



Meeting Minutes

Planning Commission

City Hall
601 4th Avenue E
Olympia, WA 98501
Contact: Todd Stamm
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Monday, November 17, 2014

6:30 PM

Room 207

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Brown called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

1.A ROLL CALL

Present: 9 - Chair Max Brown, Vice Chair Kim Andresen, Commissioner Jessica Bateman, Commissioner Roger Horn, Commissioner Missy Watts, Commissioner Judy Bardin, Commissioner Darrell Hoppe, Commissioner Jerome Parker, and Commissioner Carole Richmond

OTHERS PRESENT

Community Planning and Development Deputy Director Leonard Bauer
Associate Planner Amy Buckler

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was approved.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

[14-1116](#) Approval of November 3, 2014 Planning Commission Meeting Minutes

The minutes were approved as amended.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT - None

5. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ms. Buckler provided a CD with data from 74 prior Downtown planning studies. She gave an update on downtown development of the new Obsidian coffee and sandwich shop project.

Mr. Bauer announced the reassignment of Ms. Buckler to the Land Use and Environment Committee. She will work with them on Downtown planning and Associate Planner Stacey Ray will be the new Olympia Planning Commission (OPC) liaison, with Principal Planner Todd Stamm as primary staff support in the interim.

The Commissioners applauded Ms. Buckler and expressed their appreciation for her

Planning Commission work over the years.

6. INFORMATION REQUESTS

Mr. Bauer gave a report at Commissioner Horn's request on Council progress and anticipated timeline for adoption of the Comprehensive Plan.

Commissioner Hoppe requested the Design Review Board concerns he has reported to staff be shared with the entire Planning Commission. Ms. Buckler will provide that information to the Commissioners.

7. BUSINESS ITEMS

[14-1117](#) PUBLIC HEARING on Proposed Scope of Actions for Neighborhood Centers

Ms. Buckler discussed input received from the recent property owner mail out survey, on site interviews with business owners, and comments from OlySpeaks.org. She discussed results concerning the most prevalent obstacles which include complex regulations, the high costs of development, and threshold for low density population business viability. Other concerns were garbage/recycling; problems of low visibility; vehicle parking; safety concerns including vagrancy and crime; noise pollution; site garbage; and American with Disabilities Act accessibility. She stressed the importance of keeping the conversation ongoing about what is most desirable and outlined recommended future actions.

Discussion:

- Request for the most recent public input.

Chair Brown invited the public to focus their comments on areas of greatest personal importance and opened the public hearing at 7:08 p.m.

Bonnie Jacobs, 720 Governor Stevens Ave, and a member of the Wildwood Neighborhood Association discussed a recent article in *The Olympian* about the Wildwood Center and the use of the word "underutilized". She said she believed that term was inaccurate and supported continuing efforts to create a mixed use diverse neighborhood center with adequate parking. She addressed successful past efforts by neighborhoods to stop projects they found undesirable and encouraged the Commission to maintain community involvement.

Megan Walsh, 3505 26th Ave NE, emphasized the importance of this planning to evolve and remain flexible.

Sherry Goulet, 3516 Pifer Rd, questioned the wisdom of proceeding with neighborhood centers before a Downtown plan is formulated. She believes Downtown projects will impact how the neighborhood centers develop and spoke in support of neighbor decision-making on what is desirable in neighborhoods.

Jay Elder, 1018 Olympic Ave NE, expressed appreciation for the OlySpeaks.org process. He discussed problems arising when dictating how and what can be developed is too prescriptive and supports Downtown planning before proceeding with neighborhood center development.

Chris van Daalen, 3203 Lorne St SE, discussed the pattern of successful development in Portland and the potential in Olympia to do something similar. He spoke in support of a focus on neighborhood input and the sub area planning process. He emphasized noncommercial aspects in addition to commercial aspects for opportunities of place making activity.

Zena Hartung, 3240 Centerwood Ct SE, spoke about her experience living in many different neighborhoods in Olympia. She expressed concern about past zoning changes giving churches placement on many corners which now limits several areas for development. She inquired about the Downtown plan process and supports emphasis on Downtown planning before neighborhood center development.

Lynn Schneider, 1924 Burbank Ave NW, spoke in favor of reducing barriers to neighborhood development and said downtown and neighborhood planning can occur simultaneously.

Zach Smith, 3505 26th Ave NE, a property owner in multiple locations, spoke about the development of a subdivision on Lilly Road and the impact it had on his well. He described how unmitigated impacts are forced on the community with costs passed on to the property owner. He questioned who bears the real costs for higher density.

