



City of Olympia

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Meeting Minutes - Draft Planning Commission

Monday, January 14, 2013

6:30 PM

Council Chambers

1. CALL TO ORDER

1.A ROLL CALL

Present: 6 - Vice Chair Judy Bardin, Commissioner Roger Horn, Commissioner Paul Ingman, Chair Jerome Parker, Commissioner James Reddick, and Commissioner Amy Tousley

Excused: 1 - Commissioner Larry Leveen

Absent: 2 - Commissioner Agnieszka Kiswa, and Commissioner Rob Richards

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Commissioner Tousley moved, seconded by Commissioner Reddick, to approve the agenda as proposed. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments.

4. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chair Parker recognized former Chair Amy Tousley for her hard work in a challenging position. He encouraged Commissioners to read the informational memos attached to the packet.

Commissioners Tousley and Horn thanked staff for the April Draft Comment Response Document.

Commissioners requested a summary of the City Council's annual retreat, and the Mithun visualization software presentation to City Council. The latter will occur during Reports.

Staff announced they have a memo for Commissioners regarding current and forecasted population by proposed subarea and select areas along the Urban Corridor, as well as paper copies of the Thurston County Profile for Commissioners to pick up.

5. QUESTION TIME

Chair Parker introduced the new agenda item, "Question Time." The

Leadership Team asked staff for this. It is intended to be an opportunity for Commissioners to ask staff questions about Commission or other City business that is not on their agenda for up to 15 minutes at each meeting.

Planning Manager Todd Stamm clarified that the City Council passed an emergency ordinance in December establishing building setbacks and setbacks in the High Density Corridor zones.

Council can pass an emergency (interim) ordinance, then they have to hold a public hearing to make sure it is the right thing to do. Council will hold a public hearing on February 5th, then decide whether to continue the interim ordinance. If so, it would be effective for one year, while also becoming a work item that would go to the Planning Commission to decide whether or not to make the ordinance permanent.

6. BUSINESS ITEMS

13-0038

Briefing and Recommendation on Planning Commission Work Plan

Attachments: [1. 2012 OPC Work Program \(Modified\)](#)
 [2. HDC Emergency Ordinance, passed 12/11/12](#)

Ms. Buckler briefed the Commission regarding their 2013 Work Program. Staff recommends the Commission delay discussing this until their Comprehensive Plan deliberations are complete and more is known about City Council's priorities. In the meantime, the Commission will work on items carried over from the 2012 Work Program.

Commissioner Reddick moved, seconded by Commissioner Parker, to accept the staff recommendation. The motion passed unanimously.

13-0039

Final Deliberations on the Comprehensive Plan Update

Attachments: [1. OPC Final Deliberation Schedule](#)
 [2. Procedure for Final Deliberations](#)
 [3. OPC Sponsor Proposals](#)

Chair Parker described the Commission's Final Deliberation schedule and process. Tonight, the Commission will address 8 of the Non-Consent items, as listed in the schedule.

Commission Discussion:

- Would like to see flexibility to change proposals during deliberations.
- A lot of Commissioner's are drafting policy for the first time.

- A vote of a majority of those present will pass a motion .

Topic #1 - Hillside Development. PN1.7 in the July Draft.

The sponsor, Commissioner Horn, described his proposal. This would address hydrology issues such as came-up during a development above Black Lake. He offered a slightly different proposal than what was in the packet (as approved below.)

Commissioner Tousley moved, seconded by Commissioner Reddick, to recommend the following:

"PN1.7: Limit hillside development to site designs that incorporate and conform to the existing topography, and minimize impacts to existing hydrology." The motion passed unanimously.

Topic #2 - Urban Forest. PN3.4 in the July Draft.

The sponsor, Commissioner Bardin, described her proposal. There are other important considerations besides just the *environmental* benefits to the urban forest. She explained the difference between "ecologic" and "environmental." To her, "ecologic" means animals and their habitat. When she thinks of "environmental," she thinks of things such as air pollution, climate change and noise.

Commissioner Tousley moved, seconded by Commissioner Reddick, to recommend the following: "PN3.4: Evaluate the environmental, ecologic, health, social and economic benefits of the urban forest." The motion passed unanimously.

Topic #3 - Design Review. PL6.1 in the July Draft.

The sponsor, Commissioner Parker, described his proposal. Pertaining to the policy language proposed in the July Draft, he has had difficulty focusing on World War II as a threshold of time . It is important for the public to understand the policy language. His intent is to simplify the language, and his proposal breaks PL6.1 into two policies.

Commission Discussion:

- Would the sponsor consider adding "noise" to the phrase "minimize visual conflict?" Chair Parker confirmed that was not the intent. The policy has to do with design review, which he understands does not address noise.

