

To: City of Lynden Planning Commission
From: David Vos, 213 Cedar Dr, Lynden
Date: September 22, 2022
Re: Proposed changes to Lynden Municipal Code

Members of Planning Commission,

I'm writing to express my serious concern with one of the proposed revisions to the Lynden Municipal Code that you will be discussing at tonight's meeting. As a member of the Design Review Board, I take my job seriously to provide oversight to the aesthetics of commercial and multi-family construction as well as signage around Lynden. I appreciate the opportunity to serve on the committee and in my role, I seek to ensure that Lynden remains an attractive place to live and do business.

When the Design Review Board (DRB) was established, my dad, Alvin Vos, was part of the original committee, and the board was set up to provide citizen oversight to both the aesthetics of construction and signage and in doing so, be a check on City Planner authority in such matters. Knowing the history of the DRB, I find the proposed addition of paragraph 2 under the revised LMC 19.45.015 particularly concerning, as it fundamentally changes the role of the DRB. The proposed wording states,

The Planning Director will determine when review or re-review (in the event of an amended design) is required by the Design Review Board. The Planning Department shall prepare a staff report on the design proposal summarizing requirements and conditions of permit approval. The staff report shall include findings, conclusions, and conditions for disposition of the design application.

[Emphasis mine]

Having served on the DRB for the last few years, I've seen instances where Heidi has summarily approved projects that should have brought before the DRB, and I'm deeply concerned that this proposed change will gut what little authority our board has, further putting control of aesthetic design approval in the hands of the Planning Director.

In lieu of the proposed wording, I would recommend that all signs and new commercial and multi-family construction must be brought to DRB for review and approval, and for minor remodels that may or may not require design review, a brief e-mail to the committee members to determine our preference for reviewing would be a fast and easy way to proceed with the design review process.

Those of us who serve on the DRB are happy to give of our time to see that the aesthetics of Lynden are appealing, but why should we waste our time serving on a committee that only serves at the Planning Director's bidding? Again, this committee was set up to provide citizen oversight, not further centralize control within the Planning Department.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

David Vos