

**PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES
APRIL 4, 2019, WORKSHOP
LOWER LEVEL – COMMUNITY ROOM
702 E. FRONT AVENUE**

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Tom Messina, Chairman
Jon Ingalls, Vice-Chair
Lynn Fleming
Peter Luttrupp
Lewis Rumpler
Brinnon Mandel

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Hilary Anderson, Community Planning Director
Shana Stuhlmiller, Public Hearing Assistant
Bobby Gonder, Fire Department
Lee Brainard, Police Department

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:

Mike Ward

CALL TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Messina at 11:00 a.m.

WORKSHOP:

Atlas Mill Project Preliminary Design and Development Standards

Hilary Anderson, Community Planning Director provided the following statements:

- She stated that Mr. Boyd will provide some background and updates on public space for Atlas Waterfront, and Don Vehige, GGLO, will provide the bulk of the presentation including updates on what has been done since the last workshop.
- She introduced Phil Boyd.

Phil Boyd, Welch-Comer Engineers, provided the following statements:

- He thanked the commission for a great response by providing comments at the last workshop, with those comments incorporated into another version of the Development Standards.
- He commented that they have met with the Parks and Recreation Commission, and also at a Parks & Recreation/City Council joint meeting, and a City Council/Ignite joint workshop, with the objective to each of these meetings being to solicit public input. He commented that ignite might provide additional funding for the public space in the Atlas area.
- The City Council determined that ignite could add additional funding to the Atlas Mill property by providing the following: water dog park, converting an old beach area to a beach, putting in an accessible kayak launch, adding a playground, putting in an underpass on the Centennial Trail that would go under Suzanne, a water feature, future dock access, additional water accesses, food truck area, a vendor building that would double as a police building, and a park maintenance building. All buildings would have a historic nature to reflect the former mill site.

Commissioner Fleming commented that at Honeysuckle Beach in Hayden Lake, they provided a loop that separates swimmers from boats, and he inquired if this is something the city could do on their beach.

Mr. Boyd explained that in this area along the water there are a number of pilings that exist and they intend to take advantage of those pilings to help separate swimmers from boaters and also intend to put in log booms, provided they can get permits from the Department of Lands.

Don Vehige, GGLO Design, provided the following statements:

- He gave a presentation on density done well and explained the meaning of density at 34 units per acre. He then provided a list of various projects done in the Northwest and how 34 units was projected on those properties.
- He noted that a typical block length in these cities was 6.5 acres.
- He compared the lots in Coeur d'Alene and said they are similar to what is in Seattle, which are typically 40 foot wide lots and Coeur d'Alene is 50 feet.
- He showed different photos of townhouses in various towns and noted that those homes are anywhere between 20-24 feet wide.
- He referenced another type of townhouse project that was a GGLO project developed in the 1990's and is a good model showing the location of the townhouses around the perimeter. He noted that it was one of the first urban projects to go in downtown Redmond.
- He defined what makes a development "livable" is how it addresses the street and how it creatively uses the spaces in between the buildings.

Ms. Anderson stated that 34 units per acre has been a topic recently for the Planning Commission and Council in regard to density and questioned what the density would equate to for townhouses if it is all single family ownership, and if that density includes the stacked flats for apartments.

Mr. Vehige answered that it does, and continued:

- He showed various photos from Belmont Dairy which has some very tall, skinny townhouses with no elevator, and noted that the units are about 21 feet wide by 30 to 32 feet deep, and all have garages located behind fronting on a pedestrian street. He commented that it could be a good model for Atlas Mill site.
- He explained the definition of "Stacked Flats" and showed a photo of a development in Rainier and explained that the project had a density of 66 units/acre with limited parking.
- He stated that for the Atlas Mill site they will be looking at the lower scale for each one of those examples to provide a livable community.

Chairman Messina asked if the proposed residential homes would be built close to the river and, if so, will the height of the homes be stepped back from the water.

Mr. Vehige explained that the idea is to provide a two story building along Riverfront Drive to help provide a street wall. He said that he would like the homes built to three stories and a mixed use building with a height of four stories. He commented that he would like to hear suggestions on what would be an appropriate step up in height when going from building to building.

