

SPECIAL MEETING DES MOINES CITY COUNCIL

MINUTES

June 11, 2005

The special meeting of the Des Moines City Council was called to order at 9:05 a.m. by Mayor Sheckler at the Des Moines Senior Center, 2045 S. 216th St, Des Moines, WA.

ROLL CALL – Present: Mayor Bob Sheckler, Mayor Pro Tem Scott Thomasson, Councilmembers Dan Sherman, Maggie Steenrod (left at 1:35 p.m.), Gary Peterson, Susan White and Richard Benjamin (arrived at 1:15 p.m., left at 1:45 p.m.). Also present were City Manager Tony Piasecki, Community Development Director Judith Kilgore, Chief of Police Roger Baker, Park and Recreation Director Patrice Thorell, consultant Tom Beckwith, future Director of Planning, Building and Public Works Grant Fredricks and Permit Specialist David Steen.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Economic Development Strategy

At **Mayor Sheckler's** request, **City Manager Piasecki** welcomed attendees and gave the overview of the agenda, namely that Staff and Committees are looking for policy direction as they continue to draft language for the Zoning Code and Comprehensive Plan revisions. He emphasized that today's decisions were not final, but would go through Committees and come back to Council for acceptance or rejection. He called attention to two documents that would support today's discussion:

1. Memorandum, June 2, 2005, Judith Kilgore, 5 pgs.
2. Land Use Code and Comprehensive Plan Matrix, undated, 9 pgs.

He asked **Community Development Director Judith Kilgore** to open the discussion.

Pacific Ridge

Director Kilgore reminded the Council that three tasks are necessarily happening concurrently: Economic Development Strategy Development, Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Code revisions. She indicated that the two committees have come to a place in their work where they seek Policy direction from the Council before they proceed further.

Director Kilgore began the discussion by calling attention to the Memorandum where Pacific Ridge is the first listed major area of impact on the Zoning Code in the Economic Development Strategy Discussion. She emphasized the need for more flexible zoning as suggested in the 8 bullet items beginning on p. 1 of the Memorandum.

There was a lively discussion of the pros and cons of:

1. The Structured Parking requirement
2. Disallowing more fast food development
3. Desiring a pedestrian friendly neighborhood when a relatively high speed highway runs through it
4. The possible effects of the Port agreement on Pacific Ridge development
5. The need to exclude one-story commercial development.

Councilmember Thomasson advised the Council to separate Residential and Commercial concerns in order to help organize their thinking.

Director Kilgore indicated she was hearing a consensus that the original vision of the Pacific Ridge plan is important to keep, but that some tweaking in order to encourage more intermediate development would be advisable.

At 10 a.m., **Councilmember Thomasson** excused himself from the remainder of the meeting and **Mayor Sheckler** called for a ten-minute break. At 10:10 a.m. he reconvened the group and asked **Police Chief Roger Baker** and **Director Kilgore** to provide some update on the nature of the Pacific Ridge neighborhood.

Chief Baker used the story of his recent meeting with a new business owner in town, Jeff Eng, to outline what he thought were some points of good news. He said Mr. Eng's building, Emerald Villa, used to require an average of one emergency response each day, with lots of drugs and gang activity and complaints from businesses up to one-half mile away. Now, he reported, the response calls have been cut by two-thirds after Mr. Eng's enthusiastic participation in the Crime Free Rental Housing Program. Chief Baker wanted to emphasize that:

1. This is a new owner who thinks he got a great deal and is very pleased to own a business in Des Moines.
2. Fresh eyes consider this a beautiful city.

Additionally, Chief Baker affirmed a preference for structured parking as a crime preventing measure. He said the main thing is that it guarantees a parking place for each unit.

Director Kilgore affirmed that Pacific Ridge is very different today than it was even a few years ago. She pointed to the Midway Park upgrades, new street lights, better kept lawns and to the diminished garbage problems to show that the culture has changed and people are taking more pride in their neighborhood. She also mentioned that Silverwood condos were selling fast and that people are buying lower buildings along 30th Ave. S. Finally, she said that although Walgreens has the only building permit for that area in five years, now there is a group of doctors looking at a three-story building where the dentists' offices (west side of Pacific Highway South) are now.

City Manager Piasecki also mentioned that the Soundview Mobile Home Park has been bought by a new owner. He asked Director Kilgore what three items she would most strongly suggest be reviewed for possible change.

Director Kilgore listed the following items:

1. Height requirements
2. Front setbacks along Pacific Highway South only (because of highway speeds)
3. Allowed uses (keep the intent but allow flexibility)

Downtown

Director Kilgore emphasized the need for a mechanism in the Zoning Code that would allow staff to look at unusual projects instead of being required to deny requests without discussion.

Mayor Sheckler mentioned "Shape It," a software program that would allow staff to see how Downtown height changes would affect views farther upland. The cost was said to be \$600 for the software.

Councilmember Sherman raised the issue of structures on top of buildings, not considered in total height. He said some are fairly sizeable and should be taken into consideration. He mentioned he was opposed to eliminating third floor setbacks or requiring boats at businesses to be enclosed away from view and that he was concerned about parking.

Single Family

After **Director Kilgore** reiterated her comments from the Administrative Recommendation regarding Cottage Housing, **City Manager Piasecki**, reported his sense there was a “go for it” feeling among the group for all the Administrative Recommendations for the three neighborhoods. That willingness to move forward was confirmed around the group.

Comprehensive Plan

After brief conversation, consensus developed to follow the Administration Recommendation to remove density designations from the land use maps and create clear Rezone criteria as part of the Zoning Code revision. Regarding a possible Public Utilities Zone, with the note that the Zoning Code rewrite consultant be directed to develop regulations for this zone, consensus developed to retain Strategy 2-4-05.

At 11:45 a.m., **Mayor Sheckler** called for an early break for lunch. At 12:40 p.m., he reconvened the afternoon session.

Zoning Code

Using the “Land Use Code and Comprehensive Land Matrix” document, **Consultant Tom Beckwith** facilitated Council’s discussion of the talking points listed. The group decided to try to spend no more than 5 minutes on each of the 31 points listed. They were able to discuss the first 14 points, reaching consensus supporting all but two of the Recommendations (9 and 10), which were noted to come back and discuss later.

At 1:15 p.m., Councilmember Benjamin joined the meeting. At 1:35 p.m., Councilmember Steenrod left the meeting.

Among other things, these actions would direct the Zoning Code rewrite consultant to:

1. Consolidate the Zoning Code into four parts.
2. Take all numbers out of the text and put them in tables with footnotes.
3. Use only the North American Industrial Classification System for permitted uses.
4. Clarify the purposes of the zoning districts (understood as the most important connection to the Comprehensive Plan).
5. Expand the Conditional Use process, including an administrative conditional use process.
6. Reduce the number of zoning classifications from 9 to 7.
7. Adopt a Public Facilities zone, assuming it is included in the Comprehensive Plan strategy (changing the zoning map accordingly).

At 1:45 p.m. Councilmember Benjamin left the meeting.

Left for further discussion were the following issues:

1. Consolidating Single Family into one zone, depending on critical area overlay zones to manage critical area set-asides (9).
2. Revising permitted uses in Downtown and Pacific Ridge (10).
3. Issues 15 through 31 of the “Land Use . . . Matrix” document

4.

A major concern of the Council was to make the Zoning Code simpler and more “user friendly.”

At 2:00 p.m., **Mayor Sheckler** called for a recess. At 2:15 p.m., because of a lack of a quorum, he adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,
Dave Steen.