



Meeting Minutes

City Hall
601 4th Avenue E
Olympia, WA 98501

Land Use & Environment Committee

Information: 360.753.8447

Thursday, December 11, 2014

5:30 PM

Council Chambers

Special Meeting

1. ROLL CALL

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

OTHERS PRESENT

Community Planning & Development (CP&D) Associate Planner Amy Buckler
CP&D Downtown Liaison Brian Wilson
CP&D Deputy Director Leonard Bauer
CP&D Director Keith Stahley
City Manager Steve Hall
Police Chief Ronnie Roberts
Parks Arts & Recreation Director Paul Simmons
Parks Associate Planner Jonathon Turlove

2. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Langer called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- 3.A [14-1208](#) Approval of November 20, 2014 Land Use & Environment Committee Meeting Minutes

The minutes were approved.

4. COMMITTEE BUSINESS

- 4.A [14-1198](#) Briefing & Discussion about Downtown Plan Scoping

Ms. Buckler discussed the Downtown Strategic Plan and Community Renewal Area (CRA). She indicated the two plans will be worked on next year to advance Olympia's development process. She noted the need for a consultant team to help with strategic planning, to be funded with \$250,000 in year-end savings.

Mr. Wilson outlined progress over the last three years including the Ambassador Program, Clean Team, Alcohol Impact Area, drug free zones, public places, and private development. He highlighted an opportunity to gather data on the current state

of Downtown as part of the scoping process.

Mr. Bauer outlined successful practices of Washington cities including Bellingham, Yakima, and Kent. He emphasized the need to understand a city's market indicators to ensure profit and noted developers appreciation of SEPA. He agreed to provide additional detail of the City's best practices in January after completing research.

Chair Langer opened the discussion to audience members seeking input to guide the scoping process.

Ron Thomas of Thomas Architecture Studio discussed the Plan's importance in serving as a road map for the community to facilitate private development. He expressed concern over the lack of housing density and spoke in favor of SEPA.

Kris Goddard spoke in support of the Plan and believes it has the potential to connect the community if people are given the chance to voice their concerns. She stressed the importance of enthusiastically promoting the community benefit that will result.

VCB Executive Director George Sharp spoke in favor of moving forward with the Plan and believes a budget, assigned tasks, Council meetings, and open houses for citizen involvement are keys to success. He stressed the importance of not allowing naysayers to stop action and supported communicating the Plan to the public to promote awareness.

Rachel Newmann spoke about being part of the public that wants to work with the City and private investment partners. She expressed hope in tackling the social, environmental, and economic challenges of the community.

Downtown building and business owner, PBIA Boardmember, and Clean and Safe Committee Member Connie Phegley emphasized the importance of rehabilitating vacant properties.

Planning Commissioner Roger Horn stressed the importance of keeping the public informed. He praised the focus group meetings but noted a lack of communication during the three month staff analysis.

Planning Commissioner Max Brown expressed concern over the lengthy 18 month timeline. He said he supported moving forward with the CRA process and spoke of cities that planned vision to implementation in 90 days. He expressed confusion regarding the Downtown Plan and emphasized the importance of keeping people informed.

Planning Commissioner Carole Richmond expressed concern over lack of continuity in urban design but spoke in favor of design principles that improve pedestrian walkways. She agreed with the need to communicate action with the public and called for visuals to illustrate the City's potential.

PBIA Boardmember Phil Rollins discussed concerns with the timeline and role of a potential consultant. He said he believed the Plan is a step forward and noted the importance of enhancing safety and cleanliness.

PBIA Boardmember Jeff Trinin spoke in support of the SEPA process. He emphasized the importance of creating housing suited for all economic levels. He advocated for Council to lower the cost of development to attract developers and stressed the continual need of the Walking Patrol.

Committee Member Roe asked staff to revise verbiage to positively portray development because Olympia is not in crisis nor surrounded by blight. She expressed interest in shortening the timeline as Mr. Brown suggested. She questioned the vision and \$250,000 funding specifics of an urban designer. City Manager Hall noted the amount is an estimate and a clear scope of the work is needed to determine the funding need.

