

Anacortes Planning Commission Minutes - October 1, 2025

Roll Call

Chairperson Mike Mills called to order the Anacortes Planning Commission meeting of October 1, 2025 at 6:00 p.m. Commissioners Jim Stoneman, Frank Jeretzky, and Luke Currier were present.

Commissioner Will McCombs participated in the meeting remotely via Zoom. Commissioners Linda Martin and Paul Ryan were absent.

Jim Stoneman moved to excuse Linda Martin and Paul Ryan. Frank Jeretzky seconded it. All Ayes.

Pledge of Allegiance

Minutes

There were no minutes submitted for approval.

Public Comment

There was no public comment taken.

Public Hearings

Other Business

2025 Comprehensive Plan Update - Development Regulation Amendments (continued discussion)

Libby Grage stated that the goals for tonight are to complete the discussion of the proposed 2025 development regulation amendments and to identify any issues or further discussion and questions from the Commissioners. She pointed out that an updated packet went out this afternoon which included additional public comments and the response from Transpo regarding the Commissioners' questions about street standards. She said the public hearing for the draft Development Regulation Amendments will be on October 22nd and written comments are due by 3:00p.m. that day to be included in the Planning Commission review.

Ms. Grage said the commissioners should reference the staff memo dated 9/25/25, Attachment A and the draft Development Regulation Amendments. She started with the allowed uses section. This is a follow-up item regarding indoor recreation. We've had 2 amendments requests from property owners asking to change the code to allow recreation in the LM1 and Industrial zones. The Commissioners expressed concerns about not wanting to open those zones that don't fit the purpose of those zones. There were also concerns about potential conflicts between recreational uses and uses already occurring in these zones. Staff has some proposals regarding the language for zone specific standards for indoor recreation that would limit them. She reviewed the proposed language.

Mike Mills wondered how staff came to the occupancy limit of 20 people.

Libby Grage said it was intended to keep these at a small scale.

Frank Jeretzky expressed concern that limiting these to that small of a size may not be economically feasible to develop.

Ms. Grage clarified that these could include conversions of existing buildings that are currently unused. She agreed it may not be economically viable for new development.

Jim Stoneman expressed concern at the 20-person limit. He would like the language to be more flexible. He suggested not limiting this to an occupancy number.

Mike Mills asked if there are minimum or maximum size limits for these.

Libby Grage pointed out this is for less than 10,000 sq.ft.

John Coleman said this proposed language is based on the Commissioners discussion last week. Staff tried to strike a balance between having non-industrial uses in an Industrial zone being used 2 hours a day, but did not want the new uses to impact the industrial uses.

Mike Mills referenced the examples of types of activities, he agrees that the proposed occupancy limit is too

restrictive.

Jim Stoneman suggested removing the number and saying something like “the maximum occupancy should take into account that this is an industrial area and it should not impact industrial operations”. This would leave it at the Director’s discretion.

Luke Currier pointed out that in other communities, a 5,000 sq.ft. space would have 50-60 people in attendance.

John Coleman pointed out that staff included an occupancy number so we have a metric. We tried to have the language reflect the intent. A number gives us some enforceability. He said that having a square foot limit is another way to have metrics.

Mr. Stoneman suggested language that said “should not exceed 30 occupants, but at the discretion of the Director can be waived”.

Libby Grage said it could be updated to “maximum occupancy may not exceed 20 people unless the Director determines that the increase won’t adversely affect the adjacent uses. She moved on to the request to allow Heavy Service and Self-storage in the Industrial zone. The draft Development Regulations proposed including heavy service as an allowed use in that zone, but staff did not recommend self-storage in the Industrial zone.

