



**RIDGEFIELD PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING AGENDA**

**Wednesday, January 6, 2021
Teleconference
N/A, Ridgefield, WA 98642**

I. GENERAL SESSION CALL TO ORDER - 6:30 PM

- 1. Roll Call**
- 2. Oath of Office - Amanda Swenson**
- 3. Late changes to the agenda**

II. PUBLIC COMMENT

Anyone requesting to speak to the Commission regarding all items not subject to a specific Public Hearing may come forward at this time. Please state your name and address. Comments are limited to three minutes. Written comments may be submitted to the Clerk prior to the meeting.

III. CONSENT AGENDA

- 1. Approval of Minutes from Wednesday, 12/2/20 Meeting**

IV. BUSINESS

- 1. Housing Code Updates Outreach Summary - Claire Lust, Community Development Director**

V. STAFF REPORTS

VI. FROM THE COMMISSION

VII. ADJOURN

**Planning Commission Agenda Packet is available at the following link:
<http://ridgefieldwa.iqm2.com/Citizens/>**

**CITY OF RIDGEFIELD
PLANNING COMMISSION**

MEETING DATE: January 06, 2021

ITEM:

AGENDA ITEM TITLE: Oath of Office / Amanda Swenson

SUMMARY/BACKGROUND:

On December 17, 2020 City Council appointed Amanda Swenson to Planning Commission Position No. 5.

STAFF CONTACT: Dorothy Harrington,

ATTACHMENTS:



CITY OF RIDGEFIELD, WASHINGTON
Planning Commission MEETING MINUTES
December 2, 2020

Regular Meeting - 6:30 PM

GENERAL SESSION CALL TO ORDER - 6:30 PM

ROLL CALL - 6:40 PM

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Jerry Bush	Commissioner	Absent	
Jason Carnell	Commissioner	Absent	
Stan Okinaka	Commissioner	Present	
Paul Young	Commissioner	Present	
Patrick Flynn	Chairman	Present	
Judy Chipman	Commissioner	Present	
Gary Rightenour	Commissioner	Present	

Late changes to the agenda - 7:11 AM

Chairperson Patrick Flynn requested if there were any changes to the agenda. The Clerk, Dorothy Harrington indicated that the only change is to add "Public Comments" to the Agenda and reminded the Commission that the comment received from a Citizen was distributed to the Commissioners and Staff earlier in the week.

After the agenda item for the 2021 Draft Planning Commission Work Program, Patrick Flynn introduced as part of the Public Comment Section added to the Agenda, the email from Brad Wiltfong dated November 25, 2020, into the record. Chairperson Flynn summarized the comments received stating the concerns of this citizen regarding safe routes for walking and biking to connect the downtown and Hillhurst neighborhoods and within the City in general. There were no attendees or further comments received.

Discussion occurred on the email from the Citizen Brad Wiltfong and on the City's Trails Capital Facilities Plan that addresses the planning of trails within the City.

Chairperson Patrick Flynn stated that he appreciated these comments and the willingness for this person to be an advocate for safe walking and biking trails.

CONSENT AGENDA

1. Approval of Minutes from Wednesday, 11/4/20 Meeting

Commissioner Judy Chipman made a motion to approve the 11/4/20 meeting minutes. Commissioner Gary Rightenour seconded the motion. All in favor, motion passed unanimously.

BUSINESS

1. 2021 Draft Planning Commission Work Program - [6:44 PM](#)

Community Development Director Claire Lust introduced the Community Development Work Program for the 2021 year that staff has developed based on Council goals and other directives and welcomed any suggestions or other ideas to add to the 2021 work program.

Ms. Lust further summarized that the current draft proposes to complete housing code updates to increase residential building capacity, complete Shoreline Master Program updates, develop code language regulating short term rentals, complete a spring and fall round of general code updates, create a Community Development public participation plan, discuss the beginning stages of the 2024 Comprehensive Plan update process, present the department's new online permitting system, and coordinate a joint development tour with City Council.

