



City of Olympia

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Meeting Minutes - Draft Planning Commission

Monday, September 9, 2013

6:30 PM

Council Chambers

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Parker called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

1.A ROLL CALL

Present: 9 - Chair Jerome Parker, Vice Chair Judy Bardin, Commissioner Kim Andresen, Commissioner Jessica Bateman, Commissioner Max Brown, Commissioner Darrell Hoppe, Commissioner Roger Horn, Commissioner Carole Richmond, and Commissioner Missy Watts

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was approved.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Bob Jacobs, 720 Governor Stevens, read over the staff report about high density corridors (i.e., density is a good thing) and said he believed the community is far enough along to accept these this criteria and the question is; will increasing dense housing be important enough to affect existing housing ?

4. ANNOUNCEMENTS - None

5. INFORMATION REQUESTS - None

6. BUSINESS ITEMS

13-0693 Special Presentation: Visualizing Density

Chairman Parker acknowledges the efforts of staff, especially Associate Planner Amy Buckler. Ms. Buckler presented a slide show on the topic of visualizing density. She responded to comments by Bob Jacobs that efforts to increase density will not necessarily mean the imposition of certain criteria and outlined other presentations scheduled for the coming year. Tonight's topic was the process for visualizing density and how communities measure density differently. Olympia's criteria was outlined for both residential and commercial properties and different zones require varying maximum and minimum density criteria. Thurston county is one of the fastest growing

counties in the state and over the next 20 years the population is expected to grow 2% a year.

The panel members for the discussion are: Walker John, a local developer whose interest is in mixed use, Fred Evander, a planner with Thurston Regional Planning and is particularly interested in how to achieve middle density in historic neighborhoods, and Bob Bengford, an architect with MAKERS Architecture who has worked with several communities in Washington on various development projects .

Mr. Bengford introduced a slide show and described features of gross density, and net density. Included in the slide show were photo examples of various density ranges and examples of design features that can be used to help gracefully integrate density. Mr. Bengford included examples of design elements that help to make new density projects more compatible with existing infrastructure including landscaping; street scape; built form; massing; facade details and width; variation in setbacks; housing types; building materials and colors; varieties of usable open space; and respectful side/rear yard designs. A case study using an example about an infill project that took more of a form-based approach to development was presented.

Mr. John says he believes good density is about usable open space and connectivity and gave an example called "Seabrook" which incorporated building fronting on paths.

Mr. Evander commented that he expects the Commission will be thinking about both 'greenfield' projects and infill and the key to getting infill without making the neighbors mad is to be sensitive to the neighborhood and to use the appropriate scale of buildings.

The panel responded to questions from the Planning Commission and points made during the discussion include:

- Architectural design can make a big difference in gaining acceptance from neighbors.
- Side yard setbacks of at least 15' can help to achieve a compromise between infill development and privacy for neighbors.
- If adjacent developments can work together to create connectivity rather than using fences, the outcome is better.
- There is great diversity in the design of density.
- Condos are difficult due to litigation.
- Cities have adopted incentives for townhomes by establishing fee simple lots.
- Legislating good design can be difficult and examples of ways to show good and bad regulations and why they work is important.
- Emphasis should be on regulating what you want. Due to the large body of code, Olympia planners should understand what is the most important aspect.
- Perhaps design is the most important consideration, not density.

Mr. John said that Olympia has amazing amenities like water, open space, and a

good street grid that provides opportunity for market rate housing downtown. Although building costs are comparable to Portland or Seattle, the economy/market cannot support as high a replacement value in Olympia and the challenge of having a water table that does not allow for underground parking would need to be solved. Possibly there are some opportunities to do "tuck-unders" or parking on a slope and Olympia will have to embrace some things Portland would never allow, like surface parking, simply due to what's under the ground.

- Studies are showing that the "Echo Generation" or "Y Generation" do not purchase as many big cars or any car, as Baby Boomers.
- One stall of parking per unit may no longer be necessary.
- Portland did some things to kick-start market rate housing downtown by implementing property tax holidays which can make a project on the fence more viable.

The report was received.

13-0694 Briefing on the Sustainable Thurston Task Force Draft Plan

Chris Van Daalen from the NW Eco-Builders Guild announced there will be a Vision-to-Action Green Urban Density event on Saturday, October 26. This event is open to the public for registration and will include a panel and group discussions about what would it take to make density acceptable in our region. For more information, go to www.vision2action.us.

Chair Parker introduced Kathy McCormick and Veena Tabbut, Senior Planners from Thurston Regional Planning Council (TRPC). Ms. McCormick provided an overview of the draft of the Sustainable Thurston Plan. TRPC was awarded a Federal Sustainable Community Planning Grant in 2010. The overview included; Results of the community conversation; Findings that continue to develop under current plans and trends into the future is not sustainable; Actions, collaboration and cooperation that can change the current trajectory toward an unsustainable future; Foundation principles that articulate this region's values, the bold vision, the priority goals, targets and first action steps, and the quality of life topic goals and actions to achieve over time. The draft Plan is currently online at TRPC's website for public review and comment through October 2, 2013. If you need a hard copy or CD, please contact TRPC.