Ms. Grage moved on to the form and intensity standards proposed changes in the Marine Mixed Use (MMU) zone and Land Use designation. She reviewed the background of that zone. The standards apply based on if the zone is east or west of Q Avenue. In the 2016 Comprehensive Plan update process, it established a new MMU zone. There was a workshop to see what the citizens and property owners envisioned for that area. The Development Regulations were created for the new MMU zone. She reviewed these, including the bonus height incentives. The request from MJB (property owner) regarding one of the public amenities in the list is to provide space for a public park equal to at least 5% of the gross floor area of the building but not less than 10,000 sq.ft in area on a site agreed by and dedicated to the City. The request in the staff report proposes to change the minimum from 10,000 to 5,000 sq.ft and not require dedication to the City. Staff’s recommendation is to keep the minimums, but consider making this a double bonus, meaning it would be worth 20 additional feet. Staff expressed concern that a park less than 10,000 sq.ft is not usable and not in line with the original intent. With regard to not requiring dedication to the City, staff feels there could be flexibility. There may need to be additional requirements added; such as, maintenance requirements.

Jimmy Blais, representing MJB properties. He said the intent of this was to make it equitable for everyone. We support the 5% requirement, but the 10,000 sq.ft requirement translates to a 200,000 sq.ft building, which is a massive building. We support the city’s recommendation to make this a double bonus if 10,000 sq.ft. is the minimum. We would appreciate the consideration not requiring dedication to the city. There are often issues with maintenance.

Frank Jeretzky pointed out that 60% of the overall site can be used for single use residential. He asked how much of the remaining 40% could be other types of development.

Libby Grage said that it all could be non-residential development. There are several allowed uses that could be developed. She clarified that this list of bonus incentives is above and beyond the minimum requirements that apply to a single building. There is no park requirement in the minimum requirements.

Frank Jeretzky wondered if the area non used for buildings can be included in the amount needed to get the bonus incentive for the additional height.

Jimmy Blais said there are open space requirements for the development that we cannot take this 10,000 sq.ft cannot be applied to the waterfront corridors and parks.

Mike Mills clarified that by transferring the park to the City, we would be required to maintain it.

Libby Grage pointed out it would be a public park maintained by the City. It would be open to the public.

Luke Currier pointed out that the proposal gives the developer the option to not transfer it to the city and maintain it.

Ms. Grage agreed. There are still things to consider to ensure it is available to the public and maintained to a certain level.

Mike Mills the incentives are there to maintain the park. He likes the 10,000 sq.ft, would like for it not to be dedicated to the city but have public access.

Luke Currier and Jim Stoneman agreed.

Libby Grage pointed out that staff will need to update the language based on Planning Commission direction. The intent is to maintain the public space that provided the height bonus.

Will McCombs concurred with the discussion.

Libby Grage moved on to AMC 19.42.120 building height calculations, exceptions and modifications.

Talking about number 5 for MMU zone east of Q ave and the building heights. She presented a map of the max heights in the area. The goal is to reduce the overall scale in the height structures, to ensure there is visibility to the water. The request from the MJB is to eliminate the height requirement or maximum height of 150ft and to just have 200ft. From staff's perspective, they do feel it is an important part with the regards of marine views and with minimal tall buildings. Departures to subsections (C)(5)(b) and (c) of this section will be considered per AMC 19.20.220, provided site and building design features are included to reduce the perceived scale of such buildings, add visual interest, and enhance east-west pedestrian access and marine views. Grage advised that the bottom line is that there are exceptions.

Jimmy Blais advised this zone was the only zone in the area that has this requirement, later additional provisions were added. Making sure that you can still see the water and they do not impact the perception to the waterfront. This is reducing the ability to develop in a cost-effective manner.

Libby Grage spoke on that for a moment and that the view study applies to the marine mixed-use zone west of Q Ave. This does not add any additional procedures that would not be already required for the area.

Instead this is intended to be reviewed as part of the underline review process. No additional reviewing or permitting needed.

Mike Mills confirmed that the CUP would not be required.

Libby Grage agreed.

Jim Stoneman feels it is reasonable. Leave it at 150ft for the departure instead.

Frank Jeretzky disagrees and wants it to be the 200ft for a 65ft building.

Luke Currier sees the need and the max for the space and would want it to be 200ft.

Will McCombs wants to stick with it as is. 200ft is too high, 150ft is needed.

Mike Mills, agrees with the staff recommendation. Split vote on the recommendation right now.

Luke Currier feels that it would not be hard to get there.

Mike Mills, spoke that he agrees from his understanding and that there is no need for a separate process for a CUP.