Discussion occurred regarding the Housing Code item and the Commissioners requested the results of the recent housing survey sent out by the City on November 19th, 2020.

Discussion occurred on the Short Term Rentals like Air B & B regarding licensing and how they are taxed.

Discussion occurred on Public Participation Plan and various ways to engage a wide range of attendance in our planning projects.

Discussion occurred on the Transportation Capital Facilities Plan component within the Comprehensive Plan.

Commissioner Rightenour addressed his concerns about having the knowledge of what is going on regarding streets and driveway standards. Ms Lust indicated that she would send the Commissioners a copy of the Transportation Capital Facilities Plan Map and would provide the Public Works Director contact information for specific questions.

Ms. Lust updated the Commissioners on the current electronic migration process for permit and land use applications allowing the public to apply for these on the online permit portal.

Discussion occurred on a City Tour in 2021 so they could see the new development and the development codes on architectural and design standards in action. Chairperson Patrick Flynn indicated that he attended the last City Tour and highly recommended all the Commissioners attend this.

Discussion occurred on the roles of the Planning Commission and the expectation from the public for them to know what new developments are occurring in the City. Discussion also occurred between Ms. Lust and the Commission on the best methods of informing the Commissioners on current development and how to respond to the public when inquiries on current development occur.

STAFF REPORTS - [7:21 PM](#)

Community Development Director Claire Lust updated the Commission on the current permitting volumes despite the COVID pandemic and summarized some of the commercial activity within the City.

FROM THE COMMISSION - [7:23 PM](#)

Commissioner Judy Chipman inquired what the results of City Council were on the Comprehensive Plan Amendments brought to the Commission in November. Claire Lust, Community Development Director summarized the City Council's actions.

Stan Okinaka updated what is occurring with the Ridgefield Main Street and summarized the challenges in 2021, how it works and some examples of what has been done with the money received from the Tax Incentive Program.

Chairperson, Patrick Flynn thanked Commissioner Jason Carnell for his service as a Planning Commission Member. He also emphasized that the Commissioners should take advantage of any type of training and be involved in the upcoming Tour mentioned previously by Ms Lust. Commissioner Flynn also took this opportunity to remind the Commission of the upcoming April public hearing on the Housing Code Update and stated that he is excited to hear the comments received on the housing survey. In addition, he updated the Commission about his discussion with Ms. Lust regarding his concerns on the safety of the traffic cones on Pioneer and lastly wanted to take the time to recognize the staff for their hard work on organizing and putting these meetings together.

Community Development Director, Claire Lust thanked all of the Commissioners for their time as well.

ADJOURN - [7:40 PM](#)

Dorothy Harrington

Patrick Flynn

**CITY OF RIDGEFIELD
PLANNING COMMISSION**

MEETING DATE: January 06, 2021

ITEM:

AGENDA ITEM TITLE: Housing Code Updates Outreach Summary

SUMMARY/BACKGROUND:

STAFF CONTACT: Claire Lust, Community Development Director

ATTACHMENTS: Ridgefield Public Workshop Report_20-1117_Final (PDF)

Ridgefield HB 1923 Code Updates

November 17, 2020 Online Workshop and Surveys Summary

Format and Attendance

This report is part of the 2020-2021 Ridgefield Housing Code Update project. To share code concepts and gather community feedback, an online workshop was conducted as a Zoom webinar hosted by the City of Ridgefield. At its peak, nine people were recorded attending the meeting (in addition to staff and consultants).

The event began at 6:00 PM and concluded at approximately 7:50 PM.

Staff from MAKERS led a presentation starting with project background information, including the technical and geographic scope, project schedule, project objectives, and policy review and audit findings. Live surveys and discussion helped gather real-time feedback.

After the workshop, a copy of the slideshow, a video recording, the same two surveys were posted online.