Commissioner Discussion, Questions & Answers:

Commissioner Bardin pointed out the EPA uses a standard for air quality that is PM2.5, rather than the PM10 referenced on page "v" of the Executive Summary. She also pointed out there is a link between health and traffic air pollution.

- Targets will be looked at for success annually or every 5 years, depending.
- In the draft Plan, there is a focus on nodal development in the corridors with a diagram on page 56 of the full draft Plan. A related recommendation in the Plan is a focus on infill development near the corridors, so there are enough people to support

the commercial uses in the nodes.

- Tax base issues between cities and counties is an issue statewide, but tax sharing is not directly addressed in the draft Plan. The issue involves both infrastructure and services.
- There is a link from the Sustainable Thurston site for more info about Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) programs. TDR's are tough to make work. There are also Purchase of Development Rights.
- The Thurston County Health Department Thurston Thrives program, which flows from the Sustainable Thurston Plan section on health, includes recommendations on land use and design.

The report was completed.

13-0596 Initial Deliberation: OPC Recommendation on the Draft
2014-2019 Capital Facilities Plan

Commissioner Roger Horn reported on the sub committee process and hopes to get feedback from the commission. Meeting on September 23rd will be the target date for wrap up. Capital and Facilities Guidelines and Priorities is not clearly apparent in current document. It is important to update and revise with attention to current concerns. Commissioner Horn provided an overview of letter used for previous recommendation. Parks, transportation and maintenance are main areas of concern and funding solutions for services need attention, which will include new sources of revenue. Chairman Parker spoke on the subject of funding for certain projects that do not seem to be realistic because the money is not available this year. Commissioner Horn discussed the unreliability of forecasting revenues and the importance of accurate predictions for public awareness. To what extent do projections need to be realistic rather than optimistic, and how will assumptions need to be redefined so there is greater accuracy? There were no recommendations by Commissioner Richmond on Parks at this time. Increasing playing fields is under consideration and will be investigated. Percival Landing is anticipated to need floats, walkways, etc., and will be very expensive and the costs were outlined. There is nothing currently in the CPA plan that addresses sea level rise and costs need to be recalculated with this included. There needs to be a cost share analysis and when this will be obtained, expenses will be more clearly understood.

Chairman Parker summarized the transportation segment and outlined the costs involved. There is a need for reexamination of these costs which will necessitate further study and assessment. A large amount of the cost anticipated to occur in developing an area does not support the new emphasis on city center density and needs to be reexamined.

Commission recommends water volume rates be applied to residential fees.

Commission recommends diesel assessment and the shift of funding allocation into improving aquatic habitat.

Discussion about limiting the dumping of more water that needs to be remediated into

the storm water systems and the creation of alternative systems to address the problem, rather than expanding the existing system.

Impact fees for school districts are now reflecting real costs more accurately.

The work session was completed.

7. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

13-0710 Approval of August 5, 2013 Planning Commission Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Horn moved, seconded by Commissioner Andresen, to adopt the minutes as amended. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 9 - Chair Parker, Vice Chair Bardin, Commissioner Andresen, Commissioner Bateman, Commissioner Brown, Commissioner Hoppe, Commissioner Horn, Commissioner Richmond and Commissioner Watts

8. REPORTS

Chair Parker reported out about the Land Use & Environment Committee meeting from August 26. They discussed the Council timeline for review of the draft Comprehensive Plan, and will continue that discussion at full Council tomorrow. The deadline may change from December to no later than June. Chair Parker noted, while he would like to see this process be completed so the Commission can move on to zoning and other implementation, there is a need for Council to conduct public outreach and hearings.

The Land Use & Environment Committee (LUEC) meeting when they discuss sub-area planning has moved from September 26 to October 24. Chair Parker has asked Leonard Bauer for representation in that discussion to ensure the Planning Commission has a role.

Staff Buckler noted LUEC also discussed the Urban Neighborhoods Addendum, and this may come back to the Planning Commission this fall. The Planning Commission's recommended Option 2 for the Downtown Master Planning scoping effort was generally accepted by the LUEC Committee, but the City Council wants to have a big picture discussion about priorities for 2014 before they make any commitments.

Commissioner Andresen announced the Utility Advisory Committee (UAC) went on a tour of the McAllister Watershed, and it was a "wonder-land." The UAC also had a panel present and discussion about aquatic habitat and its relation to water quality. Rainfall impacts stream quality.

9. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 10:00 p.m.

