



Meeting Minutes

City Hall
601 4th Avenue E
Olympia, WA 98501

Land Use & Environment Committee

Information: 360.753.8244

Thursday, January 29, 2015

5:30 PM

Room 207

1. ROLL CALL

Present: 3 - Chair Steve Langer, Committee member Julie Hankins and Committee member Jeannine Roe

OTHERS PRESENT

City Manager Steve Hall
Community Planning & Development (CP&D) Director Keith Stahley
CP&D Downtown Liaison Brian Wilson
Police Lieutenant Paul Lower
CP&D Senior Planner Stacey Ray
CP&D Deputy Director Leonard Bauer
CP&D Senior Planner Amy Buckler
Parks, Arts and Recreation Director Paul Simmons

2. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Langer called the meeting to order at 5:34 p.m.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- 3.A [15-0104](#) Approval of December 11, 2014 Land Use and Environment Committee Meeting Minutes

The minutes were approved.

4. COMMITTEE BUSINESS

- 4.A [15-0092](#) Downtown Project IV Work Plan

Mr. Wilson gave a brief outline for newcomers and outlined goals of the plan to promote cleanliness, safety, economic development, and partnerships. The project has reached the end of its three-year planning period and is ready to reassess and create a new strategy. Existing and new programs will require support and ideally the resources generated will fuel future projects as things progress. Areas of future focus include the Community Renewal Area, including blighted properties and a downtown welcome center, which would require partnerships from several agencies. The work plan will be an upcoming Consent item on a future Council agenda. The Downtown Parking Strategy will soon be reviewed and plans for a public restroom area will be

reviewed in late March. Other plans include continued partnership with the Volunteers in Paint Program, improvements to facades, and improvements to wayfinding which includes utility box wraps. Social media and online forums will be utilized to gain better understanding of public opinions and ideas.

Mr. Wilson requested input on items to be added to the list and suggested additions include a Gant chart to establish a timeline with completion dates, bicycle and pedestrian wayfinding, and analyzing how people flow through downtown.

The discussion was completed.

4.B [15-0086](#) Downtown Strategy Scoping

Ms. Buckler began with a recount of progress so far, requesting questions and refinement. If they are ready to move forward, they will bring their plan in February. The City Council retreat discussed a firm approach and finalization of the scope. Once the scope is complete an RFP or RFQ will be released. A summary of the downtown strategy was provided, focusing on engaging the public and prioritizing the most impactful improvements, which will be decided upon with community input. The downtown strategy will be adopted next year in the summer or fall and will be improved and implemented each year across a five-year timeline. At the end of the five-year period, the project will be reviewed and updated to proceed with the next five-year plan. The project has already adopted a vision and goals, at this point being ready to communicate with the public and take action. The goal of these plans will improve the downtown area and encourage both community and private investors to be involved, as well as serving as an umbrella project to collaborate relevant projects. First-year goals include connecting and enhancing places and spaces through working to reduce instabilities, promote investment, and enhance the downtown space. A list of code amendments has been suggested and will be discussed at a later date. The draft framework is directed to be within purview, realistic, and what the Comprehensive Plan says it will do.

Concerns about views being blocked and development not achieving intended outcomes require the standards to be thoroughly discussed with the public. The design standards will be reviewed, changed, and improved to be more inclusive of desired outcomes and a consultant will likely be brought in. A coordinated strategy will be communicated to ensure community understanding of how jobs and businesses will be affected. A housing strategy will be generated and assessed along with the current market and what services are needed in the downtown area.

Mr. Bauer spoke on the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA), which requires governments, including cities, to review action impacts. This pertains to projects of all levels and involves rules that dictate approaches. SEPA must be consulted as the Downtown Strategy proceeds. The amount to be reviewed may be a deterrent to investors, but the City could take on a larger portion of the analysis project, so that investors would have more information on their prospective projects up front. This would allow information to be provided on potential project impacts as well as what actions might be taken to mitigate these impacts. A change to the requirements has

been proposed as a list of options for the Council to review. The City may choose to increase the exemption level for minor construction, alter urban infill exemption levels, and/or adopt a more detailed environmental impact statement. These options could be implemented during the Downtown Strategy implementation.

Chair Langer opened the floor to discussion. The discussion focused on the housing and retail assessment of the downtown area by an outside consultant as well as community members, with an emphasis on viewing all individual topics together to gain a clear picture of what is needed and how it will work best. Some preliminary input included an annual performance review, an anchor store, and a need to increase the amount of market-rate housing to improve the balance between market-rate and subsidized housing downtown.

Chair Langer moved the discussion onto the topic of SEPA. The proposed options were discussed and it was explained that they do not have an expiration date, as they would be changes to the regulations themselves and the data surrounding the project(s) would be available to the public to prevent the same assessments being repeated. Other cities have done one or a combination of these options and had success due to their decisions being based on their own situations. More information on the three options will be provided at a later date by Mr. Bauer.

