

GROWTH MANAGEMENT PLANNING COUNCIL

Wednesday, September 25, 2013

Ruth Fisher Board Room

Sound Transit, Seattle

MEETING SUMMARY

Members present:

King County Executive Dow Constantine, Chair
Councilmember Larry Phillips, King County
Councilmember Dembowski, King County
Councilmember Richard Conlin, Seattle
Councilmember O'Brien, Seattle

Representing Suburban Cities:

Councilmember Allen, Redmond
Councilmember Barnes, Maple Valley
Mayor Odell, Sammamish
Mayor Olness, Black Diamond
Councilmember Sweet, Kirkland
Councilmember Wagner, Covington

Ex-Officio Members:

Forrest Miller, King County School Districts

Chair Constantine convened the meeting. GMPC members introduced themselves.

Agenda Item II – approval of the minutes from May 29, 2013. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Agenda Item III – Public Comment. Chair Constantine opened the meeting to public comment.

Randy Banneker introduced the letter that the Master Builders of King and Snohomish Counties (MBA) and the Seattle-King County Realtors had sent to the GMPC regarding the 2014 Buildable Lands Report (BLR.) He pointed out that the BLR was last done in 2007 and that the memo from the State Department of Commerce would allow King County to continue relying on information contained in that report. He further added that incomplete information can be detrimental to planning efforts and that the County should not take advantage of the option presented in the Commerce memo. He offered that the Realtors and MBA would work with the County to persuade the Legislature to delay the comprehensive plan and BLR deadlines by one year and provide state funding to support the BLR.

Chair Constantine said that staff would work on providing a detailed response to the letter in advance of the next GMPC meeting and then asked staff to respond.

Chandler Felt, King County Demographer stated that he had just received the letter and had not thoroughly reviewed it. He pointed out some of the reasons that Commerce had offered an alternate approach to BLR: (1) that there was a large fall-off in construction following the nationwide recession; (2) that cities had made relatively few related policy changes since 2007; (3) the slow growth since 2007 is not a good indicator of development potential; and (4) that both Commerce and the State Attorney General stand by the memo.

Agenda Item IV was an action item on Motion 13-1 to designate Central Issaquah as an Urban Center in the King County Countywide Planning Policies. Chair Constantine asked Issaquah Mayor Ava Frisinger to describe the proposal. Mayor Frisinger talked about transforming current strip malls into a sustainable place that will be able to accommodate both jobs and housing, building on the current major employers already located in the area, and setting the stage for high capacity transit service.

Councilmember Dembowski asked what the designation as an urban center would allow. Mayor Frisinger responded that it would make the area eligible for transportation grants.

City of Sammamish Councilmember Don Gerand, in the audience, requested to speak. Councilmember Gerand stated that the proposed zoning would allow more development than the adopted growth targets. He raised concerns that an urban center in this location would put pressure on the UGA boundary. He further pointed out that high capacity transit at Issaquah is not included in ST3.

Councilmember Allen praised Issaquah's plan and said she preferred planned growth to ad hoc growth.

Sammamish Mayor Odell commended the plan but noted that all the growth in Sammamish and surrounding areas was occurring with limited transportation choices. He raised the concern that having more growth in Issaquah will have impacts on roads including I-90. He added that there are possible water quality impacts on Lake Sammamish and being on the UGA will threaten the growth boundary.

Councilmember Conlin said he is sympathetic to concerns raised by Sammamish, especially regarding the UGA, but noted that the GMPC is responsible for controlling the growth line and has the tools to do so. He also noted that good transit service will be critical to making the plan work, and that Sound Transit service through ST3 is a possibility.

Councilmember Phillips commended the plan and agreed that the County and the City of Sammamish would need a partnership to protect the UGA. He added that transit service will be a challenge.

Councilmember Sweet offered strong support for the plan for connecting jobs and housing.

Councilmember Barnes noted the large number of jobs anticipated in the proposed urban center and expressed concern about the number of vehicle trips they would generate and said there should be more study of transportation, particularly for I-90.

The Motion passed with 7 yes, ½ (Odell) no, ½ (Barnes) abstain.

Agenda Item V - a briefing on recommendations of the School Siting Task Force for implementation.

Lauren Smith, Land Use Advisor to Executive Constantine, presented the work program stemming from the School Siting Task Force.

Councilmember Barnes asked whether mid-October 2013 for developing a questionnaire is realistic. Forrest Miller noted a number of concerns: (1) when cities identify potential sites for schools, they need to find ways to preserve that land as school sites until the time when schools are prepared to purchase them; (2) based on conversations with the cities in the Lake Washington District (Kirkland, Redmond and Sammamish) there do not appear to be suitable sites available; and (3) suggested sites are usually not buildable because of critical areas or topography. He suggested that the work program establish criteria for identifying viable schools sites, such as: the site is buildable; the site is not affected by a freeway's noise and emissions; the site meets minimum size requirements; the site is affordable.

Chair Constantine directed staff to continue working on the items described in the work program while keeping in mind the multiple goals that stakeholders have identified.

Agenda Item VI – Healthy Communities Policies. Ann Bikle, Policy Analyst, King County, described the availability of jurisdiction-based health profiles and the planning tool for assisting jurisdictions as they incorporate health concerns into their comprehensive plans. There were no comments or questions from GMPC members.

No more meetings are scheduled for 2013.

Chair Constantine adjourned the meeting.