Walt Jorgensen, 823 North St SE spoke in support of the Commission's involvement in policy development for neighborhoods. He discussed past zoning practices which have led to current situations and the impacts of traffic on neighborhoods. He supported neighborhoods as deciding bodies for changes and the potential of the Coalition of Neighborhoods Associations (CNA) to take an even greater role.

The public hearing was closed at 7:43 p.m. with written comment open for submission until 5:00 p.m. on November 21, 2014.

Discussion:

- Neighborhood Association involvement by those members of the public at the meeting.
- City budget considerations have restricted Downtown Planning.
- Recommendation to Council for criteria changes to Land Use Map for movement of neighborhood centers to areas designated by neighborhoods.
- Commission goal of neighborhood centers has always been to vest direction and area designation planning in the neighborhoods.
- City can only allow uses, designs and sizes of buildings, not who owns and operates them.
- Property owners of potential sites must be questioned and involved in the process.
- Ideal would be to proceed from the general to the specific regarding the Downtown

Plan, but the Commission does not generate the agenda for Council.

- Possibility and importance of continuing input by the public at the next Planning Commission meeting.
- Sub area planning process and how the neighborhood initiates changes.
- Place making, working with churches, and all the comments are critical to thinking about how to further the development of neighborhood centers.

The public hearing was held and closed.

8. REPORTS

Leadership Team:

Chair Brown gave a report. He encouraged Commissioners to attend the Land Use & Environment Committee meeting December 12, 2014 at 5:30 p.m.

Liaison Assignments:

Commissioner Hoppe gave a report on the Design Review Board meeting about the Briggs apartment complex and also discussed some problems with utility placement he perceives as problematic.

Commissioner Bateman announced neighborhood association meetings and a minimum wage debate on Wednesday, November 19, 2014 at St. Martin's University.

Commissioner Parker announced he will be out of town during the next Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) meeting and Commissioner Horn may attend in his absence.

Other relevant meetings attended:

Vice Chair Andresen attended the General Government Committee meeting.

Chair Brown announced an open house on the Community Renewal Area December 3 and 4, 2014.

Commissioners Bardin and Horn attended the CNA meeting and Commissioner Bardin discussed the conversation about signage in neighborhoods.

Commissioner Richmond gave a report on the Utilities Advisory Committee (UAC) meeting.

Commissioner Horn was invited by Councilmember Cooper to attend the Council Finance Committee meeting. He shared his conversation with the Committee about Planning Commission recommendations to the Capital Facilities Plan and Policies.

Vice Chair Andresen announced a meeting on low impact development Thursday November 20, 2014.

The nominating committee of Commissioners Bateman, Watts, and Vice Chair Andresen reported on interviews with Commissioners. Chair Brown is interested in

continuing to serve as Chair. Commissioner Bateman is interested in serving on the leadership team, Commissioner Richmond is interested in the finance subcommittee, and Vice Chair Andresen is interested in continuing to serve as Vice Chair.

Chair Brown thanked the leadership team with special appreciation to Commissioner Horn for all of his outstanding work.

9. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:28 p.m.

From the August 14, 2013 Minutes, the Planning Commission discussed the following after the tour:

- It is difficult to understand the difference between Villages, Centers and Retail.
- More flexibility is needed within the Center regulations because the codes are too restrictive. The requirement for development to provide an acre of open space isn't realistic.
- A master plan is another current code requirement. It's hard to get separate property owners together to initiate a master plan to develop Centers.
- Each neighborhood may want to develop their Neighborhood Center differently.
- Maybe food carts should be allowed in Neighborhood Centers.
- Farmers Market hours typically cater to people who are home during the day, not those who work during the day and come home at night.
- Some Neighborhood Centers have to compete with other retail within 1/4 mile. Others are farther from competing businesses, such as locations on the fringe of the City that may cater to rural residents.
- The Commission should consider requesting a work item in 2014 to explore potential amendments to the Center code.

The Olympian

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JOHN DODGE

Wildwood is the poster child for neighborhood centers

By John Dodge

Staff writer October 29, 2014

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Andrea Rigg and her daughter, Clara, 2, greet friend Alexis Erickson at Spud's Produce Market in the Wildwood Building on Capitol Way in Olympia.

PHOTOS BY TONY OVERMAN — Staff Photographer [Buy Photo](#)

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The Olympia Planning Commission wants to hear from the public about things the city can do to encourage neighborhood centers such as the one found in the Wildwood Building on Capitol Way. The commission has scheduled a public hearing on this topic 6:30 p.m., Nov. 17, at Olympia City Hall, 601 Fourth Ave. E., Olympia.