Ms. Anderson explained that one benefit of the site is that there is a natural topography that gives them the opportunity to provide views from the various blocks as you go away from the river. She explained that density can be a "scary" word and that the Atlas Mill property is 48 acres across the whole site, so 17 units/acre across the entire site could be "clustered" together so you won't be exceeding 17 units/acre. She added that they are going to be able to shift the units to keep the density, but clustering to keep the open space along the riverfront.

Chairman Messina inquired how staff would handle the issue if a developer wanted to make changes to the Design Standards.

Ms. Anderson explained that staff has discussed how to build assurance with the plan, but allow some flexibility and work with ignite to keep track of the units.

Chairman Messina stated that he hopes that from doing these workshops the final product will look like what was agreed upon. He stated that his concern is they have done this before for other projects and been disappointed in the past on the final product.

Mr. Vehige explained the reason why they are getting “tailored” standards for certain blocks and suggested that after the workshop, the commission look at the Design Standards on their own and send comments back to them.

Commissioner Luttrupp inquired if Mr. Vehige was involved with any of the projects that were being discussed today.

Mr. Vehige pointed out the projects he worked on personally, including the development of design guidelines for a community in Seattle.

Commissioner Luttrupp commented that he feels assured that someone from the team has worked on a similar plan that has experience.

Mr. Vehige continued his presentation.

- He stated that their mission is to create a public realm that people love, and when thinking about the Atlas Mill property they focused on providing a central greenspace or a manmade water feature.
- He stated that they would like to create public squares for different activities that people might want to attend.
- They want to create great streets, including the space between buildings that could be used for recreation.
- He also said they want to provide some civic identity/anchor like city hall, or adding a Starbucks where there is a community meeting building.
- In regard to connecting to surrounding neighborhoods and amenities, he said that they have built it into the master plan for Atlas Waterfront development, connecting to the Centennial Trail, Riverstone etc.
- They want to provide easy access to bike and transit routes. He explained that bikes are a big part of connectivity with the transit lines/center and the trails and that this plan is providing a lot of access.
- They want to help develop a mix of uses and housing types to include retail, office and a range of different housing types.
- They have looked at developing ground level activities that engage the sidewalk, different kinds of street frontages, retail, restaurant or residential, and how they can establish a sense of community.
- In regard to parking, they need to be smart showing on street parking to serve retail and maybe having a parking structure underground or something less expensive. He suggested a wrapped parking structure with residential surrounding it, or concealing parking behind the units to create a great streetscape.
- They want to be good neighbors, and he suggested courthouses and townhouses that surround a courtyard. He further said that a shared courtyard would say “community,” and added that vegetation can provide a privacy transition from the shared space to the units beyond.
- They want to creatively modulate building mass & height. He showed examples of two similar buildings, and explained that one building has more ins and outs where modulation counts and they are using it to create a more unique roofscape.

Commissioner Rumpler asked what drove the distinction between the two buildings -- was it the architect or builder, and he also asked how they got two different projects.

Mr. Vehige explained that it was the architect and developer and that this was part of a master plan neighborhood which had more robust standards in place and a better design team and inspired developer. The other building ... not so much.

Commissioner Rumpler asked if they have presented the Design Standards to the local developers to get some input.

Ms. Anderson explained that they have it in the schedule to meet with local and nationwide developers to get their feedback on the overall site plan and the Development Standards, to make sure they are going to have something viable.

Commissioner Ingalls said that they need to ensure that each block develops to its maximum density and that the sum of the maximum density is ok with the entire project.

Ms. Anderson stated that is true and, if you multiply it by 17 units/acre, then that is the total capacity and she doubts that each block will be developed to the full density.

Commissioner Ingalls asked if a developer buys and leaves some density on the table, would that density will be moved over to the next block.

Commissioner Mandel said that the later developer would have less to work with and if the incentive is to maximize the revenue on the development, then the earlier developments might have more density. She asked if her explanation was correct.

Mr. Vehige stated that there are only a few blocks where this can happen.

Chairman Messina said that they can't control all the density and questioned if the developer can pick the design and layout and would the density stay the same.

Ms. Anderson said they can look at this further as to what makes sense.

Commissioner Mandel said that she noted on page 9, Phase 1, that the phase looks denser than the other phases.

Mr. Vehige stated that it is illustrative and explained that it is a phasing diagram on top of the other previous plan that is getting revised. He said they would probably need to come up with a phasing graphic that is a bit more generic to eliminate the confusion.

