



City of Olympia

City Hall
601 4th Avenue E
Olympia, WA 98501

Meeting Minutes - Draft Planning Commission

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Monday, April 1, 2013

6:30 PM

Council Chambers

1. CALL TO ORDER

1.A ROLL CALL

Present: 5 - Commissioner Roger Horn, Commissioner Paul Ingman, Commissioner Agnieszka Kiswa, Chair Jerome Parker, and Vice Chair Judy Bardin

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The Agenda was amended to include a presentation by Councilmember Julie Hankins on the development of a Downtown Master Plan during Announcements; time allotted during Announcements (while Councilmember Hankins in attendance) to discuss the pros and cons of the Commission's Comprehensive Plan deliberations; and the February 27 and March 18 Minutes review prior to Business Items.

The agenda was approved as amended.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments.

4. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Commission Horn attended the March City Council Finance Committee Meeting. Reports that the City received a grant for a conversion of street lights to LEED standards. OPC has supported this initiative in their CFP letter over the past few years.

Staff confirmed that the OPC will likely receive a briefing on April 15 of an amendment to the Municipal Code proposed by the Olympia School District.

Councilmember Julie Hankins addressed the Commission on the future development of a Downtown Master Plan. She shared that the a Downtown Plan can articulate a community vision and lay-out specific steps for how to implement the vision. It is important to note that the "journey" and the process is important, and can meet other community needs: educate, engage, and empower the public. Different planning initiatives and processes can be incorporated into the process as well; Community Renewal Area cited as an example.

Downtown is the entire community's neighborhood plan, with the potential to provide a

positive, collaborative experience for community members. This effort could be replicated throughout other neighborhoods as an empowering experience.

The process requires compromise, but that will occur during conversations and engagement among stakeholders and community members. This is an opportunity to dispel some fear and build trust within the community; an opportunity to come together to articulate a vision and show how it can be achieved.

The process can be a tool to scope how current development codes are achieving the community's vision downtown; may involve exploring the use of a tool called Form-Based Code.

Commissioner Ingman commented that the Shoreline Master Program (SMP) and Comprehensive Plan processes don't seem to be providing a feedback loop to the community. Councilmember Hankins confirms the value in checking back the community throughout a process. The process might look something like inviting an outside expert to learn about the community, listen to community members, put it down on paper (i.e. develop a Draft Plan), and then ask the community: "Is this what you said?" Stresses the value of continuous feedback loop.

Commissioner Kizza concurred that OPC represents the community; that they are here for that purpose. Expressed concern about the process, and stressed the importance of more time for discussion as a good investment.

Councilmember Hankins promoted designing a different way to develop the Downtown Plan; stressed being clear about what is being asked of the public and Planning Commissioners. As well as what will be done with the information collected. Be clear in scoping work; what specifically is being asked of a participating group. Confirmed that deadlines can be frustrating, but necessary.

Commissioner Parker stated that it is imperative that the Downtown Plan have an urban designer involved. Councilmember Hankins concurred.

Councilmember Hankins stated that Board and Commission should be invited to provide input so that community expertise is utilized. The Planning Commission may or may not be the lead in this effort. The Commission's role is yet to be determined; however, the Commission could make a recommendation.

Commissioner Horn suggested an ad-hoc committee with approx. 40 representatives from the community.

Councilmember Hankins noted all the different City plans need to be working together to be achievable. The Downtown Plan will be built on the Comprehensive Plan, but separate so it stays flexible, community-supported, and implementable.

Commissioner Kizza shared that a large group of people won't be able to effectively work on a final plan, and that the process will require clarity of thought with the input

or leadership of a professional expert. Commissioner Ingman concurred that an expert brings research-based methods and process.

Councilmember Hankins views the Downtown Plan as a blueprint (vision) for when opportunities arise, and a new model for public engagement. It can establish some predictability and patterns for how community members can get involved.