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In a span of two years, an historic, but dormant, shopping center on Olympia's Capitol Way has morphed into a hub of four businesses embraced by neighborhood residents and city officials.

Welcome to the Wildwood Building, which was designed in the Art Moderne style by noted Olympia architect Joseph Wohleb and opened in 1938 as the G.C. Valley Shopping Center, the first of its kind in Olympia, featuring a grocery store, pharmacy, and flower shop to meet the needs of the newly platted Wildwood subdivision.

Some 75 years later, the building's tenants are once again serving the needs of a pedestrian-friendly, urban neighborhood with a complementary mix of retail services befitting a buy local, sustainable lifestyle.

It's not out of the question that someone could start the morning with a cup of fresh-brewed coffee at Olympia Coffee Roasting Co., then shop at Spud's Produce Market to prepare home-cooked meals, grab an artisan sandwich or salad for lunch from The Lucky Lunchbox and return that night with the family for dinner at Vic's Pizzeria.

"I can hardly imagine a better combination of businesses," Wildwood neighborhood resident Charles Bert said. "The Wildwood Building has suddenly become this hub of the neighborhood. It's energized our neighborhood a lot."

After years underutilized as a home to specialty shops and state government offices, the Wildwood Building at 2822 Capitol Way SE entered its new, wildly popular era on Aug. 8, 2012. That's the day Dave and Karissa Jekel opened Spud's Produce Market in the south side of the building.

Dave Jekel grew up in the grocery business in Tenino. He and his wife started looking for space in 2011 for a neighborhood-style grocery store to sell fresh, organic produce grown locally.

"This was one of the buildings we targeted," Jekel, 41, said. "When I saw the 'For Lease' sign go up in 2012, we jumped on it." The Jekels had a 3,100-square-foot store to fulfill their new business model dream.

"We've been real happy here and the store just keeps evolving," he said. Customers ask them to stock things, then they actually put their money where their mouth is and buy them. The latest craze? Butter from grass fed cows.

Jekel estimates that more than 60 percent of the store's customers live in nearby neighborhoods. But customers come from far and wide, including Tenino residents Kerri Turner and Joy Lower, who said she was drawn to the store by the fresh apples at 99 cents a pound.

Jekel said the four businesses have a special synergy not often found in a shopping center.

"It's nice because none of us do the same thing," he said. "And we all have things that people want."

The next business to join the Wildwood fold was Olympia Coffee Roasting Co. Oliver Stormshak, who's lived in the Wildwood neighborhood for 13 years, opened the coffee shop in March of 2013.

"I started talking to the landlord five years ago," Stormshak recalled. "The Wildwood Building is one of Olympia's gems. It has such a presence."

In December of 2013, Vic's Pizzeria owner Rachel Lee took the plunge and opened a second store to complement the original west Olympia store. "It's been fabulous," she said of the Wildwood neighborhood center. "It reminds me of something you see in Portland, Ore."

The final piece in the puzzle fell into place earlier this year when Swing Wine Bar owners Nicole and Jim Butigan sublet space from Stormshak for The Lucky Lunchbox, a gourmet sandwich shop featuring all-natural and organic ingredients.

The city's 20-year comprehensive land use plan calls for more neighborhood centers, clusters of businesses within a 20 minute or one-half-mile walk of someone's home. An on-line survey on the city's website is asking what city residents want in a neighborhood center. More than 625 responses – several times more than other on-line city surveys have received – show strong support for a grocery store, a pub or restaurant, mobile food cart, drug store and health and fitness center, to name a few.

The Olympia Planning Commission has scheduled a public hearing 6:30 p.m., Nov. 17 at City Hall to keep the neighborhood center conversation going.

The planning commission wants to make sure city regulations encourage, not discourage, neighborhood centers, said planning commission chair Max Brown, who happens to be a big fan of the Wildwood neighborhood center.

"It's in a walkable neighborhood, on the transit line and features all locally owned, customer-focused businesses – I love it," Brown said.

Retired state employee Bill Perry grew up in the neighborhood, and remembers going to the grocery store and butcher shop, and later an ice cream store when he was a kid. Now he's back living in the neighborhood and frequently stops in Spud's for groceries. "It's a big positive," he said of the Wildwood resurgence.

Spud's Produce Market brings back fond memories for Olympia Realtor Larry Peterson, whose father, Irv Peterson, opened the a grocery store in the Wildwood Building in 1940. The family business moved to west Olympia in 1962 and the original grocery store was leased out until 1965.