- There could be a design review element to include a noise wall to block noise from freeways, for example.
- The policy in the July Draft was edited from the 1994 Plan, which included some pretty good language, "designed to maintain or improve the character and livability of each area or neighborhood."
- Concern that the proposal would lead to a requirement that even single-family houses would have to go to the Design Review Board (DRB).
- Planning Manager Todd Stamm thinks the phrasing is fine. The threshold between staff and DRB review is established in the Municipal Code. Design review for a single-family development is currently done by staff at same time as building permit review.
- Mr. Stamm clarified that the sponsor's proposal would expand the scope of design review to include all areas. Currently, not all single-family areas or infill are subject to design review.
- This is good and timely to help protect existing single-family neighborhoods.
- The issue of freeways has been coming up lately. Green buffers would help with noise and pollution. But there are other ways to do this. This might be a good place to address the noise issue, and other environmental impacts such as air pollution.
- The policy cannot cover everything.
- Discussion about including the phrases, "vegetative buffers," "Minimizing visual conflict" could be done through vegetative buffers.
- The sponsor proposed deleting the phrase, "highly visible" because it is very subjective.

Commissioner Tousley moved, seconded by Commissioner Reddick, to recommend PL6.1A, as proposed: "PL6.1A: Require residential and commercial development adjacent to freeways and public streets be subject to a design review process." The motion passed by a 4-3 vote. Commissioners Tousley, Horn, Reddick and Parker voted yeay. Commissioners Ingman, Bardin and Kiswa voted nay.

Commission Discussion regarding PL6.1B:

- Sometimes the community sees design impacts as regarding windows and trims. What Commissioner Bardin pointed out is that we want buildings next to freeways to be buffeted for health and environmental impacts.
- "Livability" could include environmental considerations, including noise and air pollution through green buffers or sound barriers.
- Mr. Stamm confirmed that only larger projects, such as commercial and residential developments over 8,000 sq. ft., are subject to environmental (SEPA) review. The City does have noise regulations.

The Commission agreed to table PL6.1B until a future meeting.

Topic #4 - Healthy & Active Lifestyles. PL17.5 in the July Draft.

The sponsor, Commissioner Horn, described his proposal. He wants to give staff and Council a little more latitude to go further than just "encourage." The intent is that Council could decide to encourage or require when establishing regulations.

Commissioner Tousley moved, seconded by Commissioner Reddick, to recommend the following: "PL17.5: Encourage or require development and public improvements be consistent with healthy and active lifestyles." The motion passed unanimously.

Topic #5 - 'Fortress Style' Designs. PL17.6 in the July Draft.

Sponsor, Commissioner Ingman, described his proposal. The intent of this policy is to focus on reduction of physical barriers, and make new development compatible with our community as a whole. Policy as proposed in the July Draft lacks clarity. Also, the issue of site security demands further discussion; the Codes don't really address it.

Commission Discussion:

- Language proposed by sponsor is good. Maybe another policy addressing security is needed, but the sponsor proposal as written is good.
- Staff confirmed site security is not addressed very thoroughly in the existing code.

Commissioner Tousley moved, seconded by Commissioner Bardin, to recommend the following: "PL17.6: Prevent physical barriers from isolating and separating the integration and compatibility of new developments with existing neighborhoods." The motion passed unanimously.

Topic #6 - Utilities. GU16 and related policies in the July Draft.

Sponsor, Commissioner Tousley, described her proposal. These policies really should pertain to public as well as private. She is currently working with City Engineer Fran Eide regarding the underground utility management plan. She met with Ms. Eide, who requested aesthetics not be listed first as this is not the first consideration when deciding when to underground.

Commission Discussion:

- PU16.5 could be expanded to other utilities.
- "Puget Sound Energy (PSE)" seems like an unnecessary detail in this policy. That detail carried over from the 1994 Plan. PSE already has an underground management plan with the City.
- Staff clarified that private utilities have to be addressed under the Growth Management Act, while public utilities do not. It is a challenge for the City to work with private utilities that have their own plans; they don't always want to share their business planning. The ones that work the best are the ones with which we have franchise agreements.
- Staff added that according to Ms. Eide the main drivers for undergrounding are safety and reliability. It is not as easy for the City to hang their hat on the "aesthetics."
- It is expensive to underground utilities. For an electric system, it can be anywhere from \$150 to \$350 per linear foot - that's just for the line.
- Anything new has been put underground for decades now.
- There is a very high penalty for cutting into a newly paved road.
- "Practicable" rather than "practical" is a word used in a lot of state legislation. It means to include consideration of financial and other aspects beyond just what is "practical."

Chair Parker moved, seconded by Commissioner Reddick to recommend the language as proposed, with the following changes: move the word "aesthetics" to the end of the series in each policy; for PU16.1, change the word "practical" to "practicable;" and for PU16.5, delete the word "PSE" and add an "s" to the end of the word "agreement." The motion passed unanimously.

The recommended goal and policy language is:

GU16: Public and private utilities are located underground to protect public health, safety and welfare, and to create a more reliable and aesthetic utility system.

PU16.1: Place new public and private utility distribution lines underground wherever practicable. This should be based on sound engineering judgment, on consideration of health, safety and aesthetics, and in accordance with the regulations and tariffs of the Washington Utilities Transportation Commission and the City's Engineering Development and Design Standards.

