

Wenatchee Housing Code Update

Planning Commission Meeting Summary

September 18, 2019

MAKERS' Bob Bengford conducted a slideshow covering recent updates and key discussion items associated with the housing code changes and the proposed design guidelines.

Outcomes associated with the zoning code updates included:

- **RH zone** – agree with keeping single family a permitted use (not just for existing, but new uses). PC members agreed that market conditions will likely limit the number of new single family uses in the district. Meanwhile, the change allows some flexibility for property owners in the zone (and it will be appreciated by members of the public who came to the last meeting with concerns about the subject).
- **Sunnyslope RH zone height limits** – PC members agreed to reduce the maximum height down to 35' in the RH zone consistent with the Sunnyslope Subarea Plan. Staff provided some background on the topic.
- **Maximum density in the RM and RH zone** - Bob noted that the maximum density standards for the RM and RH zone (20 and 40 respectively) were a topic of discussion by task force members recently. Bob presented slides from Everett and elsewhere illustrating what various densities look like. PC members had questions about how parking was accommodated in some of the developments depicted. One PC member noted that the lot sizes in the city were getting too small and should be increased across the board. Another PC member disagreed. Bob noted that the RM and RH density standards seemed appropriate given the existing and desired context and other existing/proposed standards. No specific changes recommended by the PC.
- **Multiple single family homes on one lot** – Bob presented a new suggestion for how to regulate multiple homes on one lot, suggesting that they would need to be located and designed so that they could meet subdivision and applicable lot standards. The PC agreed.
- **Measuring height on sloping lots** – Bob presented slides identifying a suggested approach to address the problem. Though there appeared to be some acceptance of the elements of the proposed (building elevations on the downslope side of property may not exceed height limit but may integrate a 10' upper level stepback to achieve ultimate height limit), but PC members stopped short of providing full endorsement. They requested to run the proposal by the task force at their next meeting. The ideas of measuring to the peak of a pitched roof rather than mid-point and measuring from beginning rather than finished grade was discussed.
- **Height limits for zoning transitions** - Bob presented a new concept to moderate building heights on zone edge properties (between residential zones and other commercial/mixed-use zones with taller height limits). The PC agreed with the proposal.

- **Townhouses in foothills** – The Commission in review of the residential use table determined that the massing and characteristics of townhomes did not blend well with the characteristics of the RS Zoning District. The Planning Commission did feel that patio homes would be appropriate. Outcomes associated with the design guidelines included:
- **Lighting** – PC members referenced need for dark sky related lighting and Bob noted that he'd examine the current and proposed standards to see if any adjustments were warranted. Staff pointed out that there are policies in the Comprehensive Plan supporting the adoption of dark sky regulations but no code provisions have been adopted yet.
- **Character areas/waterfront** – Bob added the Waterfront area as a character area and added a row to the architectural treatment matrix. PC members agreed with the change.
- **Stucco** – The PC vice-chair asked about the stucco provisions in the matrix and in the standards. Bob clarified that the "C" in the materials matrix implied that the materials were just subject to applicable standards (conditions) in the document and NOT subject to a conditional use permit. Bob also asked the PC vice-chair to review the other stucco standards given his familiarity with the material and possibly provide photo examples (prior to the next task force meeting).

Next Steps

- Staff noted that the draft has already gone out for 60-day public review
- The task force will be meeting again to review the draft on September 25. Bob will work with staff to provide them with a list of key items to discuss.