Chair Parker invited Commissioners to share with Councilmember Hankins thoughts on the Commission's deliberation process.

Commissioner Ingman noted that in his opinion Commissioners weren't represented accurately to the Council by staff, and that their meetings dedicated to deliberations were not sufficient. Concern expressed that the Commission will not have an opportunity to inform the Council thoroughly of their recommendations, and would like to ensure that Council knows the Commission's reasoning for their recommendations. Council should have that information available to them to ensure equal consideration given to input from Councilmembers, Commissioners, and staff.

Councilmember Hankins stated that the Council intends to have a roundtable discussion with the Commission.

Commissioner Ingman doesn't feel like there was an exchange or dialogue on the SMP. He stated that he felt the Commission met with the Council too early in the process, and that an interface should occur at the moment Council is deliberating on a particular topic with the Comprehensive Plan. This will allow the Commission to inform the process, and not feel shutout from Council's process, as occurred with the SMP.

Commissioner Bardin noted it took her a while to understand the issues; would like to see more of an iterative process. Some Councilmembers may prefer to work directly with Commissioners rather than relying solely on elements of the transmittal packet. An early overview won't be as valuable.

Staff distributed copies of a draft Council review process shared with Council's Land Use and Environment Committee (LUEC) on March 28.

Commissioner Ingman felt offended by the Commission's actions on the SMP being made light of. Feels Commissioners should be able to speak for themselves to explain differing perspectives, and how they represent the diversity of the community. Commissioners should be able to speak for themselves, individually, and not represented by staff.

Chair Parker acknowledged and thanked Councilmember Hankins for her time.

5. INFORMATION REQUESTS

Staff confirmed that Commissioners will receive a copy of all materials being prepared and distributed to Council.

Staff explained that Commissioners are not typically involved in determining a future work plan if they are no longer on the Commission, but can be consulted individually.

Staff elaborated on the pros and cons of the Downtown Plan as an element of the Comprehensive Plan: If the Downtown Plan were to be adopted under the requirements of the Growth Management Act (GMA), it would be constrained to one amendment a year, a defined timeline, a defined process, and to the GMA-dictated structure. It would also be constrained to Commission review, and a subsequent recommendation to Council. It would need to be forwarded to Commerce and subject to potential appeal to the Growth Hearings Board (GHB).

Advantages to including the Plan as an element of the Comprehensive Plan include that the Plan would be binding on other agencies: including, but not limited to the Port, State, and School District. GMA documents also require internal consistency.

If not an element of the Comprehensive Plan, all aspects of the Plan can be individualized for the local jurisdiction. Consistency is desired, but not necessary to the level or extent required by GMA. Other Master Plans in the City are not GMA documents. Staff will be presenting all options and implications to Council when discussing the Commission's recommendation.

Staff explained that Council can make Plans official through approving documents, adopting documents, or accepting documents. Each method has a different meaning. This is a decision Council will need to make that applies to all Sub-Area Plans. The strongest and most binding option would be potentially as adopted code, however, staff is not likely to craft or recommend the Plan as code, because it would need to be driven by another Plan. There are Master-Zoning Codes that are a blend of policies and regulations. GMA directs that there be separation of policies and code. Council will sort out what weight to give documents.

6. BUSINESS ITEMS

Commissioners begin discussion by addressing the clarifying questions outlined in the meeting packet (page 4).

Question #1: The Commission is asked to confirm the elements depicted on the "Urban Neighborhood Map" to ensure the legend will be accurate.

Commissioner Ingman distributed a map he revised to reflect the Commission's adopted recommendation. Commissioner Ingman described his new draft map.

Staff noted that the map was dated "March 11, 2013" however, the map was not adopted that evening, the policy language was. Ingman's original draft was adopted by the Commission on March 18, 2013.