Libby Grage will keep it as is for now.

Commission is slightly leaning that way.

Libby Grage advised we will not make any changes and will leave it alone and vote on it later, after the public hearing. The next one is on page 6 of 15 in the staff memo. CBD and MMU zone setback requirements for building height standards and the mixed-use and where the tallest buildings are allowed in the city. They are requesting that buildings have a min 8ft horizontal setback for the front of the building. A way to reduce the pedestrian level reduced the bulk of the building. The request was to remove the setback requirements in 19.42.120. She advised that the facade is only the front of the building and not all sides.

Suggestions were made to entertain to reduce the provision to less than 50%. Also advised that there are multiple routes to go, we can propose another option.

Jimmy Blais spoke to provide clarification, and it is only for exceeding the max height only, reducing setback by 8ft back. Clarification that once that height max was met, the entire building or 75% of the building facade did not need to meet that new setback, just anything above can be closer.

Mike Mills asked if Libby Grage agreed with Jimmy Blais.

Libby Grage advised that it does not need to be the top of it for the setback of the 8ft but will need to research more on it.

Mike Mills advised last sentence is clear but not the previous one.

Libby Grage will not be able to provide clear clarification without research.

Mike Mills thinks the image is not clear either, the words are but the image is not.

Libby Grage will clarify. She will bring that back up next time. Moving on to the AMC 19.43 uses, rooming houses. Staff are recommending deleting the rooming house and boarder terms from the code. Co-living type replaces those. The recommended code edits are mentioned.

John Coleman advised that there are not a lot of differences between them, however the co-living house has a much larger term for more options. He advised that Grage will review that. Possibly sharing kitchens with their own bathroom is co-living houses. Co-living better covers these areas and removes the other terms.

John Coleman is suggesting removing rooming houses, since it is an older term. However, John Coleman is also suggesting that co-living for residential and for multi-family living.

Frank Jeretzky asked how that would work.

John Coleman advised about oxford houses are slightly different. Example a large SFH, can rent out rooms, but still an SFH. State law protects people to allow them to rent out their rooms. With no limits.

Libby Grage then advises that she cannot find the specific code but moves on. She then shows 19.43.117 code and added a new section and advised on changes and was moved from group living. Staff are recommending to just remove the words from it. She then advises on deleting boarder. Next is AMC 19.43.070 for townhouses zone specific standards. Same language in each section and maintaining it. Then she goes over MMU zone east of Q Ave for the 60 percent of the site use area. She read off AMC 19.43.070(C)(3) Townhouse zone-specific standards. MJB is requesting to consider amending the subsection below to exclude associated landscaping and open space areas from the maximum site area coverage (60%) permitted for single-purpose residential or assisted living uses in the MMU zone east of Q Ave. There is an additional process to exceed this, per director.

Jimmy Blais then spoke on the proposal to remove the landscaping open space out of the 60 percents for townhouses, assisted living or multi-family areas. Essentially, if we go in and add a park associated with one of the buildings up to 10,000sqft that amount could count against that amount. What the code is doing is pushing us to minimize landscaping and public open space areas and forcing it on commercial sites. Not allowing a cohesive development that allows for more landscaping and more open spaces. Jimmy Blais did advise that they go through the framework development to get around this, which requires a city council decision with a hearing, but still want to request this to not have to go through this process.

Libby Grage then spoke on, staff does not recommend parceling out landscaping areas because they are associated with that part of the development that requires them and this doesn't help to meet the large-scale requirements.

Mike Mills commented on the change of percentage.

Will McCombs clarified on the percentage and landscaping for residential properties and how hard it would be to accommodate that amount.

Mike Mills thinks it is commercial only.

Will McCombs asked about taking the 60 percent for building, so where does the landscaping go? Jimmy Blais advised that it would eat into the commercial side, some landscaping is needed and parking, and the park space would not be included in that.

Jimmy Blais advised that if a new building is developed and there is park space greater than the 60 percent that it would not go against it.

Mike Mills then commented on this and said that would not count for the park space.

Will McCombs asked about the 40 and not the 60.

