

Minutes of May 14th Visual Appearance Committee Meeting

In attendance - Richard Soto, Ed Gemkow, Nancy Bartlett, Jeff Tate, Anthony Boscolo

Because of late start, E G suggested we communicate about the Visual Appearance paper via email

RS asked EG what his vision is for commercial buildings on Main St and Harbor Ave

EG - Avoid themes, look at other design standards - don't start from scratch, break up facades, not a flat frontage.

EG will bring Langley's standards for discussion

JT - Standard for Stanwood (or Camano) takes a different tack - "This is what we want to avoid."

Suggests Pocket Plazas

Edmonds development standards, at least for down town core, are good model

Jeff will pull codes for us.

Explore the concept of certain sections of town having different sets of standards

Point system to try to create variety

EG - If we tie property owners hands they won't go along with this.

JT - concerned about people taking the path of least resistance. "They got a permit, I'll do what they did."

EG - let interpretation be open so we don't create uniformity

Part of visual appearance starts from streetscape

RS - county can dictate streetscapes

How can we prevent non-aesthetic buildings?

NB - are there any ways to keep buildings from being built on the peak of a hill, or otherwise looming?

JT – line of sight standards

Color standards have a dramatic effect on the look of a building, break up the massing with color.

Steve Shapiro will likely lobby hard for a Design Review Board. Difficult for personnel sitting in Coupeville to take codes/standards of different areas of the county into account.

Developers know the code. We have to write code that stipulates they build in a way we want. It's important to have good solid code.

Rick Brown suggested we adopt Carmel's code (400 pages)

Langley's code is perfect model for alleys and courtyards.

Require community space. Community space instead of green space.

Community nooks are what make the ambiance, not necessarily the buildings.

NB – what is the mechanism for creating these spaces? Easements? How are they instituted?

JT – Write into code that % has to be dedicated to community when next modifying the building

RS – create the community spaces and the buildings have to follow.

JT – setbacks can be interchangeable. i.e. 10 feet on one side, 30 feet on the other with the owner choosing whether the 10 ft setback will be in front or in back. (Side to side similarly.)

A certain % of property must be community space

Setbacks have to be odd sizes to allow for undulating façade, paths and alleyways

Create options

Identify on a map where you'd like to see community spaces

An owner might be allowed to increase bldg footprint or height in exchange for community space.