Visual Preference Survey

MAKERS presented 21 questions surveying the audience on their visual preferences for residential buildings and residential subdivisions. The images represented a mix of single-family and multiplex architectural styles and configurations. MAKERS explained how to use the webinar's built-in polling function, and invited the audience to opine using a 1-5 rating scale on each image:

- 5. Great example!*
- 4. Generally like*
- 3. Neutral*
- 2. Generally dislike*
- 1. Strongly dislike*

Several audience members had difficulty completing the visual preference survey. They were invited to take the SurveyMonkey.com version, which was posted later that week and replicated the workshop for people not able to attend live. Between five and seven people (among nine audience members) responded to each question at the live workshop.

The online survey had the same images and questions, including written feedback options. The workshop slides and video recording were linked so that online survey takers could receive the same background information. The online visual preference survey was available from November 19 to December 2. A total of 463 people responded to the online survey, and 243 written comments were submitted.

An average score for each question was developed (5 being great, 1 being strongly disliked). The two tables below summarize these scores and written feedback. Note that workshop scores are generally higher than the online scores.

Building Images

These images were not supported by any verbal or written description in the surveys. Survey takers were not provided the number of units, but the type of product is listed here for reference.

Question/Image (How would you feel about this building if it were built in Ridgefield?)		Live Workshop Average Score	Online Survey Average Score	Written Comments Summary
1	 Duplex	3.4	3.1	- Like the porches, landscaping, and long sidewalks - Looks upscale - The setback helps reduce the perceived density - Where is the parking? - Compatible with current neighborhoods
2	 Single-Family	3.6	3.5	Compatible with current neighborhoods
3	 Triplex	3.0	2.6	- Distinct, modern, and functional without being overpowering in size - Compatible with current neighborhoods
4	 Fourplex	1.8	1.6	Visually boring

Question/Image (How would you feel about this building if it were built in Ridgefield?)		Live Workshop Average Score	Online Survey Average Score	Written Comments Summary
5	 Single-Family	3.0	2.3	• Cookie-cutter feel and poor landscaping
6	 Duplex	3.2	2.6	• Don't like the amount of driveway • Compatible with current neighborhoods • Cookie-cutter feel and poor landscaping
7	 Triplex	1.7	1.3	• Visually boring • Looks cheap
8	 Duplex	4.0	3.0	• Distinct, modern, and functional without being overpowering in size • Geometric design does not mesh with small town feel
9	 Fourplex	2.5	1.9	• Don't like the amount of driveway • Visually boring and no style • Cookie-cutter feel and poor landscaping • 3-story homes don't fit well in Ridgefield

Question/Image	(How would you feel about this building if it were built in Ridgefield?)	Live Workshop Average Score	Online Survey Average Score	Written Comments Summary
10	 Single-Family	3.2	2.9	Distinct, modern, and functional without being overpowering in size
11	 Duplex	3.2	2.5	- Distinct, modern, and functional without being overpowering in size - Geometric design does not mesh with small town feel
12	 Fourplex	2.7	2.3	- Cookie-cutter feel and poor landscaping 3-story homes don't fit well in Ridgefield
13	 Triplex	2.3	2.6	Way too much concrete in front

Subdivision Images

In the survey, these images were supported by a verbal or written description of the main features to help orient viewers to the birds eye view. Except for #3, the location of each subdivision was not shared with survey takers, but it is listed here for reference.

Question/Image (How would you feel about this subdivision if it were built in Ridgefield?)	Live Workshop Average Score	Online Survey Average Score	Written Comments Summary
1  Monroe, WA	3.4	2.9	Block sizes should be standardized and connected for ease of walkability and navigation
2  Olympia, WA	3.4	2.2	Parks should have street visibility and access to all
3  Ridgefield, WA	4.1	3.4	- This design is why people purchase in Ridgefield - Pedestrian connections for cul-de-sacs is paramount
4  Pierce County, WA	3.0	2.3	The green space is not functional
5  Monroe, WA	3.6	2.9	No comments.
6 	3.0	2.0	- Connectivity is important in high-density subdivisions - Lots are too small

	Lacey, WA			
7	 Lacey, WA	3.0	1.8	• Mix of products is good but this lacks amenity space
8	 South Jordan, UT	4.0	2.4	• Crams people in to make money • Variety of housing choices, access, and amenities is great • Like the open space but not the multifamily buildings • The more green space, the better • Feels less robotic and more dynamic • Blocks are too long and encourage speeding