On Commissioner Ingman's draft map, existing high density corridors are in place outside the point where the gateways are indicated approaching downtown on

Harrison, Pacific, and Martin Way. Commissioner Ingman highlights that the area for high density neighborhoods is smaller than both the original Ingman draft and the July Draft.

There was no definition in Appendix A of Land Use Chapter for high density. Ingman clarified that "high density" on the map differs from that in the July Draft; proposed a minimum threshold (dwelling unit/acre), believing the terms in Appendix A need to be defined further on both the map and in Appendix A.

Specific language regarding a minimum threshold for high density was rejected by the Commission in response to a motion by Commissioner Horn; believes in one definition consistent across the Plan.

Commissioner Parker stated that the Commission can make recommendations on substance tonight, but any outcomes will be incorporated into individual transmittal letters, and not the Commission's formal recommendation to Council, which was already approved by the full Commission on March 18.

Commissioner Kisza expressed concern that the draft map recommended high and medium density throughout areas determined to be vulnerable to liquefaction. Traditional housing would leave community members vulnerable to danger and financial loss. The Port peninsula should be a park, rather than housing.

Commissioner Ingman responded that the Commission's discussion was about the intent of the type of land use, specifically accommodating higher densities in a walkable environment.

Commissioner Parker stated that changes in designations are not on the table for discussion; need to focus on reconciling the two maps. The definition of downtown as demonstrated in the draft map is valid, including the Port as a part of downtown.

Commissioner Parker added that If the Commission were to explain to Council the primary changes between the map adopted by the Commission on March 18 and Ingman's draft being discussed this evening, the major difference is that the two focus and high density areas are represented as smaller than what is proposed in the Future Land Use Map.

Staff reminded Commissioners that their letter to Council is due May 3.

Commissioner Ingman confirmed that the 1/2-mile width of an urban corridor did not change. The map under discussion designates where the corridors are located; not the language or concepts that defines them.

Concern was expressed by Commissioner Horn that there is a conflict between definitions of "medium density" in the current zoning. Areas designated as yellow in color on the July Draft Land Use Map are currently zoned to allow 6-12 units per acre. Public comment did not reflect any concern or objection with this long-standing zoning

designation.

Commissioner Ingman confirmed that he has no intention to change the existing densities. The intent, instead, is to increase what is intended by medium density and high density designations.

Commissioner Ingman believes that high density should be above 25 units per acre, medium density needs to be 13-24 units per acre, and low density should have two sub-designations to differentiate between neighborhoods such as the Northeast Neighborhood and Governor Stevens Neighborhood.

Staff clarified that there are density targets for downtown, but no specific maximum or minimum density associated with waterfront property. The Urban Waterfront Land Use designation, however, defines a minimum density of 15 units per acre, but that has never been implemented as a zoning designation.

Areas that are designated on Ingman's draft map under discussion at the meeting as Urban Corridor, but are not hatched, will remain as recommended in the July Draft. The hatch marks are intended to assign a higher density overlay over the urban corridor in the July Draft.

Question #3: What is meant by the Commission by the term "Boulevards?"

Commissioner Ingman would like to see a public process to define "boulevards," similar to what was discussed for addressing heights and views; should be part of the Downtown Master Plan public process. The gateways and civic boulevards are part of the downtown experience; despite being outside what is defined as the downtown core.

Staff requested further clarification regarding does "boulevard" mean "median," "formal street," etc. Staff needs to identify inconsistencies between what the Commission recommends and other parts of the Comprehensive Plan. The City has an existing plan for the installation of medians, and the map under discussion doesn't match that plan.

Commissioner Ingman clarified that the policy language regarding boulevards is not intended to be prescriptive. He looked to language in the 1994 Plan when drafting the policies, and how gateways were described. He would like to see some of that language moved forward as a recommendation to Council in the Commission's letter.

Staff sought to confirm that the green circles on the map were the recommended locations for gateways. Commissioner Ingman elaborated that gateways were not intended to include signage, but more of a natural and vegetated gateway at specific locations. The locations were intended to contrast and highlight the transition between a high density area and corridor area to a lower density area.