The discussion was completed.

4.D [15-0106](#) Artesian Commons - Immediate Actions and Long-Term Visioning Process

Mr. Simmons presented an approach that has been developed for managing the Artesian Commons. Aspects of the plan that require immediate action include improved safety and security, implementing 20 hours a week of programming from May to September involving the Olympia Workers League (OWL), hosting eight special events over the summer, increasing maintenance at the park, administering walk-throughs prior to events, putting up a basketball hoop, installing a fence (four feet is the current intended height), including gates and space for a storage unit, improving park signage, establishing park hours, improving and implementing new lighting, and adding additional cameras to the park. The fence project is the most urgent, due to the four- to five-month installation period.

The 2015 management strategy involves the development of the Artesian Commons Leadership Committee, which will meet to make minor decisions on the park and help to guide staff on park management. Structural or regulatory changes would still be brought before the Council. Candidates for the committee have been selected from various City departments and a youth liaison from the community will be included as well. The next step is to formally invite the candidates to join the committee. The 2015 plan also includes the formation of action teams, that will oversee various areas of the park's maintenance, help the community take ownership of the park, and implement the decisions of the Leadership Committee. The areas of focus are programs, partners and events; maintenance; safety and security; evolving design; and public outreach and communications.

The visioning plan for the park will entail considerations for 2016 and beyond. Safety and security will continue to be important and community input will be highly influential in creating a scope and timeline. The current plan from February to April is to focus on assessing programming, design challenges, and reviewing data and input to produce a basis for future decisions. From May to August, the primary focus will be to develop the public outreach strategy, collect input from those using the park, and consider the information to decide how to proceed in the short- and long-term.

Chair Langer opened the floor for discussion. The smoking situation at the park was discussed and this will be discussed by the Leadership Committee that will be formed. Information on crime at the park was offered by Police Lieutenant Paul Lower and may be prioritized in the 2015 review. The effect of cameras, a crime map since the well's opening, specific problems facing the area, difficulties enforcing these problems, and some options for dealing with these were all requested. There were various mentions of the positive impact that youth presence has on the park.

Chair Langer directed the discussion to the fence options presented for consideration. The cost of the fence will not be known until a design is decided and vendors have provided quotes. Use of a community welding group was suggested and concerns were expressed for the effectiveness of the four foot height of the fence in regards to basketballs entering the roadway and people entering the park after hours. The use of the fence as a boundary line for regulation enforcement was noted. Suggestions were made to opt for a flat-topped fence as opposed to one with exposed bars and no sharp designs. The ability for plants to grow into the fence was supported and bamboo as a fence alternative was suggested. No vote was made on fence design.

The discussion was completed.

4.C [15-0050](#) Briefing on Action Plan Partners

Ms. Ray said the Action Plan aims to assist the Comprehensive Plan to gain traction. It allows for prioritization, collaboration, moving forward, and is community-wide. It provides an umbrella, including other plans and the community. The success of efforts assisted by the Action Plan will feed back into the Action Plan again. Public involvement is critical to the project's success and requires community input, ideas, and diversity. The Action Plan works to inform, consult, involve, and collaborate. The project plan is to kick off in mid-April in a community-wide event and work heavily with the public in the months following, closing with an event to celebrate the accomplishments and recognize partners in August to September. The plan to engage project partners includes presentations, mini workshops, and action plan partner work groups. Fifteen members will make up the group of partners, and although a list of candidates has been created, it is still open to change. This group would meet four times throughout the public involvement process, providing feedback to staff on draft material and updates to the Land Use and Environment Committee.

Ms. Ray asked for input from the Committee on what would be requested of the Action Plan group. Chair Langer opened the floor for discussion. The diversity of the

candidate group so far was discussed and it was suggested that it could be discussed with those who invested in this project and potentially pulling people in from other boards. The deadline for the solid list of candidates is as soon as possible and it may be taken to a higher Council if possible. More precise content will be available later and will be provided. The framing of the event was discussed and considered to be changed to a more “party”-oriented title. Scheduling of the full Council and availability will be discussed at a later date.

The discussion was completed.

- 4.E** [15-0087](#) Consider Land Use and Environment Committee Calendar and Work Plan

Mr. Stahley reviewed the Land Use and Environment Committee Draft Work Plan and Committee Calendar, listing the areas of focus, such as the Artesian Commons, the Shoreline Master Program, and the Urban Forestry Asset Management Plan. An endorsement was made to put the future calendar up for City Council approval.

The discussion was completed.

- 4.F** [15-0110](#) Status Reports and Updates

The item was closed with no discussion or action.

5. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:43 p.m.