Mr. Stahley emphasized this is day one of the Plan discussion and staff will regularly meet with the Committee to make revisions.

Mr. Bauer spoke about other cities' plans varying from one to five years. The time duration is determined by the number of issues a city attempts to fix. He also explained the City may need to outsource for consultants depending on staff capabilities.

Committee Member Roe asked to see predictability and emphasized the need to eliminate planner talk to promote clarity between the public and City.

Mr. Thomas spoke about Council as the conduit for the community. He spoke in support of the Plan because it sends the message of supporting development.

Planning Commissioner Jerry Parker said the public wants a process, not a product, and emphasized the importance of revising the Plan as needed.

Rachel Newmann suggested the City scope and deliver additional amenities that will make Downtown attractive.

Chair Langer commented the Plan will be revised yearly.

Ms. Buckler indicated staff is committed to clear, consistent messaging between Council and the public with the use of the internet, social media, and a newsletter. She agreed to communicate what the City is doing and why.

Committee Member Hankins discussed the importance of using steps to accomplish desired outcomes.

Chair Langer asked that the Plan feature a vision statement in italics. He recommended that Council adopt the revised Downtown Plan.

The report was received.

4.B [14-1225](#) Urban Forest Strategic Plan

This item was not discussed. It will be scheduled on a future agenda.

4.C [14-1195](#) 2016 Parks, Arts and Recreation Plan Update Process

Mr. Turlove gave an overview of a project matrix that is updated every six years to apply for grant funding. The Parks, Arts and Recreation Department anticipates review and adoption by March, 2016.

Discussion

- City divided into eight neighborhoods to collect public input.
- Community meeting in February to present feedback.
- Olyspeaks.org is an online forum for public comment.
- Create telephone survey based off collected input.
- Will questions be crafted to convey tradeoffs since not all projects are feasible?
- The challenge of anticipating project costs.

The report was received.

4.D [14-1218](#) Artesian Commons Next Steps

City Manager Hall opened discussion of Artesian Commons.

Mr. Simmons gave an update of the past six months. The challenge was a limited design budget, maintenance, and lack of resources. With funding from partnerships, the City hopes to meet the aforementioned challenges.

Police Chief Roberts provided negative statistics. The Police Department received 500 calls for service (110% increase since last year) and made 50 arrests (58% more than last year). Police have not been able to eliminate undesirable behavior and social service providers are concerned for clients who frequent the area. Police remain busy because the area generates crime. He expressed concern about the perception that it's a police problem. On behalf of police, he expressed defense that it will take more than police to combat the problems. He suggested shutting it down to regroup and do-over.

Mr. Wilson spoke in agreement with Chief Roberts. He discussed crime at the park and downtown and said businesses have noticed a decrease in storefront crime since the park opened.

Discussion

- Programming at night to prevent crime.
- No delineation between private and public space.

- Close Artesian Commons at night.
- Youth can champion the space.
- Programs such as yoga and performances will help deter crime.
- Closing Artesian Commons will disperse the crime elsewhere not eradicate.
- Increase food trucks in the area.
- Concern with the consultant's vision.
- The need to regain the space as community space rather than crime space.
- A clear strategy outlining how the space will be used and maintained is needed.
- Implement signage informing the public the park is currently closed due to unsafe behavior.
- Concern that City departments are no longer working as closely together.
- Downtown is a hub for many cities without a downtown.
- Disadvantaged kids need a place to be.

The Committee decided to recommend shutting the park down at night and developing contingencies. A temporary fence is needed until an urban planner is contracted to develop a permanent fence. Signage will alert the public of park hours, and the restroom will remain open during park hours.

4.E [14-1196](#) Status Reports and Updates

Mr. Wilson reported the Washington State Liquor Control Board (WSLCB) plans on opening a rules review for Alcohol Impact Areas (AIA); the City will have an opportunity to review proposed changes prior to WSLCB rule-making. Also, the City of Olympia's petition to amend the Downtown Olympia AIA banned product list will be considered in early 2015.

The report was received.

5. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.