

Tacoma Permit Advisory Group

Hybrid meeting

Special Meeting Sept 5th, 2024 12:00 PM

Advisory Group Members in attendance: Clinton Brink, Michael R. Fast, Ben Ferguson, Jason Gano, Justin Goroch, Brett Johnson, Gomer Roseman

Excused: Layne Alfonso

Absent: Ryan Babbit, Loundyne Hare, Robert Laing, Claude Remy

12:04 PM Welcome

The meeting was called to order by Chair Justin Goroch.

12:05 PM Public Comment

No public Comments were provided at this time

12:15 PM Home in Tacoma

- Justin Goroch advised that we had ten recommendations that were originally sent to the Planning Commission. Changing square footage per unit to a percentage of the overall lot was accepted, and allowing multi-unit buildings to be subdivided for sale was also accepted. However, the rest do not appear to have been taken into consideration.
- If HIT (Home in Tacoma) is codified in October and not active until February, there will be a dead zone. So, we will ask if applications can be submitted but not accepted until February.
- Clinton Brink advised that it can be difficult to comply with setback requirements. He mentioned that if there is a current building not oriented toward the front, it might be beneficial to use the side of the building where the main entrance is located as if it were the front.
- Ben Ferguson advised that we should only give them two or three items to review. If we give them ten things to fix, they are more likely to ignore our recommendations. Ben suggested that we try to give them two or three things initially, wait for HIT to go into effect, and then address additional issues based on identified pain points.
 - Jason Gano agrees
 - Gomer Roseman agrees
 - Brett Johnson agrees
 - Clinton Brink does not agree
- Justin Goroch suggested that we pick the most critical items and then restate the remaining ones in a shorter form. This way, we can prioritize the most important aspects while still including everything. Clinton Brink advised that we could perhaps narrow it down to five critical items.
- Jason Gano agreed with Ben Ferguson's point that we can offer suggestions yearly. Justin Goroch agreed
- Clinton Brink advised that he is struggling to narrow it down past the following four:

- Backyard buildings issue applying amenity space setbacks, etc. to the area being developed and not the whole site.
 - Setbacks taking up 40% of standard and 70% of larger site.
 - Parking restrictions keeping parking the same as it is and eliminating 450 sq ft exemptions.
 - Tree retention.
 - Allowing for a formal path for planning staff to create interpretations and code changes, which would then be verified by city council.
- Mike Fast asked why we are trying to narrow it down. Jason Gano advised that by making the document more digestible and smaller, the chances of having our recommendations adopted are increased. Ben Ferguson stated that the shorter and more focused the list of recommendations is, the more likely it is to be adopted. Brett Johnson agreed with Ben Ferguson. Ben Ferguson also mentioned that anything related to parking or trees is less likely to be approved. He suggested that we focus on backyard buildings, setbacks, and allowing a formal path for planning staff. Clinton Brink clarified that this involves reducing parking to comply with state law. Mike Fast added that we have never regulated trees on private property and suggested we could simply inform them that it is an issue. He advised that we do not need to provide a lot of detail. Ben Ferguson expressed that he believes the council is no longer paying attention to details. Clinton Brink and Mike Fast disagreed, with Clinton Brink adding that there are serious issues that need addressing. Gomer Roseman added that he disagrees as well and mentioned that there are numerous study sessions planned.
 - Justin Goroch advised we need to get back to two or three main issues and then bulleting out the remaining issues. Clinton Brink added that he does not think five issues will overload council. Justin Goroch asked if we can agree on the format.
 - Jason Gano said we have a chance to be heard and we do not want to say too much in the letter to make people lose interest.
 - Gomer Roseman asked if we can present at a study session, as he thinks that could be a good way to be heard.
 - Ben Ferguson added that he is okay with mentioning eight things in a study session, but not eight things in a letter
 - Justin Goroch mentioned that he is hearing one side saying to pick only one, two, or three points, while the other camp agrees on keeping things concise, but wants to include all of our points and try to keep it on one page. Gomer Roseman added that he believes we could accomplish more in 15 minutes during a study session than with a letter. Mike Fast suggested that we should do both, and there was general consensus. Ben Ferguson added that we could inquire about presenting at a study session and wait to write the letter until after we know if we are able to present. The group voted on whether they wanted a longer or shorter letter. The results are as follows:
 - Ben Ferguson - smaller
 - Jason Gano - smaller
 - Brett Johnson - smaller

- Gomer Roseman - smaller
- Clinton Brink – long
- Mike Fast– long
- Justin Goroch – long
- Gomer Roseman said that we need to be an agenda item at a study session
- Justin Goroch is concerned that if we wait too long to write the letter, we are risking the record closing and being unable to submit anything
- A vote was held to determine which topics will be mentioned as the most important in the letter.
 - Backyard buildings, setbacks and tree retention were the top three and the fourth was empowering employees. Justin stated that we seem to agree on the stack ranking.
- Justin Goroch stated that the format we will take is to highlight three main issues. We will then include a paragraph with the procedural points and ask them to refer to our previous documents.
- Clinton Brink advised we should submit this in the next couple weeks
- Clinton Brink motioned that Clinton Brink, Justin Goroch and Gomer Roseman will draft a letter to City Council that will be voted on and approved at next meeting, Ben Ferguson seconded, motion carried.

12:50 PM HIT Planning Commission Recommendations

12:50 PM Final Comments

1:00 PM Adjourn