

**City of Kenmore
Planning Commission Meeting
August 4, 2020 @ 7:00 p.m.**

Planning Commission Members – In Attendance (the meeting was held virtually using the Zoom online platform)

Mark Ohrenschall, Chair
Carol Baker
Suzanne Greathouse
Nathan Loutsis
Mike Mulcare
Dennis Olson
Mike Vanderlinde

Consultants & Staff

Lauri Anderson, Principal Planner
Debbie Bent, Community Development Director
Maura Query, Administrative Assistant

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chair Ohrenschall at 7:00 p.m.

2. CITIZEN COMMENTS

There were no citizen comments at this meeting.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion to approve the July 7, 2020 Planning Commission Minutes was made by Commissioner Greathouse and seconded by Commissioner Vanderlinde. Commissioner Olson recommended some minor changes to the minutes. The minutes, with the changes recommended by Commissioner Olson, were approved unanimously by a roll call vote.

A motion to approve the July 21, 2020 Planning Commission Minutes was made by Commissioner Olson and seconded by Commissioner Greathouse. The minutes were approved unanimously by a roll call vote.

4. AGENDA ITEMS

City Staff introduced the Affordable Housing Review Process. The purpose of this meeting was to have an initial conversation regarding a review process for affordable housing projects.

In November 2019, the City received a request from a private citizen for a zoning change related to a senior housing project that also included affordable housing. City Council determined they do not want to take up zoning changes at this time as these are being looked at as a whole later, and suggested that this private project be considered as a type of project that might fit in with this affordable housing process.

The Affordable Housing Review Process was brought to City Council as a topic, before the Planning Commission, in the hopes of determining if there were specific parts of the process that they were particularly concerned about. The City Council wants to be sure that the process includes affordable housing for seniors and those with disabilities. They also wanted to separate the discussion of expedited process from the discussion of waivers of development standards.

In this meeting, the Planning Commission was asked to walk through the same set of policy questions that were brought to City Council to get a sense of what the Planning Commission is interested in. This was a preliminary open discussion about what this process might look like.

City Staff shared Attachment 1: Affordable Housing Review Process Questions. The Planning Commission discussed each question.

The Commissioners had questions regarding the Council's specific interests in addressing low income housing projects rather than moderate income housing, and the current percentages of affordable housing Kenmore currently has. City Staff confirmed City Council is specifically interested in addressing low income housing at this time. Staff will return at the next meeting with more information regarding the current percentages of affordable housing in Kenmore.

The Commissioners in general felt that the special review or expedited process should be open to all levels of affordable housing, rather than limiting it to specific levels of income. It was felt by the Commissioners that low income appears to be the greatest need in affordable housing so some form of weighted criteria would be beneficial. There was a desire to see special review processes of neighboring cities and more current numbers on housing needs. The Commissioners also would like to understand what the current pain points are for developing affordable housing to better address those in the special review process. City Staff can talk to ARCH and other communities to determine these pain points.

The current affordable housing process was discussed. Currently there is no specific process related to affordable housing. The process is site specific depending on variables like zoning and use. City Staff can provide a table that illustrates the different processes of development.

There was a discussion on whether senior housing and housing for people with disabilities should be eligible for this quicker process regardless of income of the people living there. A comment was made about requiring developers to explain

what accommodations they are making in their design that facilitates safe and reasonable care for those living there as part of the criteria for the exception process.

The topic of project size was discussed. In general, the Commissioners agreed that every unit of affordable housing created has an impact, and so eligibility for the special review process should not be limited to how many units the building has. A couple of concerns about small unit buildings the Commissioners mentioned are financial viability or the expedited process being somewhat exploited.

The Commissioners at this time are considering allowing the expedited process to extend to privately owned properties. Concerns related to this are the impacts to zoning and density limitations, and whether those would be relaxed as a part of the exceptions in this process.

Limitations on the appeals process could help expedite the process of approving affordable housing projects because the appeals process takes additional time. There will be more information about appeals included in the table of current permitting processes that City Staff will be providing for the next meeting. City Staff will also double check if there are any state level mandates on allowing an appeals process.

6. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Ohrenschall adjourned the meeting at 8:26 p.m.