

**CITY OF MONROE
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
NOVEMBER 18, 2013**

A blue rectangular stamp with a checkmark in a box on the left and the word "APPROVED" in capital letters to its right.

The meeting of the Monroe Planning Commission was scheduled for November 18, 2013 at 7:00 p.m. in the City Hall Council Chambers at 806 West Main Street, Monroe, WA 98272.

CALL TO ORDER

Commissioner Kristiansen called the meeting to order at **7:00 p.m.**

ROLL CALL

Secretary Christina Lavelle called the roll. The following were:

Present: Commissioners Bill Kristiansen, Dave Demarest, Dian Duerksen, Wayne Rodland, Jeff Sherwood, Bridgette Tuttle, Steve Jensen

Staff Present: Planning and Permitting Manager Paul Popelka, Economic Development Manager Jeff Sax and Planning Technician Christina Lavelle

CITIZEN COMMENT

None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

None

PUBLIC HEARING A

A. Comprehensive Plan Amendment CPA2013-D and Zoning Code Amendment ZCA2012-09 School Mitigation Fees

The City of Monroe is proposing to adopt Monroe and Snohomish School District Capital Facilities Plans for 2012-2017, remove regulatory language for school impact fees in the 2005-2025 Monroe Comprehensive Plan, and amend Monroe Municipal Code Chapter 20.07 (School Impact Fee Mitigation Program).

Commissioner Kristiansen opened the public hearing for Comprehensive Plan Amendment CPA2013-D and Zoning Code Amendment ZCA2012-09 School Mitigation Fees.

Manager Popelka summarized changes to the Comprehensive Plan and Monroe Municipal Code (MMC) in relation to the School Impact Fee Mitigation Program, including removal of the regulatory language for school impact fees, amending the MMC, and increasing the developer discounts on mitigation fees from 25% to 50% for consistency with Snohomish County discount rates.

PUBLIC TESTIMONY

Nancy Truitt Pierce

120003 Woods Creek Road, Monroe WA

Ms. Truitt-Pierce, Monroe School Board Director, is opposed to changing the discount on the mitigation fees. She commented that the Snohomish School District meets their Capital Facilities needs with a bond and noted her discussion with County Councilman Dave Somers, who did not believe mitigation fees were a deterrent to growth. She commented that when researching impact fees, school fees seem to be the first to be reduced, and noted the recent reduction in fees that show different fees for single family and multi-family units.

She also commented on removing the fee schedule from the Comprehensive Plan with the City, not the County, calculating the fees. She commented on raising fees from multi-family, but they remain behind with desperate needs for schools, leading to use of operations funds if impact fees continue to decrease. She noted the MMC can be changed more often and the need for a minimum nine month lead time for changes. She stated that mitigation fees are an adjustment for growth and good schools are needed for growth.

Ms. Truitt-Pierce responded to a question from **Commissioner Tuttle** on the proportion of impact fees in the capital facilities budget. She noted that the proportion depends on what is being built.

Dr. Ken Hoover

Monroe, WA

Dr. Hoover, Superintendent Monroe Public Schools, is opposed to changing mitigation fees. He commented that a bond or levy is the only other option for funding, and noted that the 25% discount is not enough, leading to the need for portables.

He continued to state that mitigation fees cover the cost of growth, allowing schools to grow with development. Future goals are to provide permanent structures and update schools with amenities comparable to other county-wide schools. He shared examples of facilities at other schools with permanent buildings and athletic fields.

Dr. Hoover addressed questions from the Commission, including lack of amenities (e.g., baseball field at Monroe High School) and space needs for 900 additional students. He estimated several millions of dollars needed, and noted that portables are the only means of housing students waiting for permanent solutions (e.g., a bond measure). He indicated that the Board is considering a bond or capital facilities levy that would result in lower mitigation fees. He also reiterated the need for predictability now in the Monroe Comprehensive Plan.

