

Minutes  
Point Roberts Community Advisory Committee  
Regular Meeting, July 18, 2019

Attendees: David Gellatly (DG) — CoC  
Stephen Falk (SF) — At Large  
Linda Hughes (LH) — At Large  
Tessa Pinckston (TP) — PRRVA  
Steve Wolff (SW) — PRТА

**1. Call to Order.**

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm.

**2. Review of Minutes**

LH indicated that the Minutes for the June 20, 2019 would be approved via e-mail.

**3. Public Comment**

LH indicated that a separate period for public comment would be skipped, noting that members of the public could bring up comments regarding WCC 20.72 during the comments by Cliff Strong, Senior Planner, Whatcom County Planning and Development Services (PDS).

**4. Correspondence**

None identified or addressed

**5. Old Business**

**Continued review of proposed revisions to WCC 20.72 - Discussion with Cliff Strong, Senior Planner, PDS**

Mr. Strong provided copies of WCC 20.72 modified to show the draft changes provided by the PRCAC and questions from the PRCAC, and including Mr. Strong's comments on the proposed changes and questions. A copy is attached to these Minutes. Most of Mr. Cliff's comments are captured in his document.

Other noteworthy comments, public comments and PRCAC member comments include the following:

**Administrative Approval Uses**

\* .135 - Regarding the fee assessed by the County for keeping an RV on a property for extended time, the \$1440 is an appraisal fee to cover the costs of making health and safety review; it is a one-time fee for that property owner.

\* .135(3) - Regarding screening, Isobel \_\_\_\_\_, asked how high screening needs to be; Mr. Strong noted that this can depend on the geography and distance from the road, but that in general the fence or screening should be high enough to obscure the item at issue, such as blocking view of RVs.

\* .135(5) - The number of "accessory structures" could be increased from one, but allowing two or more would tend to encourage use of properties without homes and extended time with RVs; generally that is not what is favored and encouraged.

**Conditional Uses**

\* .151 - Having "hotels, motels and timeshare condominiums" as Conditional Uses could be changed if there were community support to permit such uses more generally.

\* .154 - Deleting horse racing and pari-mutuel betting facilities from "sports facilities" could be done, but those items would still be interpreted as being only conditional uses.

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Prohibited Uses

- \* .202 - The prohibition of rooming houses, taverns and commercial parking in Maple Beach could be changed to follow standard code in Whatcom County if residents, particularly those in Maple Beach supported the change.
- \* .204(1) - There was considerable discussion about the prohibition of mini-storage facilities. The existing storage business on Gulf Road is “grandfathered in” as pre-existing non-conforming use. If there was some tolerance for such uses, they could be governed under “Conditional Uses,” for example, if permissible with appropriate screening.
- \* .204(3) - Separating the auto service and vehicle storage prohibitions into two provisions makes both provisions clearer.
- \* There was considerable discussion in connection with Prohibited Uses on the issues related to the compliance action regarding 1480 Gulf Road. There was no clear way to make the storage of commercial vehicles and truck containers permitted without opening up the entire Gulf Road commercial area to such uses.
- \* .350 - Regarding building setbacks, the applicability to Roosevelt Road could be removed if that was what the community wanted.
- \* In response to Tom O’Brien’s question about the standards for zoning provisions, Mr. Strong explained that they are based on factors such as the effects of noise, light, height and mixed use on a property, neighboring properties and the district as a whole. Mr. O’Brien noted that we are discussing the restrictions specifically in the “small town commercial” district and questioned how commerce and economic impact could be omitted from zoning considerations in a “commercial” area.
- \* A question was raised about ongoing work at the Chevron Station on Tye Drive which did not come before the PRCAC for review. Mr. Strong explained that the work is considered “improvements”, not new construction, and improvements do not come before the PRCAC. He suggested that the Code could be amended to require CAC approvals for improvements.
- \* On the Design Guidelines, Mr. Strong noted that they are guidelines. The mandatory “shall” usage in the Design Guidelines does not alter their status as only recommended guidelines. They provide a framework for property owners to use in their planning and for the PRCAC to use it is review of new commercial projects.
- \* .659 - Parking - The PRCAC had noted provisions of WCC 10.24 that should be changed. Mr. Strong commented that those limitations are under the purview of Whatcom County Public Works (CPW). Those provisions could be changed. Regarding covering ditches to install sidewalks, CPW would have practical concerns about maintaining draining ditches which could prevent such action.
- \* Mr. Strong suggested that the zoning change process should involve getting out a map of the community, drawing out what uses one wants where, and then making the rules fit those goals.
- \* Tom O’Brien commented that the PRCAC was moving forward with the review and revision to WCC 20.72 without having done or acquired an economic development study to understand the economic effect of the current zoning provisions and the anticipated impact of proposed

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changes to the zoning provisions. He strongly questioned how a valid assessment could be achieved without the benefit of such an economic development study. Mr. O'Brien noted that he had posed a question via the live-stream online during an April 2019 meeting, "When will PRCAC schedule into their calendar an economic impact study of the proposed changes of 20.72?" In response, it was noted that the PRCAC has no funds to conduct a study and that DG and others had tried for about 2 years to get the County or the Port Authority to conduct an economic development study for Point Roberts, without success. LH asked Mr. O'Brien to define how any subsection of 20.72 or the Code had affected his business, and why he had not brought his concerns to PRCAC throughout the review process, with no response.

\* Judson Meraw reiterated the importance of doing a "visioning" exercise in the community before making changes and the value of doing an impact study on proposed changes.

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\* Productive discussion came to an end with Mr. O'Brien's continued insistence that the PRCAC was moving forward with out the benefit of an economic study and the PRCAC members' unsuccessful attempts to address Mr. O'Brien's concerns.

**6. New Business**

None raised.

**7. Adjourn.**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:37 pm. (Motion by LH; seconded by SF)