

MINUTES OF JOINT CITY COUNCIL/PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
MARCH 31, 2010

Council Chambers, City Hall, 135 East Johnson Avenue, Chelan, Washington

Elected Officials Present: Mayor Goedde; Councilmembers Lingard, Greenfield, Cooney, Harper, Morehouse, Morse. Absent/Excused: McCardle.

Commissioners Present: Collins, Griffith, Tesch. Absent: Warren, Dobbs.

Staff present: Administrator Reinbold, Planning Director Gildroy; Assistant Planner Kowacz; Office Assistant Williams, City Clerk Liles.

At 6:03 p.m., Mayor Goedde called to order a special meeting of the Chelan City Council, announcing its purpose as review of the Draft Downtown Master Plan Regulations, and Planning Commission Chair Collins called to order the regular meeting of the City of Chelan Planning Commission.

Bob Bengford, representing consultant Makers Architecture and Urban Design, presented the Draft Downtown Master Plan Regulations (power point presentation attached). Discussion included the following comments:

Professional offices, including real estate:

Ben Higgins, owner of three commercial offices in the downtown, commented that restricting professional offices on the first floor will devalue his property. Staff stated that if the property is currently used as a professional office, it may continue to be used in that way. However, if the use is discontinued for more than 6 months; it would need to come into conformance with the current code. The idea is to allow more pedestrian oriented businesses such as retail.

Realtor Kim Skaar suggested allowing a percentage of real estate offices on the first floor of Woodin Avenue buildings.

Tesch stated that we need to look at uses that generate pedestrian traffic in the downtown, and it is questionable if real estate, attorney and other professional offices do that.

Harper said it is difficult to tell businesses that have been serving our community for years that they can no longer do so in the same location.

Morehouse stated that offices are a dead space in the downtown; if an attorney is good, people will go to that attorney even if he is located off the main street.

Griffith requested clarification on what uses would be allowed where, and she said it is her opinion that the downtown should be a mix of different types of business.

Collins pointed out that Chelan's retail business is mainly seasonal, but real estate offices are active in the winter as well. Collins contended that real estate sales not only draw people to Chelan but to Woodin Avenue.

Cooney said he visited Sandpoint, Idaho, and talked to people about that City's recently implemented downtown master plan. Their main comment was that street level should be retail and professional offices should be on the second floor.

Downtown Mixed Use:

Greenfield stated that drive through businesses should be accommodated somehow to allow the property owner to conduct business in another way, and she supported the Downtown Advisory Committee's recommendation that the storefront street zone be extended one block east of Sanders.

Cooney asked if there were grants available to renovate historic buildings. Bengford responded, saying he believes there may be grants and/or low interest loans available for that purpose.

Citizen Robert Gervais stated that he would like the downtown to remain historic and hopes the plan will prevent building that doesn't fit in such as the one at the northeast corner of Columbia and Woodin.

Landscaping:

Morse said he would like the plan to encourage the use of native plants so less water is used to maintain landscaping.

Signs

Bengford noted that the current code doesn't permit neon signs in downtown, but they are historic and he believes they should be allowed.

Other Comments:

Cooney stated that the intent of the plan is to make downtown more vibrant and lively—not to restrict property rights.

Bengford stated that he would like to have clear standards for staff but also provide choices for applicants to achieve the look/feel of what Chelan should be like.

Morse agreed with Cooney's last statement, but said he would like the plan to prevent buildings that are undesirable.

Greenfield would like the plan to encourage sustainable building and would like to see recycle containers provided along with the trash receptacles in downtown. Kim Skaar agreed.

Tesch stated he would like the Arts Council to collaborate in the plan by introducing artistic elements.

Bengford mentioned that some municipalities offer incentives to encourage the provision of small garden plots for tenants in multi-family developments, and that may be something Chelan wants to consider.

Morehouse would like to preserve what Chelan has now as that is what draws people here.

Cooney would like Makers to do some sketches of a downtown building remodel with historic design.

Staff stated that draft documents will be posted on the City's website and comments are encouraged.

There being no other business, meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Prepared by:

Attested to:

Date Approved by City Council:

April 22, 2010

Linda Allison-Liles

Robert R. Goedde

City Clerk

Mayor