Jim Scott

20227 80th Avenue SE, Monroe WA

Mr. Scott, Director and Board Vice President Monroe Public Schools, is opposed to changing the cost of mitigation fees. He responded to a question from **Commissioner Demarest** regarding changing the MMC in relation to the Monroe School District Capital Facilities Plan. Mr. Scott

noted the need for time to catch up, not with mitigation fees alone, with bond issues. He summarized past history for bond issues and changing discount rates from 50% to 25% in the 1990's to increase funding. The Growth Management Act expects developers to pay a fair portion of the cost of growth (roads, parks, and schools) but noted that schools have no authority to collect these fees; rather they collected through an inter-local agreement with the City.

He noted the future growth in Monroe and its impact on schools. He commented that underfunded schools do not attract development, that there are now over 1,000 students in portables leading to overcrowding that fails to meet the growing school population.

Mitigation fees allow the school district to house students as they enroll, and reducing fees by increasing the discount rate results in lesser ability to house new students.

Katie Woods

17162 176th Place SE, Monroe WA

Ms. Woods, Monroe School Board Director, is also opposed to increasing the discount on mitigation fees. She commented that the school district needs the money for facilities to meet growth that brings more students. She noted that Monroe is in a growth pattern, schools need money to create a safe learning environment, and the importance of looking at all fees, not just school impact fees. Lessening these fees will require higher taxes to Monroe taxpayers.

Erin Angus Snapka

421 S Lewis St, Monroe, WA

Ms. Snapka, a member of the Monroe School District Capital Facilities Steering Committee, is opposed to increasing discount fees. She commented that kids need a safe place to learn and that increasing the discount reduces money to schools, leaving less for building new facilities and updating existing ones.

Commissioner Demarest moved to close the public testimony portion of the public hearing. Motion seconded by **Commissioner Duerksen**. Motion carried 7/0.

Commission discussion is summarized below:

- Removal of the regulatory language from the Monroe Comprehensive Plan, a policy document, is appropriate. Amending MMC 20.07 is the appropriate action for school impact fees.
- Consistency and predictability was discussed in adopting the Comprehensive Plan and MMC amendments as the School District needs lead time on potential changes in funding. Language in the Comprehensive Plan and MMC should support predictability.
- Two reasons for changing the discount rate: reflect County and neighboring municipalities versus addressing costs to the school district.

Commissioner Jensen moved to close the public hearing. Motion seconded by **Commissioner Rodland**. Motion carried 7/0.

PUBLIC HEARING B

B. Comprehensive Plan Amendment CPA2011-01/Rezone 2012-01 East Monroe Development Group

Continued from 2012, this Comprehensive Plan Amendment and Rezone proposes to change the designation for approximately 43 acres of land located at the eastern end of the city limits north of US-2 from Limited Open Space to General Commercial.

Commissioner Kristiansen opened the public hearing for the Comprehensive Plan Amendment CPA2011-01/Rezone 2012-01 East Monroe Development Group.

Manager Popelka summarized the amendment and described the proposed Comprehensive Plan and zoning designations for approximately 43 acres from Limited Open Space to General Commercial.

PUBLIC TESTIMONY

Thomas Minnick

13789 194th Drive SE, Monroe WA

Mr. Minnick, Pastor at Heritage Baptist Church, favors the amendments. He noted that the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS), though this amendment is a non-project action, is comprehensive and more than adequate to support the amendment as a logical use. He commented on neighbor opposition but stated the property is private, not a public land conservancy, is not agricultural and is in the UGA inside City limits with all costs for utilities and development to be paid by the developer, not the City.

In response to questions from **Commissioner Jensen** regarding rezoning prior to a defined project, Susan Boyd of Pace Engineers noted that no development proposal is possible without rezoning and is difficult to sell the property for development.

Doug Hamar

1122 Calhoun Road SE, Monroe WA

Mr. Hamar is opposed to the amendments, stating that the Environmental Impact Statement is whitewashed with serious flaws in transportation regarding a roundabout at the property access; flawed Levels of Service at the intersection; the number of incoming trips from the west versus the east; the direction (west versus east) of outgoing trips; and stated that a roundabout would cause lengthy back-up of traffic.

