

Minutes
Point Roberts Community Advisory Committee
Special Meeting, April 1, 2019

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

1. Call to Order.

The meeting was called to order at 6:14 pm. (The committee members waited to see if members of the public would be in attendance.)

DG opened the meeting by commenting that there are 21 or 22 sections in WCC 20.72 and suggesting that we could go over half of the sections at each of two meetings, some being simple (simple to keep as-is or simple to change with broad consensus) and others being complex. The complex sections should be put aside initially, and then we should come back to the “hard” ones for discussion and conclusions.

SW suggested, as an adjunct to DG’s comment, that we should be starting by identifying the “problems” in Point Roberts that might be attributed to zoning restrictions and applying solutions to those problems. He noted that Cliff Strong has asked that we not give him code language, but rather the problems and solutions, so that the County can draft language to implement those solutions [or — so, that we can then present code language changes to implement those solutions ?? Steve — which were you saying?]

DG suggested merging both of those approaches. It was noted that the next Special Meeting on the topic of WCC 20.72 is scheduled for Tuesday, April 16, 2019.

2. Public Comment

The meeting was attended by Allison Calder, Annette Lowen, George Wright, Judson Meraw and Ken Calder.

Allison Calder: She asked what Mark Personius had proposed as a process for managing the review of WCC 20.72. DG responded that he has suggested just focusing on a few sections of the code; namely:

- 20.72.050 Permitted uses.
- 20.72.130 Administrative approval uses.
- 20.72.150 Conditional uses.
- 20.72.200 Prohibited uses.
- 20.72.653 Landscaping, screening, and tree canopy retention.

DG also suggesting maintaining the Design Guidelines. Regarding the Design Guidelines, SW expressed concern about legal mandates contained in those Guidelines (the “shall” item in that document) and suggested reviewing those part of the Guidelines.

Allison Calder: She suggested also looking at WCC 20.72.350 Building setbacks/buffer areas, because the combination of required 50 ft setbacks and areas of wetlands has made development on the open land on Tyee Drive north of Umpqua Bank impractical.

George Wright: New development in Point Roberts should be walkable, and generally accessible by people living in and visiting Point Roberts. Pedestrian-friendly areas will attract people. This should be part of the “Vision” for Point Roberts.

SW raised the point that parking requirements are controlled by state and county code.

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Allison Calder: She noted that parking along Gulf Road cannot be counted when determining how much parking is available for a business located along Gulf Road. Office/Retail Commercial development requires 1 parking space for every 200 sq ft of building area, while restaurants require 1 space for every 100 sq ft. This should be addressed.

George Wright: A “walking mall” would attract people. WCC 20.80 addresses parking requirements and has lots of “issues”. DG noted that WCC 20.72 addresses parking, but refers to back to 20.80.

SW suggested that a requirement that on-street parking be limited to 7 am to 12 midnight would keep Gulf Road clear during night hours.

Allison Calder: The Design Guidelines suggested that Point Roberts have community parking lot(s). She also suggested that we could try to get the parking restrictions along Gulf Road removed. This could help businesses like the Salt Water Café which had to reach a parking agreement with nearby properties to have sufficient parking.

DG noted that community parking lots would have to be with 700 ft of businesses which seek to count parking spaces in such a lot toward their parking space requirement. DG suggested adding WCC 20.80 to the short list of critical section that should be reviewed.

Someone notes that County code has provisions regarding electric vehicles, but WCC 20.72 has no such provisions for electric vehicles.

George Wright: We need to build in flexibility in the WCC 20.72 to accommodate eventual development in Point Roberts. We should “stretch” in what we propose and give to the County for review.

SW: Bringing the parking discussion back to the problem/solution approach, he suggested we could include “parking restrictions” as a problem, and “how to increase parking on Gulf Road” as a solution.

Judson Meraw: There is more to WCC 20.72 that the business district. We should change zoning code to allow and encourage development of affordable housing. Smaller houses should be allowed for affordable housing. We could have an area that allows for multiple small houses on a single parcel. This should not diminish real estate values, but should somehow “incentivize” creation of affordable housing.

DG: To build a house, the minimum lot size is 15,000 sq ft.

SW: A house must have certain required elements.

Allison Calder: There is no minimum size for a house.

George Wright: Commercial buildings should be able to have residential space as well.

Judson Meraw: The code should promote green technology and maintain trees. We never want the level of development as in Tsawwassen, BC. We should review minimum house size, shared septic systems, and things like that. The field of “Little houses” is a new growth business.

Allison Calder: You can’t control property values through the zoning code. In Whatcom County Code, in rural areas, one can have small cabins for rental; 5 3-bedroom units on 5 acres. This is available in the

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foothills area of Whatcom County. We could ask the County to change that to be for the foothills area and Point Roberts.

SW: Is that different from “transitional” zoning?

Allison Calder: There cannot be multiple housing units on a single lot. B&Bs are acceptable.

Judson Meraw: We should not turn Point Roberts into an Air B&B area; that can kill an area. The goal should be tying short-term rental housing to also have long-term affordable housing.

George Wright: We should not kill Air B&B opportunities because Point Roberts lacks short-term rental properties. He asked, “Who is going to pay for development of affordable housing.”

Allison Calder: Another section that should be reviewed is WCC 20.61 regarding development density.

SW: Zoning does not provide all the solutions. We also need partners to get things done.

3. Adjourn.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:05 pm. (Motion by SF; seconded by DG)