

GROWTH MANAGEMENT PLANNING COUNCIL

Wednesday, November 29, 2017
Puget Sound Regional Council Boardroom
Seattle, WA

MEETING SUMMARY

Members present:

King County Executive Dow Constantine, Chair
Councilmember Rod Dembowski, King County
Councilmember Kathy Lambert, King County
Councilmember Joe McDermott, King County

Councilmember Jennifer Robertson, Bellevue

Representing Sound Cities Association (SCA):

Deputy Mayor Debbie Bertlin, Mercer Island
Mayor Leanne Guier, Pacific
Mayor Matt Larson, Snoqualmie
Councilmember Tola Marts, Issaquah
Councilmember Ed Prince, Renton
Councilmember John Stilin, Redmond
Deputy Mayor Nancy Tosta, Burien

Forrest Miller, Representing School Districts, Lake Washington School District

Ron Speer, Representing Water and Sewer Districts, Soos Creek Water and Sewer District

Executive Constantine convened the meeting at 4:05 pm. GMPC members introduced themselves.

Staff affirmed that a quorum was present.

Agenda Item II – approval of the minutes from March 29, 2017. The minutes were approved unanimously with a clarification offered by Councilmember Lambert.

Agenda Item III – Public Comment - *No public comment offered.*

Agenda Item IV – Discussion Item: School Siting Policy Implementation

Executive Constantine opened the discussion by acknowledging that there has been a lot of progress in siting new urban schools since the School Siting Task Force completed its work five years ago. He further explained that this meeting is a follow-up to the GMPC promise to get together periodically to check in and see how things are going. While there are definite success stories there are also real challenges. Representatives of three school districts briefed the GMPC on the status of their efforts to build schools in the Urban Growth Area.

Ron Thiele, Superintendent of the Issaquah School District talked about the journey that the school district has been on in the last five years. Mr. Thiele explained that the district includes five municipalities and is building multiple schools on individual sites and building multi-story schools in

an effort to make more efficient use of the urban land. Challenges include: the higher price for urban land, sites constrained with critical areas, regulations driving greater acreage needs, full-day kindergarten requiring even more classrooms, more lab space requirements, and transportation access.

Forrest Miller, Capital Facilities Director for the Lake Washington School District stated that the district includes five different municipalities and has recently built three new schools. Successful projects include the new middle school at Redmond Ridge, which has a capacity for 900 students and is three-stories tall. The district has established a new model for taller schools that can fit on smaller sites. The biggest challenge for Lake Washington is finding land for projects. Another significant challenge is the rising cost of construction. The district currently needs a fifth comprehensive high school, a smaller “choice” high school, two elementary schools in Kirkland and another one-two elementary schools in Redmond. Mr. Miller stated that there is no end in sight for the significant level of growth that the district has been experiencing.

Denise Stiffarm, with Pacifica Law Group spoke on behalf of the Tahoma School District. Ms. Stiffarm described the remarkable partnership between the district, the City of Maple Valley, and King County that came together to build the new Tahoma High School. She further stated that this is a good precedent for future partnerships. The district is also experiencing significant growth in student enrollment.

Executive Constantine remarked that the county has come a long way to see schools being sited where the students are living. He called for the cities and the districts to continue to work together for the benefit of future generations. The GMPC members discussed the challenges of building larger schools and the potential impact on school programs and on students; the challenges for teachers needing more affordable housing so they can live in the communities in which they teach; the need for the cities to be in partnership with the school districts; how more frequent interaction between the school district and the cities within their boundaries has been positive; and the need for more flexibility within the Urban Growth Area to be more accommodating to schools.

Next Steps: The GMPC asked for an accounting of what has happened with the rural sites owned by school districts that can no longer be used for a new school. The Executive asked staff to develop a resolution for consideration at the next GMPC meeting that will outline best practices and improve the way the governments can work together because they are serving one constituency.

Executive Constantine adjourned the meeting at 5:30 pm.