"It's a great neighborhood and a great little grocery store," Peterson said after roaming the aisles he frequented as a youth.

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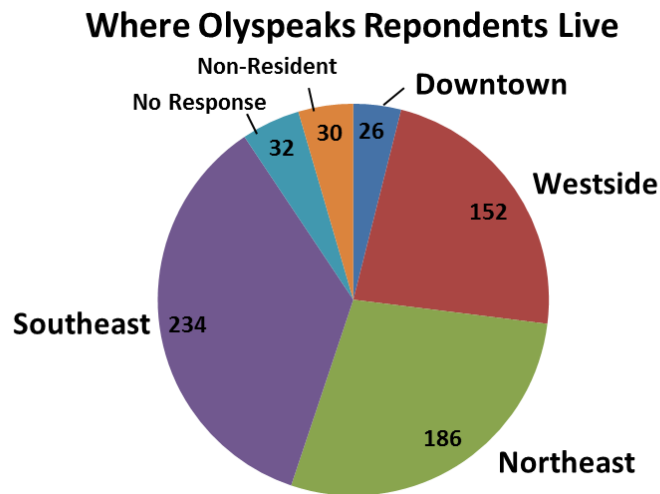
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Summary Report: Questionnaire on Olympia’s Neighborhood Centers

Olympia’s 20-Year Comprehensive Plan says neighborhood centers should develop in various locations throughout the city. In 2014, the Olympia Planning Commission gathered input to better understand community desires and feasibility for neighborhood center development. This included an online questionnaire which was posted to Olyspeaks.org October 13-28, 2014. A total of 668 people responded from all over Olympia. This input, along with other forms of input and analysis, will help to inform a Planning Commission recommendation to the City Council regarding actions the City can take to further the community’s neighborhood center goals.



What Types of Businesses Belong in Neighborhood Centers?

We asked respondents to select desired businesses from a list we provided. We had two reasons for providing this specific selection:

- 1) To get a better idea about the community’s interest in neighborhood center business types, and
- 2) To rationalize two lists of allowed neighborhood-scale development in the code. Currently, there are two sections of the development code that relate to neighborhood-scale business development, with some differences in their allowed/prohibited uses.

As some respondents pointed out, the feasibility and impacts of these uses should be examined. Here is how the community responded in order of preference from most selected to least selected:

Responses	Types of Business
566	Bakery/coffee shop/restaurant
473	Food store
310	Alcohol establishment
302	Mobile food cart
285	Health fitness center
276	General store
183	Art gallery
163	Bed & breakfast: 2-5 guest rooms
160	Pharmacy or medical supply store
150	Bank
146	Child care center
134	Personal services such as hair or nail salon
130	Bed & breakfast: 1 guest room
117	Medical offices such as dentist or doctor
100	Gas station
97	Veterinary clinic
92	Clothing stores
91	Laundry services
65	Church*
56	Light manufacturing with retail component
53	Business offices such as tax preparation, lawyer, or real estate agency
26	Commercial printing shop

** This should be re-titled "Place of worship"*

What Other Uses Belong in Neighborhood Centers?

We asked respondents to select from a list of non-commercial uses they think belong in a neighborhood center. Below is a compilation of how the community responded with selections ranked from most selected to least selected:

Responses	Types of Business
523	Benches
496	Neighborhood message board
471	Community garden
442	Children play area
401	Farmers markets
369	Neighborhood gathering space
320	Residences above commercial uses
310	Entertainment events
296	Shared recycling/waste bin area for businesses
295	Membership organization facility
279	Library
276	Free standing ornamental structure
251	Mobile sidewalk vendors
240	Electric vehicle power station
190	Interpretive signs
176	Apartments (up to 5 units)
147	Duplexes
137	Quarters for a night watch person
125	Museum
105	Apartments (6 or more units)
93	Parking lot sales
47	Wholesale sales combined with retail component

Open-Ended Responses

The survey included three open-ended sections where respondents were asked to write in their own ideas. A number of common themes surfaced in these comments.