He referenced the 2007 and 2012 Buildable Lands Reports showing excess land to 2025, and noted that large retail properties eliminate more jobs than they create and impact community wealth and character. He commented on site cut and fill, asserting that there is insufficient material to fill the developable area as shown in the FEIS.

Susan Boyd

Pace Engineers, Inc., 11255 Kirkland Way, Suite 300, Kirkland, WA 98033

Ms. Boyd of PACE engineers helped prepare the comprehensive FEIS that addresses all potential issues with the rezone and development of the property by applying worst case scenarios to determine buildable area defining mitigation to subsequent construction. Ms. Boyd stated that traffic issues were addressed based on WSDOT information. She supports the rezone in the best interest of the property owner and the City of Monroe.

Commissioner Jensen questioned the use of the maps used in the FEIS. **Susan Boyd** explained that the maps that were used in determining the 100 year floodplain were the draft maps from FEMA. **Commissioner Jensen** wondered if the adopted 1999 maps would allow for more land to be developed than the 11.33 acres that the FEIS suggests using the 2007 FEMA map. **Susan Boyd** stated that using the 2007 un-adopted map gave a worst case scenario for the FEIS. However, even if the 1999 map was used for development, the only thing that might change would be the amount of fill that would need to be used for compensatory food storage and it would not change the amount of buildable land.

Commissioner Demarest moved to close the public testimony portion of the public hearing. Motion seconded by **Commissioner Duerksen**. Motion carried 7/0.

Commissioner Kristiansen moved to break at 9:05. Motion seconded by **Commissioner Demarest**. Motion carried 7/0.

Commission discussion is summarized below:

- Review of the current zoning designation of Limited Open Space and whether changing this designation to General Commercial is supported by the City of Monroe Comprehensive Plan and the Growth Management Act objectives and goals.
- Potential transportation and traffic issues arising from the rezone. Potential traffic impacts from a roundabout serving the site.
- Changing the character of the City by moving the “Gateway” to the City from the downtown district to East Monroe and the potential economic impacts from this action.

Commissioner Sherwood moved to close the public hearing. Motion seconded by **Commissioner Jensen**. Motion carried 7/0.

PUBLIC HEARING C

C. Comprehensive Plan Amendment CPA2013-A Text Amendments

The City of Monroe is proposing Comprehensive Plan Text Amendments for several plan sections. This amendment includes the Land Use, Housing and Economic Development Elements that are being revised in preparation for the 2015 Comprehensive Plan.

Commissioner Kristiansen opened the public hearing for the Comprehensive Plan Amendment CPA2013-A Text Amendments.

PUBLIC TESTIMONY

None

Commissioner Duerksen moved to close the public testimony portion of the public hearing. Motion seconded by **Commissioner Tuttle**. Motion carried 7/0.

Commission discussion is summarized below:

- Minor revisions will be completed for inconsistencies in formatting, text, tables, maps, and graphs in each section (Land Use, Housing, and Economic Development).

Commissioner Demarest made a motion to close the public hearing. Motion seconded by **Commissioner Rodland**. Motion carried 7/0.

DISCUSSION BY COMMISSIONERS AND STAFF

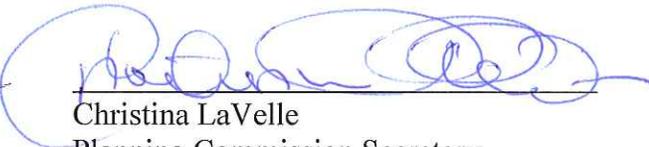
Manager Popelka noted the remaining schedule with a final Commission meeting December 2, 2013 and a 2015 Comprehensive Plan Visioning Workshop Thursday, December 5, 2013.

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Rodland moved to adjourn the meeting. Motion seconded by **Commissioner Jensen**. Motion carried 7/0 and the meeting adjourned at 10:12 p.m.



Bill Kristiansen
Chairman



Christina LaVelle
Planning Commission Secretary