Commissioner Ingman will provide Chair Parker with as precise locations as possible

for Chair Parker to include in the Commission's cover letter for Council consideration. Commissioner Bardin will provide staff with the precise language regarding gateways referenced from the existing (1994) Comprehensive Plan; staff will distribute to the full Commission to review.

Commissioner Horn noted concern that some policies in the July Draft Land Use Chapter reference the term "suburban." Doesn't feel sure if anything in Olympia is suburban, especially along the corridors. The goal is to convert those areas from suburban to something else; why continue to refer them as suburban? GT14 doesn't seem to be consistent with the use of the term suburban in PL 11.7. Commissioner Horn expressed that his concern can be conveyed in the Commission's cover letter to Council.

Chair Parker confirmed that he will be consulting with individual members when drafting the cover letter.

Staff noted that suburban in this context is highlighting the existing condition, and not necessarily out of consistency with the goal of moving away from a suburban landscape.

Commissioner Horn explained that Appendix A in the Land Use Chapter of the July Draft included definitions that would apply to the Commission's recommended policy language and associated map. Common definitions are needed. "High density" also needs a definition.

There is a need to consider the definition of "low-density," as some neighborhoods with a low-density designation are currently fine with a designation of 6-12 units per acre.

Commissioners determined that three or four members may continue the discussion on definitions outside of the formal meeting schedule, and return with additional comments for April 15.

Neighborhood Centers as shown on Ingman's draft map are the same as in the July Draft. Staff noted that almost all the neighborhood centers exist 'on the ground.' Neighborhood centers are small pockets of retail and higher density development within low-density areas. One example of a neighborhood center is the west side Food Co-op and Sage's restaurant.

Staff noted that everyone has a different meaning for the term "Urban Neighborhoods." The July Draft does not include a definitive definition of a neighborhood. Staff will determine where the Commission's draft map and policy language titled "Urban Neighborhoods" may be integrated into the existing language in the July Draft Land Use and Design Chapter, Downtown, and Other Neighborhoods section.

Chair Parker asked that the next Commission meeting on April 15 be used to

determine what concepts will go in the cover letter, and that those issues not agreed to for the cover letter may be included in individual Commissioner letters.

Staff requested discussion on Question #4: Is the Land Use Map and zoning for downtown sufficient (as in it currently allows for at least 1/4 of forecasted growth to occur in downtown), or if the growth goes elsewhere, does the City take action to direct it to go downtown.

Commissioner Ingman noted that the existing Comprehensive Plan includes targets for housing units downtown. The proposed policy language should suggest a target.

Staff noted that the Commission's recommendation states that a quarter of forecasted growth "shall be..." downtown, which implies it is a mandate. An extreme example of how this would potentially be implemented includes a moratorium on any development that occurs outside of downtown.

Staff explained that the City has always had goals for growth in downtown; forecasts continue to show that even though the zoning can accommodate growth, it is not likely to come to downtown. For a larger proportion of growth to go downtown, something needs to change. For example, change the zoning elsewhere or provide more incentives to develop downtown. Staff expressed the opinion that the Commission should consider how aggressively the City pursue this policy.

Staff explains that restricting growth or trying to drive growth only downtown may just move growth to Tumwater or Lacey. A well-planned downtown that is predictable (and has community consensus around a vision) may encourage or invite more growth downtown.

Commissioner Parker asked Commissioners to discuss developing a recommendation for Council on the Commission's work plan for the remainder of 2013.

Staff confirmed that the recommended work plan for the remainder of 2013 is not tied directly to the transmittal of the Commission's recommendation to Council. However, their transmittal package may include items the Commission didn't get to during their deliberations, and would want to work on "some day." There may also be items the Commission wishes to work on in 2013 that weren't addressed or part of the Comprehensive Plan review as well.

