

July 26, 1995
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Introduced By:

Bruce Laing
Chris Vance

Proposed No.:

95-490

MOTION NO. **9627**

A MOTION relating to the implementation of the recommendations of the Benson Glen Report and initiating Regulatory Reform.

WHEREAS, the county council unanimously adopted Motion No. 9259 in March of 1994, and

WHEREAS, the Motion stated that The Story of Benson Glen should be a basis for regulatory reform as it relates to ensuring an adequate supply of affordable housing in King County, and

WHEREAS, King County has met the mandates of the Growth Management Act by adopting the Countywide Planning Policies, the 1994 King County Comprehensive Plan and has adopted development regulations pursuant to the GMA prior to January 1, 1995, and

WHEREAS, Comprehensive Plan Policy H-301 states "King County should pursue land use policies and regulations that result in lower development costs without loss of adequate public review, environmental quality or public safety and do not reduce design quality, inhibit infrastructure financing strategies, or increase maintenance costs of public facilities.", and

WHEREAS, Comprehensive Plan Policy H-302 states "King County shall continue to improve development standards to allow higher densities and flexibility of housing types in all residential zones, in order to best accommodate the environmental conditions on the site and the surrounding neighborhood when planning housing developments," and

WHEREAS, Comprehensive Plan Policy H-304 states; "King County shall seek to minimize the time necessary to process development permits to meet affordable housing and environmental goals and community and aesthetic concerns," and

1 WHEREAS, Comprehensive Plan Policy U-101 states "King County should
2 encourage development within the Urban Growth Area that creates and maintains safe,
3 healthy and diverse communities. These communities should contain affordable housing
4 and employment opportunities and should protect the natural environment and significant
5 cultural resources, and

6 WHEREAS, housing affordability throughout King County continues to be more
7 difficult to achieve as average sales prices for single family new construction for the 1st
8 quarter of 1995 have reached \$237,918, and

9 WHEREAS, condominium new construction sales price averages for the 1st quarter
10 of 1995 have jumped to \$195,825, a startling increase from \$162,313 average for all of
11 1994 countywide, and

12 WHEREAS, the King County executive and the county council must establish,
13 through their leadership, a clear mandate that county employees can and will act effectively
14 to improve the prospects for affordable housing.

15 NOW, THEREFORE BE IT MOVED by the Council of Metropolitan King
16 County:

17 A. The King County executive is expected to transmit changes to the Surface
18 Water Design Manual in September, 1995, a Site Alteration Code in January, 1996 and a
19 revision of the Subdivision Code in January, 1996. The executive is requested to ensure
20 that the following recommendations outlined in The Story of Benson Glen, have been
21 incorporated into these ordinances and into all other executive sponsored legislation
22 relevant to these recommendations. These recommendations include, but are not limited
23 to:

- 24 1. Assurance that the county's surface water management policies and practices allocate
25 resources efficiently and that the division's emphasis shall be to correct historical storm
26 water drainage problems, adequate maintenance of existing drainage systems, and to
27 seek regional opportunities to solve drainage problems, and
- 28 2. Assurance that future amendments to basin plans and the transmittal of the complete
29 Surface Water Design Manual strike a balance between housing affordability and
30 environmental protection. Included in future transmittals of any basin plan or the

1 complete Design Manual, the departments of SWM and DDES shall provide an
 2 evaluation of whether detailed engineering specifications in the SWM Manual lead to
 3 significant and valuable gains in water quality, flood control, and habitat protection.

4 An evaluation of how proposed design specifications will affect housing costs and a
 5 discussion of necessary levels of protection to protect public safety shall also be
 6 included, and

- 7 3. Assurance that design specifications for small urban infill sites are modified to
 8 facilitate urban development to attain affordability, protect the environment and
 9 achieve urban area housing, employment and population goals established in the
 10 Countywide Planning Policies and the King County Comprehensive Plan, and
- 11 4. Development of a clear yet flexible authority in the Surface Water Design Manual or
 12 by Directors Rule establishing performance standards for mulching (erosion control)
 13 that recognizes different levels of erosion potential for different soil classifications.
 14 Allow county field inspectors clear latitude in allowing exceptions, and
- 15 5. Allowing residential rooftop drainage to be absorbed into yards instead of tied into
 16 expensive storm drainage system where soil type and project location permit, and
- 17 6. Establishment of an "accelerated clearing and grading permit" to allow site work prior
 18 to road and storm drainage plan approval when soils testing allows and weather will
 19 permit site work in dryer, more environmentally sound conditions, and
- 20 7. Evaluation of the past winter rain and storm patterns and effects and issue a report and
 21 findings, in order to allow appropriate application of seasonal clearing limitations, and
- 22 8. Evaluation of partial diversion of storm drainage from one basin to another in order to
 23 lower housing costs if such action does not individually or through cumulative effect
 24 threaten the environment, water supply or public safety or property.

25 B. The King County Executive is also requested to identify regulations and
 26 codes in the proposed 1994 Uniform Building Code (UBC) adoption which may be driving
 27 up building costs and propose lower-cost alternatives to be included in the county
 28 amendments to said adoption. The following issues should be included and identified as
 29 part of the 1996 executive proposed legislative packet, if necessary:

COUNCIL AMENDED 7/31/95

- 1 1. The conflict between the State Energy Code and the State's Ventilation and Air Quality
- 2 Code,
- 3 2. The degree to which seismic and wind load requirements in the Northwest should
- 4 conform to national Uniform Building Code standards,
- 5 3. The degree to which the county's residential fire safety requirements are redundant, or
- 6 prompted primarily by concerns for property protection rather than life safety,
- 7 4. The opportunity for eliminating unnecessary inspections or consolidating multiple
- 8 inspections, including the multiple electrical inspections from the State Department of
- 9 Labor and Industries, water and sewer inspections from the Health Department and
- 10 construction inspections from DDES,
- 11 5. The opportunity for agencies to waive certain inspections and permit builders to self
- 12 certify certain elements of their compliance with specific county and state
- 13 requirements, with an enforcement program that utilizes random inspections,
- 14 6. The opportunity for a greater number of plan minor site and building plan amendments
- 15 to occur through field inspections.

16 PASSED by a vote of 12 to 0 this 31st day of July,

17 1995.

18 KING COUNTY COUNCIL
19 KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON

20 Kent Pullen
21 Chair

22 ATTEST:

23 Gerald A. Peterson
24 Clerk of the Council

25 Attachments:

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