21, Karsten Wise

Wise noted that his union represents the employees at Safeway and Food Pavilion. He addressed the CDC regarding city ordinances which require hazard pay for frontline workers. The union has worked with City Council's in Burien and Seattle. A few others including Bellingham, Olympia, Federal Way also approved hazard pay ordinance.

Noted that at the start of the pandemic workers at Safeway were paid an extra "Hero Pay" of \$2 an hour. This was later discontinued and remains discontinued despite the union lobbying the employers to recognize risk associated with working with so many members of the public. He also raised the point of extraordinary increase in profits that grocery chains are making due to the pandemic since people are stocking more groceries at home and not eating out.

Wise noted that ordinances like these have been held up in court. He also noted that different cities have handled the ordinances differently. Some ordinances have a sunset or are tied to the state of emergency declaration, some utilize ARPA funds.

Wise encouraged the CDC to consider an ordinance to show good faith in the efforts of the workers.

Gudde asked if funds (ARPA or other) had been distributed to businesses in Lynden related to the pandemic. Korthuis noted that CARES funding has been distributed to some local non-profits and small businesses who had requested assistance.

Strengholt noted that PPP would be increased for Albertsons/Safeway's profits were up.

Bode responded to the presentation by stating that if the City were to recognize grocery store workers then how would the City not also need to recognize all frontline workers that continued to work through the pandemic. He strongly feels that what you do for one you need to do for all. He also stated that he felt this was a private issue for the employer to work out with the employee's union and that the union should advocate for its members rather than the City.

Wise responded by saying that he was representing union workers and following through with a request they had made of him – to explore options regarding a city ordinance as had been done in other cities.

The Committee thanked Wise for the presentation.

c. West Lynden Annexation Process and Zoning Categorization

Lenssen introduced the topic. At this stage the Council has granted the petitioners the right to petition and collect signatures for the 277-acre addition to the city. This encompasses the entire block of urban growth area in the southwest corner of the city. This land is slated for a mix of uses including industrial, commercial, and residential. It would also bring the City's West Lynden Regional Stormwater Pond to within the City's jurisdictional limits. Items that the CDC should discuss were included in the executive summary for the item. This includes public outreach plans, land use designations, zoning categories, timing of the annexation, and infrastructure needs for the area.

Will VanderHage, the petitioner for the annexation, gave the Committee a summary of which property owners he had talked with about the annexation. Generally, he was finding support.

The committee discussed the slated land uses as described in the Comprehensive Plan. A significant area south of the Birch Bay Lynden Road is slated to be commercial uses. Staff and the Chamber representative, Gary Vis, has concerns that commercial may not be viable and encourage the Council to consider a land use shift in this area.

Gudde noted that the most frequent inquiry for property at the Planning Department is for industrially zoned properties. While the zoning map gives the impression that the City has a significant amount of industrial area, there are property owners and market factors that result in that land not necessarily being available for development. Gudde encouraged the Council to consider broadening the industrial areas of the City.

Gudde also noted that if the commercial area came into the City as Commercial Services Local (CSL) it would undoubtedly be developed primarily as residential as CSL allows for mixed use. In this case it would be better for the City to zone the property residentially.

The Committee discussed how and when the land use shift may occur. Vis encouraged the Committee to consider a land use shift simultaneous to an annexation so that a shift is considered before / at the same time as properties are coming into the City. Gudde noted that the review would be better done at a comprehensive level. Although the Comp Plan update is slated for 2025 the annexation may move faster.

d. Land Use Projects Map

The Committee reviewed a map that Gudde has put together with the intent of better communicating land use actions that are occurring in the City. This map was also shared with the Planning Commission and they appreciated the information. Ultimately the map would be a useful public outreach tool and ideally, interactive on the website, but for now it offers a snapshot of how many applications are being reviewed and where.

Given the favorable response, Gudde offered to continue to provide map update to the CDC.

Next Meeting Date: October 20, 2021