Survey of Preliminary Concepts

Next, MAKERS presented 14 questions surveying the audience on preliminary concepts for zoning, housing design, and subdivision design in Ridgefield. Prior to each question, MAKERS explained the issue being addressed and the rationale for the proposed concept. MAKERS invited the audience to opine using a 1-5 rating scale on each image:

- 5. Great idea/high priority
- 4. Good idea
- 3. Neutral
- 2. Not good
- 1. Very bad idea

Seven to eight people (among nine audience members) responded to each question at the live workshop.

The concepts survey was replicated on SurveyMonkey.com for people not able to attend the live workshop. The workshop slides and video recording were linked so that online survey takers could receive the same background information and question leadup. The concepts survey was also available from November 19 to December 2. A total 176 people responded to the online survey (note: the most responses were to the first three questions, and responses dropped off further into the survey).

An average score for each question was developed (5 being great, 1 being very bad). The table below summarizes these scores and written feedback.

Note About the Online Survey Results

The minimum time necessary to complete the online concepts survey was estimated by MAKERS as 15-20 minutes. This estimate accounted for the extensive amount of background information, question leadup, and explanatory graphics that supported each concept at the live workshop, but it also assumed most respondents would not view the workshop's video recording (which was not posted until November 25 and is approximately 1 hour and 50 minutes long). Some key information and graphics were copied into the online version for seven questions, and each question was also accommodated by a page reference to the workshop slideshow.

The SurveyMonkey.com reports the "typical" online survey completion time was 5 minutes. If accurate, this likely demonstrates that many online respondents did not read or benefit from the additional background information available to participants at the live workshop. This may explain at least part of the difference in scores.

Concepts Feedback Scores

Question/Concept <i>(What do you think of this concept?)</i>		Live Workshop Average Score	Online Survey Average Score
1	Require a mix of housing types in large subdivisions.	3.6	2.4
2	Incentivize a mix of housing types in large subdivisions.	4.0	2.3
3	BOTH OF THE ABOVE: Require (#1) AND incentivize (#2) a mix of housing types in large subdivisions in the RLD-4, -6, and -8 zones.	3.3	2.4
4	Limit new single-family detached homes in the RMD-16 zone to no more than 50% of dwelling units in new subdivisions.	3.3	2.4
5	Downtown Transition Area – Update zoning to better encourage infill development (duplexes & small single-family homes).	3.9	2.7
6	Update the duplex and triplex driveway/garage standards to create more attractive street frontages.	4.5	3.9
7	Update townhouse garage, driveway & façade standards to create more attractive street frontages.	4.6	3.9
8	Update the open space standards for duplexes and triplexes to clarify the standards and add a minimum dimension of 15 feet.	4.3	3.8
9	Update the open space standards for townhouses to clarify the standards and require covered porches or entries.	4.1	3.9
10	Require that all detached single family lots set aside at least 10% of the lot for useable open space – featuring a minimum dimension of 15 feet.	4.1	4.0
11	Require some modulation of front yard setbacks in new subdivisions to avoid repetitive designs.	4.0	3.9
12	Strengthen trail standards by requiring at least 1 lineal foot of trail per 3 lineal feet of subdivision perimeter length.	4.3	4.2
13	Prohibit reverse frontage lots (wall-lined streets) on all but the three major corridors.	3.8	3.7
14	Require at least 25% of new lots on larger subdivisions to have alleys, and update alley standards to improve appearance and function.	3.8	2.7

Live Workshop Q&A Discussion

Throughout the live workshop the audience was invited to type written questions with the webinar's built-in Q&A function. Below are key points of discussion (paraphrased), with the project team's responses in *orange text*:

- There was interest in the corner duplex requirement under the Commerce grant: Where the idea originates, and whether more cars are parked on the street around this type of housing which may cause a safety issue at intersections. *The idea is that corners present the opportunity for duplexes to mimic a single-family home by presenting two "fronts", one facing each street, helping them better blend in with single-family neighborhoods. Off-street parking is required for duplexes, and public works standards determine where signs are posted that prohibit cars from parking too close to intersections.*
- Will there be any type of requirements on the trails? *Yes. In addition to requiring a minimum amount of trail length in new subdivisions (see concept #12 above), MAKERS may propose new/updated standards for the design of trails such as width, surface materials, and landscaping.*

- Does concept #2 mean that a duplex or triplex would be considered one unit, and developers could have 4 duplexes per acre in an RLD-4? *Yes, in RLD-4, the concept for a density incentive means a duplex would count as one unit, and a triplex would count as 1.5 units. This couldn't be used for the entire subdivision, however; MAKERS proposes caps on the number of duplexes and triplexes that can built in any subdivision using this incentive.*
- How is missing middle housing integrated lower density zones? All of the proposed concepts are intended to help integrate missing middle homes in lower-density neighborhoods and subdivisions and create a mixture of housing types. *This is proposed to be achieved by adjusting the dimensional standards for lots, along with requiring open space and yards, updating the architectural requirements to ensure high-quality construction, updating parking and driveway requirements to reduce street impacts, and other concepts discussed at the workshop.*
- Currently there isn't really any vacant land in downtown. Are we encouraging knocking down older, historical homes to promote density? *The City wouldn't be active in encouraging teardowns, but the proposed revisions (concept #5) would provide more options for property owners looking to redevelop or get more value out of their property. In recent years staff have talked with some property owners who wish to do this but current standards make it prohibitive.*
- Are alleys private roads or public roads? Who maintains? *In most cities alleys are usually public, but in subdivisions like in Ridgefield they would most likely be private owned and maintained by the homeowners' association.*
- Sometimes I see cars parked on the sidewalk. Most cars are longer than the driveways in some of the subdivisions. *The minimum driveway length in new subdivisions is generally 18 feet, which is slightly longer than the average car length. We'll consider changing this to 20 feet.*
- Some of the required walls are nice brick or precast. Some are fir boards and look cheap, and sometimes the materials differ between phases in the same subdivisions. Maybe some standards are needed. *It may be that less attractive walls were built before the current standards were adopted, which do require "the appearance of earth tone stone", but this will be further reviewed in the code drafting.*

Other written comments at the live workshop:

- The image showing the corner lot concept is a great idea.
- All ideas that increase variety and livability are encouraged!
- Thank you everyone. This was a great and very informative workshop.
- This was a great workshop. Thank you!

Online Survey Written Comments

A summary of online comments are provided below.

Visual Preference Survey (VPS) - Comments Summary

Generally, there is general concern with development on farmland, losing the small-town aesthetic and character of Ridgefield, and profit-driven development. Many commenters said all development should be halted, or that only single-family housing should be built. More specific themes are summarized below.

VPS – Building Comments

Note: The few comments on specific building images are in the survey question table above. Most other comments, summarized here, were not directly related to the images presented.

- There is general concern that new housing will not have any yards or trees, or will have yards that are too small for children and pets to run around.
- There was slightly more openness to duplexes than triplexes, but overall attached products are perceived as low-income housing that will lead to trash, overcrowding, and reduced property values.
- Some commenters perceive attached products as “multifamily”, and that such housing is not family-friendly and will overload public infrastructure and services like roads and schools.
- There is general concern with small side setbacks that place buildings close together, and lots that are too small to park boats and RVs.
- There was general concern with apparent lack of parking for both residents and visitors in the survey images.
- Several commenters noted that some subdivisions have too many cars that block the view of homes, or cars block sidewalks because driveways are not long enough and many people own full-sized pickup trucks.
- Several commenters said garages should not be the largest part of the building that faces the street.
- Architectural detail is needed on new homes such as trim and plenty of windows. Design standards should also ensure attached units are independent or separate to avoid a cookie cutter look. There was openness to both traditional and modern styles.
- There were several comments about providing accessible housing to support aging in place and people with disabilities.
- Housing is becoming unaffordable for the younger generation and groups like veterans.