Libby Grage agrees, that the landscaping or open space that are required as a minimum, it is reasonable that it is not included. Will need clarification on the language for this.

Mike Mills agrees.

Libby Grage advised the same issue with the other type of living: Multi-family and assisted living facilities.

On to division 6 page 9 in staff memo. She talks about the relationship with the buildings, such as balconies to adjacent properties. AMC 19.62.030(C), light and air access. Buildings or portions thereof containing multi-family dwelling units whose only solar access (windows) is from the applicable side of the building (facing towards the interior side property line) must be setback from the applicable interior side of rear

property lines at least 15 feet. Balconies may be allowed to project up to 6ft into the required 15ft setback. She presented an example with windows only on one side of the building. Those buildings should be setback 15ft instead since they will be allowed solar. Whereas the units on the corner have solar access from other windows and can go within the 15ft setback. The request is that the code needs to clarify on if balconies would be allowed to encroach into the 15ft setback.

John Coleman spoke on the image, showing that the porch and the decks will not encroach into the setback for other residents. The change would be that the porches and decks can be within the setback and that the building only needs to be in the 15ft setback.

Mike Mills asked the committee and seeing head nods.

Will McCombs asked if there was a limit to how much the balcony could protrude into the setback?

Libby Grage advised 6ft would be the limit.

Will McCombs advised that he sees that it is reasonable.

Next, Libby Grage advised is limited to internal open space AMC 19.62.040. Advised on some edits such as the shared roof decks and with all the options for the open space. Shared open space, ground level individual outdoor space, balconies, common indoor recreation areas, and shared roof decks. She provided examples of the current code and the edits. Only allowing multifamily buildings up to 50 percent of the required open space can be provided using a shared open space deck. Housing action plan (HAP 2.5.4) for verbiage in green, that suggestion was remove the applicability between single-purpose multifamily buildings compared to mixed-use buildings, to allow intermediate level roof decks, and to ensure access is available to all residents. MJB has requested amending this section, LEG-2024-28 to allow horizontal mixed-use development to fulfill 100% of their required internal open space requirements with shared roof decks. However, LEG-2024-28 and HAP recommendations are not aligned.

Jimmy Blais spoke on the proposal and wanting them to align so will follow up.

Will McCombs had a question, so for single family residents is that up to 50 or 100?

Libby Grage advised up to 50 for residential and for mix-uses.

Libby Grage then moved on to miscellaneous follow-up items. Adult concessions code, MS and CBD development standards and rooming houses. Staff found that in 2013 there was a significant change in this area. This topic was documented in the findings from that report. She then presented a map of where the adult concessions are permitted to be. Staff recommendation is not revising this and that 2013 was significant during that time.

Mike Mills stated that it seems that they did a lot during that time and should we reconsider it, or has the state made any significant changes since, state or local?

Libby Grage advised no, not aware of any. Staff memo included the information for the MS and CBD development standards. PC requested additional information about development regulations applicable within the MS zone. She advised in the staff memo that the development in the MS zone is exempted from many of the requirements for the development standards. That would mean that any new development in that area would need to comply with the frontage appearance, such as: window design, transparency, minimum design, commercial use, window covers. Provided with that information, any questions or concerns? No, from all. One more item, change indoor animal care from C to P in CBD zone. Staff is proposing requirements from a conditional use to permitted use instead.

Mike Mills, would this apply to only animal activity to all indoor facilities with the care of animals?

Libby Grage advised yes, no outdoor activity associated with the care of animals. She then went over the upcoming schedule.

Mike Mills asked about page 7 in the memo about the map, needs to be clarified and maybe needs to include proposed.

Planning Department Update

John Coleman, advised something to report, working with a consultant from First 40 Feet, and they are looking to improve the downtown streets. They are bringing experts in to look at the downtown and how important they are. Focusing on commercial ave. There will be a public workshop in this room on Oct 15th. Coleman wants First 40 Feet to be able to talk with the community and how to make changes. Recommendations to come

later. All welcome, including staff and publishing findings, and will not be attending in a meeting setting. Oct 15 at 5:30pm.

Adjournment

Mike Mills adjourned the meeting at 8:07pm.