Commissioner Mandel stated that if she was a developer, would look at the phasing diagram and try and get in on Phase 1.

Mr. Boyd explained that phasing is driven by infrastructure and where the district boundaries are, and that the River District and the Lake District have a certain amount of funding in them that could be used to build the initial infrastructure. He explained that in Phase 1 they build the infrastructure, the blocks get sold, and then they would take that revenue from Phase 1 as "seed money" to be used for Phase 2.

Commissioner Luttrupp asked what happens when there is more than one proposal.

Mr. Boyd explained that their next step is to talk to the development community and show them how they plan to do this. He commented that in regard to the discussions they have had so far early on, some developers would want to take it all and that becomes a question to ignite as to whether they want to give

all those blocks to one person, or disperse them to others. He stated that some people may not have the capital to take them on.

Commissioner Luttrupp asked if the determination will be made through either council or ignite.

Mr. Boyd stated it would be ignite to make the selection.

Ms. Anderson stated that because of time, they need to get through the presentation and that if the commissioners have any questions or feedback, they can provide them to Ms. Anderson and they will get any additional materials presented today to the commissioners.

Commissioner Rumpler said that he feels this is not the first time this challenge has been given to the community. He commented that they are talking about a multi-phased master plan development and feels that they don't have to invent the solution. Someone else has had the same question and, if that is true, the last person in will not have the same advantage as the first person.

Mr. Boyd commented that they have talked about that with their team and how they present this in a business-type way. He said that Heartland, their real estate advisor, commented that they will provide long term advisory services.

Mr. Vehige continued his presentation.

- In regard to frontage types, he said that they have changed and are still based on the same principals and explained there are A, B, C and D types.
- He explained that the A and B buildings face the street and showed various photos of what those homes could look like.
- Frontage types C homes will have front loaded garages and he showed some examples and noted that the primary goal is not to have a street dominated by garages. They want street trees and good curb appeal.
- Frontage type D is retail mixed use building or office. He stated that the success of these buildings is how they engage the streets.
- He explained the differences from the last map, including expanding the flexibility for where they could have retail and office mixed with retail in the western front entry.
- He stated that the diagrams have been cleaned up and revised. The potential block configurations are meant to provide examples of what they could do within the standards. He stated that the photos shown are not the only solutions and that there are others out there.

Development Blocks

- More flexibility in terms of density and layout was added for Block 3 and 4. Block 4 has streets on two sides on the south and east side and a slope on the north side with potentially a walkway. He stated that it is difficult to have a more regular series of development standards applied to this uphill portion.
- Block 5 is a unique block with a unique shape and has streets along four sides and a mid-block connection. The setbacks and building separations have the flexibility and type of building proposed along Riverfront Drive.
- In regard to uses, there is potential for some retail or restaurant office spaces to share some required parking on the street. Some of the blocks are kind of tight and Mr. Vehige questioned the flexibility that can be provided to relieve some pressure on parking.
- All of the blocks except Block 10 have a more robust take more detailed standards, such as Block 6 which has a unique block shape where the standards are trying to adapt the flexibility and the expectations to the different site conditions.
- Block 7 and 8 are both most likely front-loaded residential building blocks and that is why they are grouped together. They will have a more simple building type.
- In Block 8, there is the option to minimize alleys which they have limited to that block, and if

someone wants to develop at a slightly higher density there might be the potential to bring an alley in Block 8.

- Block 9 is a different block in that it has access and visibility and potential access from Seltice and a wider range of uses.
- Block 10 needs more work.
- Block 11 and 12 are two blocks that go hand-in-hand, and which are located at the western end of the site. It has some flexibility to Block 9, but less so because the site is narrow.
- He stated that the Building types have not changed since the last time they were presented.

Mr. Vehige concluded his presentation.

Chairman Messina asked if there will be parking along Riverfront Drive and, if so, will it be for residential only or will the public will be allowed. He said that at the last meeting, they had a number of city staff and had questions/comments, and if they were addressed. He asked, in regard to walkways and streetscapes, if there were going to be some requirements to have more landscaping than the normal requirement. He said that at the last Parks & Recreation Commission meeting it was mentioned that the docks could be used for commercial businesses and noted that he is concerned with the safety of those rentals close to public access.