Parker asked that all Commissioners take time to identify those items that the Commission did not work on, and bring them to the April 15 meeting for possible addition to the future work item list.

Commissioner Ingman will send out a list and agenda for the members interested in additional clarification of the "Urban Neighborhoods" proposal, including a discussion of PL11.7 and potential inconsistencies with other Commission recommendations.

Integrating the Urban Neighborhoods Policies with Comprehensive Plan Map(s)

Attachments: [1. Select Goals and Policies from Draft Plan](#)
[2. Link to Draft Future Land Use Map \(July Draft\)](#)
[3. Draft Urban Neighborhoods Map](#)

7. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Approval of March 18, 2013 Planning Commission Meeting Minutes

Attachments: [1. Draft Minutes](#)

March 18, 2013 Minutes:

Commissioner Bardin noted that the minutes on page 2 are not adequate to make clear that if the July Draft Land Use Map is approved, the Commission wouldn't review all zoning changes.

The last sentence in the first paragraph under Item #7 should be revised to read: "The change in the Code could require that all rezones come before the Commission, *rather than the Hearing Examiner*, which would change the hearing process."

Commissioner Horn raised concern about the motion on page 3 that states: "Commissioner Horn moves that the Commission forward both the Future Land Use Map and Commissioner Ingman's Draft "Urban Neighborhoods Map" to the Council for inclusion in the Comprehensive Plan..."

Commissioner Horn anticipated still making recommendations on the map itself in April, including continuing to work on integrating the two maps to accurately reflect what their policies implied.

Commissioner Ingman recalled being asked [prior to March 18] to synthesize the map and recommended policies, which is why he brought forward tonight a draft map.

Staff cautioned against revising minutes, as they are to reflect what actually occurred, not what was intended to occur. Commissioner Horn feels the words stated may be correct, but they do not reflect the intent of the motion. Feels the minutes may be misinterpreted as currently stated.

The text of the motion recorded in the minutes should be revised to state: "Commissioner Horn moves that the Commission forward both the Future Land Use Map and Commissioner Ingman's Draft "Urban Neighborhoods" Map to the Council for inclusion in the Comprehensive Plan, with the understanding that the Commission will work more on the recommendation *to the Council for integration and alignment of the two maps* in April."

Near the bottom of page 5, in the last sentence, insert the word "Plan" after "The Implementation (action)..."

Move minutes regarding "Recommendations for Future Work Plan Items" (13-0238) and "Discuss the Process for Planning Commission's Transmittal to City Council" (13-0239) to their appropriate locations within the agenda template.

Commissioner Horn moved, seconded by Commissioner Bardin to adopt the March 18, 2013 minutes as amended. The motion passed unanimously.

Approval of February 27, 2013 Planning Commission Values & Vision
Subcommittee Meeting Minutes

Attachments: [1. Draft Minutes](#)

Chair Parker moved, seconded by Commissioner Horn, to approve the February 27, 2013 minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

8. REPORTS

Leadership Team Meeting:

Chair Parker invites Commissioners to submit questions to him, which he can share with the Council's General Government Committee as he participates in the 2013 Planning Commission applicant selection process on behalf of the Commission.

The General Government Committee will be hosting applicant Interviews on April 18; Chair Parker will participate, but doesn't vote. There are 11 applicants.

Staff confirms that their role is intentionally very minimal in the selection process.

Commissioner Bardin reminds Commissioners to begin thinking about or considering the format for the Commission's annual retreat. There will be more discussion on this topic at the April 15 meeting. The retreat will likely be in June.

Staff clarifies that Commissioners can begin to think about what outcomes they'd like from the retreat; but may also wish to wait for new members to be on board first. New members are likely to be appointed formally right soon after General Government meets; however, there may be a delay to allow for more consideration. Hope to have new members on board for the first meeting in May.

9. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Bardin moved, seconded by Commissioner Kiswa, to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned.

Accommodations