

PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

Date: January 24, 2019

The Ephrata Planning Commission, Grant County, Washington met on January 24, 2019. The meeting was called to order in Council Chambers at 7:00 p.m. by Chairman Joe Dennis. Roll was taken. Members present Don Guillemette, David Spencer and Tom Moncrief ; Jo Maedke Excused

Staff present: Ron Sell, Community Development Director; Anna Franz, City Attorney; Bill Sangster, Public Works Director and Stacy Hooper, Secretary.

The commission reviewed the minutes of the July 26, 2018 meeting. Minutes approved with no changes. (m/s Don Guillemette/Tom Moncrief). Motion carried.

Correspondence: Ron Sell one page was added to packet with information with other jurisdictions parking requirements based on business type and square footage.

Additions and/or Revisions to Published Agenda: No additions or revisions to agenda.

Study Session – Zoning Code, Chapter 19.05 – Off Street Parking and Loading Requirements update.

Joe Dennis asks Ron Sell for staff report: Ron Sell goes over the letter in the packet from a council member addressed to council regarding commercial parking. Council started a study session and recommends an easy fix that they saw. At this point, discussion is open for Planning Commissions opinion, we do not have to follow their recommendation. An idea was to let the business owner recommend the number of parking spaces. Ron Sell gives a quick comparison of City of Ephrata parking to other jurisdictions parking.

Joe Dennis asks if this is regarding new construction only, not existing business's; Ron Sell, it is for commercial zones and light industrial along Basin Street only at this point. If Planning Commission would like to look at residential and heavy industrial parking we can. Ron Sell points out there was no changes to the existing code addressing drive thru coffee stands and drive thru restaurants.

Joe Dennis asks if the quick fix would solve the problem or will it come back and cause problems in the future; there are areas where the business will have no parking or parking that is inadequate; without having parking requirements in the code, in the future it is highly likely that the city could be blamed for business's not being able to exist due to lack of parking; Discussion Ensues

Anna Franz clarifies that her perspective is not only as the City Attorney, but is also as a tenant in a commercial building in the downtown core. Anna Franz explains the impact of the parking and the building she is in. Anna Franz gives examples of a few business's where parking was built in compliance for the building but does not meet the needs of the business in the building, in both Ephrata and Moses Lake. Anna Franz does not feel the entire parking requirement should be eliminated, Joe Dennis agrees that this would be a mistake. Joe Dennis gives his observation; when driving down the streets in downtown many times the large parking lots are empty, and the requirements make it hard for a business to build. Discussion Ensues

Dave Spencer gives example of requirement challenges he has experienced while developing mini storages. Dave Spencer asked what the specific numbers for parking would be. Discussion Ensues.

Don Guillemette gives some favorable and non-favorable ideas, either build small building with many parking spots or demolish buildings to build parking; Discussion Ensues.

Anna Franz states that one of the issue that can be discussed is the difference between new construction versus change of use; there should be different standards for those activities. Anna Franz we are trying to get direction from Planning Commission as to what information you want to review and

what concerns you have about parking issues, then staff can provide that information. **Joe Dennis** asks if it would be appropriate to have a public meeting or hearing where business owners can voice their concerns; **Ron Sell**, City Council did ask the Chamber of Commerce to provide comments from business owners, and nothing came back. **Anna Franz**, we can hold a public meeting or hearing or you as a board member can invite individual members of the community to a meeting and ask for their input.

Discussion Ensues.

Tom Moncrief asks how many complaints have we actually had in recent years. **Joe Dennis** gives scenario from many years ago regarding same discussion in the City of Auburn. **Discussion Ensues**

Tom Moncrief asks **Anna Franz**; instead of putting the parking decision on the business owner, can we keep in code and add that the requirement maybe waived based on business. **Anna Franz** states there needs to be some kind of standard; First step we should review is what are the reasonable parking needs for Ephrata and how it is measured. Second step is when do those requirements apply, is it only new construction, is it change of use; an existing building, is it change of occupancy. Also exceptions and variances; when should there be an exception or variance to those requirements. **Joe Dennis** states the type of business should be taken into account as well. **Discussion Ensues.**

Joe Dennis points out the few public parking lots that are placed around the downtown area, these were supposed to alleviate the parking issues; **Discussion Ensues.**

Bill Sangster asks about ADA Parking requirements for new construction; **Discussion Ensues**

Joe Dennis would like to come up with something that will bring new businesses to town.

Ron Sell asks **Planning Commission** for suggestions;

Tom Moncrief suggests if we have to have regulations, we should make the requirements minimum, or something to the effect of this is what we would like to see. **Discussion Ensues**; **Joe Dennis** asks how do we come up with that minimum number. If we don't give a number than the parking will be abused.

Anna Franz suggest doing a peak hour parking lot study at the local downtown businesses; **Discussion Ensues.**

Tom Moncrief suggests we are trying to help new businesses not hinder their progress. **Bill Sangster** brings up parking at the Bureau parking lot and other spots in that same area. **Discussion Ensues**

Tom Moncrief leads discussion on differences between public and private parking. **Discussion Ensues**

Bill Sangster suggests if he was a business owner he should be able to say how much parking he needs **Discussion Ensues**

Don Guillemette talks about parking at the Auto Part stores. **Discussion Ensues**

Planning Commission agree that we do need some kind of regulations but these regulations should be reasonable and fit the business type. **Discussion Ensues**

Joe Dennis requests a recommendation at next meeting from staff. **Ron Sell** states we can come up with a number; **Dave Spencer** suggests something like, business owners in the downtown core business area should have a blank amount of parking spaces and outside the downtown area business would be different. **Discussion Ensues.** **Ron Sell** suggests we can do something like business in a certain area should meet a minimum number of parking or have a sliding scale. **Discussion Ensues**

Ron Sell asks if you have recommendations please submit them. Staff is asked to put something together for next meeting.

Tom Moncrief asks about the letter to Council; what were the opinions of some of the other council member. **Don Guillemette**, most like the idea to turn over to business owner; **Anna Franz** explains they didn't have all of the codes as this was a very preliminary discussion with council.

Ron Sell asks if there are any issues with Residential parking issues. **Discussion Ensues**. No changes to be made to residential parking requirements.

Meeting on January 24, 2019 adjourns at 7:43 p.m.



Joe Dennis, Planning Commission Chairman

Attest: 

Stacy Hooper, Secretary