Desired Characteristics for Neighborhood Centers:

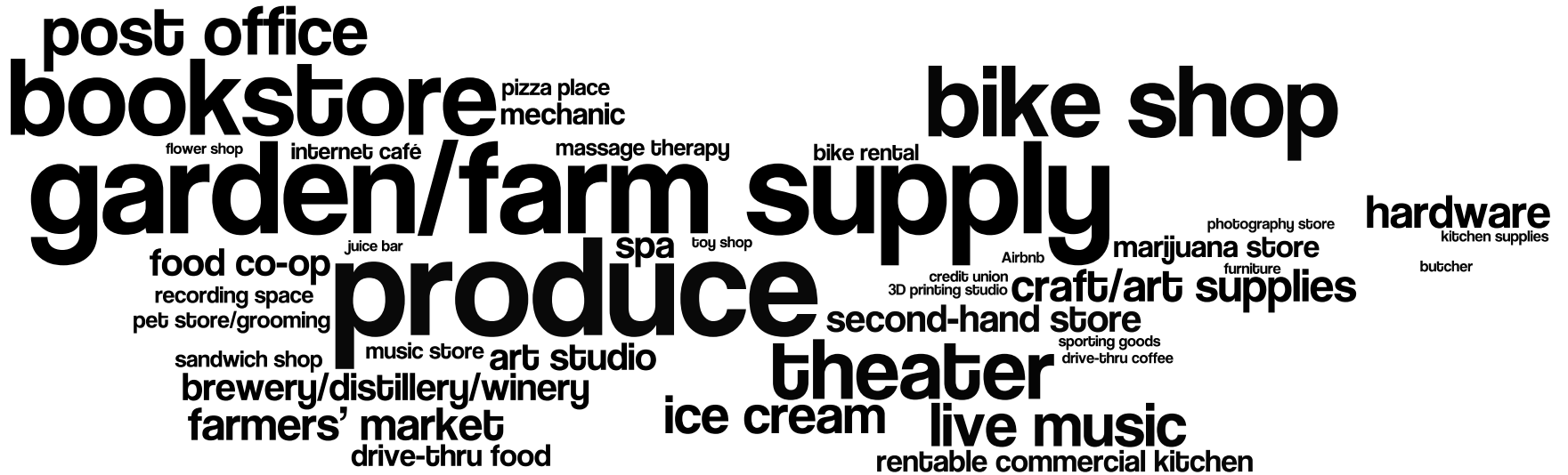
- Family-Friendly, Local, Organic, Small-Scale, Affordable, Quaint, Convenient, Easy Transportation Options, Bike-Friendly, Variety of Housing
- Wildwood & San Francisco Bakery are good models

Concerns about Neighborhood Centers:

- Impacts of vagrancy and crime (increased break-ins, drug-needle debris)
- Impacts of noise (need set hours of operation)
- Site of garbage (needs to be screened)
- Availability and design of parking
- ADA Accessibility to and within centers

The following pages provide a compilation of the public's responses to the open-ended prompts.

Other Business Options - Write-in Comments*



* Font size reflects the relative number of suggestions for each item, with the smallest font indicating 1 comment and the largest indicating 17.

Other Housing Options - Write-in Comments*



*Font size reflects the relative number of suggestions for each item, with the smallest font indicating 1 comment and the largest indicating 6.

Other Findings:

Most of the comments were positive in regard to neighborhood centers, such as ***“Love it!”*** and ***“I think this is one of the most progressive initiatives the City has offered citizens in many years.”***

A few of the comments were not positive, expressing sentiment such as, ***“no thanks”*** or ***“...we don’t want businesses in our neighborhood, pure and simple.”***

Many people expressed concern along these lines, ***“... allow the centers to not be “trashed” with homeless, drug dealers and young people hanging out like we have done to our downtown.”***

Many people also expressed concern for Olympia’s homeless population. For example, one person wrote, ***“The homeless-ness in our community has increased so much that services to assist homeless should be present in each center.”***

Several people made comments about desire for ***“locally focused”*** businesses. One person gave a reason, stating, ***“I would be very disappointed if my neighborhood had any national chain business as they don’t have the same kind of investment in building relationships with neighbors or investing in local activities.”*** A few comments expressed this idea: ***“do not want profit zones in my neighborhood.”***

There were also several comments along these lines, ***“allow flexibility depending on size of land and location,”*** and ***“Central planning isn’t what government should be all about”*** and, ***“make it easier for people to build a small business without all the red tape the City has.”***

In regard to our survey, we received sentiments such as:

- ***“Thank you for involving the community with this survey! It is a HUGE step in the right direction asking citizens what they want to see in their neighborhoods.”***
- ***“The city does not have prescriptive authority over what WILL go in NC’s, so this survey is a bit odd. Perhaps its purpose is to determine if allowed uses are on-target with community needs?”***
- ***“... survey doesn’t capture important distinctions ...”***
- ***“I was confused by the survey question on where I should indicate I live.”***
- ***“I really appreciate the opportunity to provide feedback!”***
- ***“I worry the city is leading people on with false hopes instead of using this as a learning moment about the economics of growth and realities of density.”***