VPS – Subdivision Comments

Note: The few comments on specific subdivision images are in the survey question table above. Most other comments, summarized here, were not directly related to the images presented. Themes were largely similar to the above Buildings section – only new themes are summarized below.

- One commenter noted subdivisions should be modeled after historic neighborhoods, such as using home designs with porches and rear garages.
- Transit is needed if density is going to increase.

- Subdivision image #8 (South Jordan, UT) was a particular favorite among commenters for its variety of housing types, the access configuration, and amount of open space.
- Many new homes in the images do not have useable yards.
- Larger lots are needed, with numbers cited ranging from 12,000 square feet to 0.5 acres.
- If lots are not big enough for large yards and gardens, the subdivisions should be required to integrate community gardens and more park space within walking distance. Subdivisions generally need more green space and also amenities like sport courts.
- Trails should be well-separated from homes so they are enjoyable to use.
- There was a mix of support and opposition for alley-loaded subdivisions designs. Concerns frequently related to maintenance and neighborly interactions.

VPS - Good and Bad Housing/Subdivision Examples

Several commenters suggested specific development examples to aspire to or to avoid.

Good examples:

- Downtown Ridgefield and the variety of homes there
- The Wishing Wells development and its open space
- Seven Wells
- Osprey Pointe development
- Bellwood Heights
- The first phase of Taverner Ridge
- Mount Vista
- Battle Ground's urban village area near Grace Street
- Vancouver's Hough and Arnada neighborhoods
- Portland's Laurelhurst neighborhood
- Lake Oswego, OR
- Wilsonville, OR
- River Park in Oxnard, CA, specifically Nimes Lane
- Middleton Hills, Middleton, Wisconsin

Bad examples:

- Pioneer Canyon
- Taverner Ridge (specifically, being able to see in people's backyards)
- Teal Crest (boxy homes)
- North 33rd Court
- North 3rd Street
- Salmon Creek
- Battle Ground
- Hazel Dell

Survey of Preliminary Concepts – Comments Summary

Generally, many respondents are concerned about the changing landscape in Ridgefield and a desire to keep those aspects of Ridgefield that drew people. More specific themes are summarized below.

- It appears the city planners are just attempting to cram in as many as people as possible, which could result in crime, low-quality architecture, and low property maintenance.
- Separating the entryways helps create the look of a single home even though it is multi-unit.
- Some HOAs don't allow tall trees. More trees should be encouraged and required.
- Require more than 10% open space on lots. Decks should not count.
- Parks are not a replacement for private yards.
- Trails should not be counted as required open space, especially if they are slim.
- Alleys promote crime and outdoor storage. Alleys should only be used for duplexes and apartments, not single-family areas. Further, alleys are not necessary if lots are large enough.
- By the time these code changes are adopted, a lot more homes will be built. Consider going further such as only allowing 60% of homes to be a single type.
- Require façade variety, including more color.
- Downtown should be left alone and encouraged for business development instead.
- The City's dark sky requirements are not being followed.

Workshop Outreach Summary

Staff used the following methods to conduct outreach and announce the November 17 event and online surveys:

- November 17 online workshop invitation:
 - Advertised in *The Columbian* (11/3)
 - Posted on the project website (11/3)
 - Posted on the City Facebook page (11/4)
 - Sent to the Community Development updates email distribution list (11/4)
 - Emailed to stakeholder interviewees, Planning Commissioners, and City Council members with a request to distribute the invitation to neighbors and colleagues (11/4, 11/17)
- Online survey links:
 - Posted on the project website (11/19)
 - Posted on the City Facebook page (11/19)
 - Sent to the Community Development updates email distribution list twice (11/19, 11/30)
 - Emailed to online workshop attendees, stakeholder interviewees, Planning Commissioners, and City Council members with a request to distribute the links to neighbors and colleagues (11/20)
- Housing workshop presentation:
 - PDF posted on project website (11/18)
 - Online workshop video posted to the project website and the City YouTube page (11/25)