Ms. Anderson explained that two of those items have been discussed related to street trees, landscaping, and timing. They have discussed riverfront parking on the street and noted that it is critical to notify anyone who lives there that it will be for public use for the project.

Commissioner Mandel mentioned the importance of protecting or making sure that they get the riverfront drive blocks correct and questioned if the design standards for blocks 1, 2, and 3 are similar and should they be more particular about setbacks and street scapes.

Mr. Vehige explained that it has been a challenge, and what is in the handout that Mr. Boyd gave the commissioners is more generic and is intended to facilitate discussion about some of the details, rather than walking through page by page and trying to hit more things that are more common. He stated that when you look at Block 1, 2, and 3, they are similar and intended to be more detailed and more pointed towards getting the character they are hoping for.

He stated that there are no changes for carports and garages and the commission may want to look at accessory structures.

Retail and restaurant are limited to free standing buildings to two stories, or 30 feet, and any office buildings are to three stories, or 45 feet.

In regard to lot size requirements, they are generalized and vary from block to block. For single family houses, they are proposing a minimum lot width of 35' feet and 75' feet for the depth. There is a limited amount of space from the street, riverfront drive, the river, and Seltice.

Duplexes are being conceived as a fee simple side-by-side duplex like a two unit town house with a 25 foot minimum width. Where that comes from is a narrow unit with a 5 foot set back and similar depth.

Townhouses would have a minimum width of 20 feet.

In regard to multi-family, they may need to look at a minimum lot size of 1.5 times the footprint of the building. Looking at small multifamily buildings that they have proposed, the standard seems to work.

Commissioner Fleming said that she sees a problem with side yard setbacks with roof overhangs that have been a challenge. She is concerned about water table issues with some of the lots and asked if they are able to do basements because they have the window well issue, which is a fire exit issue.

Mr. Vehige explained that they would see more of that detail when they get into the blocks.

In regard to fences, the front character reduces to 3.5 feet which creates a more friendly area and keeping side/rear fences to 6 feet.

In regard to parking, there is a minimum of two off-street spaces per single family duplex and townhouse, and they may want to maximize townhouse parking. They may allow one additional parking stall beside the garage, or having an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) may require one extra parking stall.

In regard to multi-family parking, they are proposing one per unit for a studio, 1.5 for one bedroom and two per unit for two bedrooms. He commented that they have been discussing this with Heartland and have been planning to have an average of 1.25 stalls per unit off street for the multifamily. He commented that they would like feedback from the commission and if there is a problem they can go back to the city standards.

Commissioner Rumpler said that if they are basing this on a smaller car and state, Idaho is not Portland. They have to shape the parking spot to their local realities and even with multi-family housing, North Idaho would be trucks.

Mr. Vehige stated that he was not talking about parking lot size and was not concerned about size and is confident they can accommodate the larger sizes of stalls and parking spaces, whether it's on the surface or in the buildings.

Commissioner Rumpler said that the size of the stall has to be larger and has an effect.

Ms. Anderson said that they did talk about that earlier this week and the plan is to do the 9 foot by 20 foot stall, which is their standard size in the city to make sure they are not creating an issue by having parking spaces that only accommodate a small car.

Commissioner Ingalls stated for him to make this project successful is to allow this project to have some "breathing" room to be successful and that parking is a big concern.

Commissioner Fleming commented about perpendicular parking like downtown Wenatchee that has some retail on the street, allowing perpendicular parking away from the view. He commented that they don't leave parking on the view side of the street but perpendicular parking could work and that they did perpendicular parking on East Sherman and it was a big hit.

Mr. Vehige stated that he appreciated all the comments and in terms of diagonal parking, they have been talking bring more perpendicular parking in the block area.

Commissioner Luttrupp commented that maybe staff can get examples from different areas so they can discuss.

Commissioner Rumpler said the street parking in Kendall Yards has the street parking as parallel with no diagonal parking at all. He said that parking configuration can affect the quality of place and if you can't find somewhere to park, the quality of the whole experience can fall short.

Commissioner Mandel asked if the parking courts enable more cars or is a way to hide the parking.

Mr. Vehige explained that it all depends on if they are combining parking with tuck-under garages that could give them more parking. They need to study it further and bring back more examples.

Chairman Messina said that if there are more questions, please send them to staff.

Prepared by Shana Stuhlmiller, Public Hearing Assistant