PU16.2: Encourage placing existing public and private utility distribution lines underground, in accordance with the regulations and tariffs of the Washington Utilities Transportation Commission and the City's Engineering Development and Design Standards.

PU16.3: Coordinate the undergrounding of both new and existing public and private utility lines consistent with policies PU 3.1 and PU 3.2.

PU16.4: Apply utility undergrounding requirements to all public and private development projects.

PU16.5: Develop and maintain a management plan, consistent with the Olympia Municipal Code and the Engineering Development and Design Standards, for underground and overhead utilities as part of the City's franchise agreements. The management plan will also address undergrounding of the City's aerial facilities as well as other franchise utilities. (See [OMC telecommunications Chapter 11 regarding permitting and leasing <http://www.codepublishing.com/wa/olympia/>](http://www.codepublishing.com/wa/olympia/).)

Topic #7 - Acquiring and Preserving Land. PN2.1 in the July Draft.

The Commission agreed to table this topic until a future meeting so that sponsor, Commissioner Kizza, can submit a proposal.

Topic #8 - Action Plan Partners. PP1.1 in the July Draft.

The sponsor, Commissioner Bardin, explained her proposal. She feels the word "partners" needs to be better defined. The role of the Planning Commission is not really concrete. She feels the Commission should have a more pronounced role in the Action Plan because they know the most about the Comprehensive Plan out of all the advisory boards, and have been involved in the public process all along. She also wants the policy to lay a foundation that the Action Plan be reviewed on a yearly basis by a special committee. Such review would be too much for the Planning Commission.

Commission Discussion:

- Associate Planner Stacey Ray added that the Council's Land Use and Environment Committee (LUEC) is currently talking about the role of the Planning Commission; a staff proposal is outlined in the memo included in the agenda packet.
- Planning Manager Stamm clarified LUEC is currently looking at a proposal from staff regarding this year's Action Plan. The Commission's recommendation may change how it is done in year two.
- It is important to proceed with what the Commission feels is right

despite the timing issue.

- Concern that it is too prescriptive to say that the Planning Commission should identify the elements to include in the Action Plan
- that might be a little presumptuous. The Council should have the role to decide how this is done.
- Sponsor's intent is to find a role for the Planning Commission, because it feels a little vague at this time.
- Commissioners discussed some potential word changes and who should "engage the public," the Planning Commission or City Council, or that the policy not prescribe this at all.
- The intent of the proposal is for the Commission to work with the Council, not take over the process.

Commissioner Tousley moved, seconded by Commissioner Reddick, to recommend the following:

"PP1.1: The City Council and the Planning Commission, with the support of City staff, is to identify the elements to include in the action (implementation) plan. The action plan should reflect City advisory groups' priorities. The public shall be engaged by doing outreach to neighborhoods, the business community, environmental and other public interest groups and citizens. This strategy will include an updating, monitoring and reporting process."

"PP1.2: A committee established by the City Council will, on a yearly basis, review the progress of the action plan and make a report to the City Council, Planning Commission, staff and citizens. The committee should include members from the Planning Commission, neighborhoods, business community, environmental and other public interest groups and citizens."

The motion passed unanimously.

Continued Discussion of Topic #3 - Design Review. PL6.1 in the July Draft.

- May be able to include something about vegetative buffers in the Urban Greenspace topic (#1B).
- Don't want to be writing code in the Comprehensive Plan.
- Current sponsor proposal PL6.1B means nothing. Would like definition of words linked with vision and measurable goals.
- The words "design" and "livability don't mean anything.
- This is a policy document. Not meant to include specific design guidelines. But want to create parameters so there is some idea of

what is trying to be accomplished. The words "character" and "livability" give a sense of what we are trying to do.

- Measures are more regulatory. And wouldn't "livability" be defined in some way through regulations?

- Mr. Stamm clarified that performance measures will be part of the Action Plan. The Design Code has regulations intended to achieve those measures. When drafting the plan update, staff brought in two Plain Talk experts and asked them to give better words for these, and the experts declined, saying that this is the English language.

Commissioner Reddick moved, seconded by Commissioner Tousley, to recommend the following: "PL6.1B: The design review process should recognize differences in the City with the objective of maintaining or improving the character and livability of each area or neighborhood." The motion passed unanimously.

The Commission took a break at 8:30 p.m. (Re-adjourned at 8:39 p.m.)

List B - Topic #B1 - Urban Green Space.

The sponsor, Commissioner Bardin, described her proposal. She is addressing non-park green space. These spaces are important because they provide many ecological, environmental benefits and health benefits. For example, they sequester carbon dioxide and help mitigate heat islands. People living closer to greenspace have a greater rate of activity, less obesity, and improved sense of well-being. Also, greenspace has economic impacts because property values rise, businesses are more likely to locate near them. They also foster tourism and a sense of community. The intent is to go beyond parks - this is about greenspace in people's immediate vicinity. Commissioner Bardin feels really strongly about this after living in New York, Holland, and Olympia, each for several years.

- We should not think we have to "escape to parks." Livability should mean we don't want to escape where we live - we should enjoy greenspace where we live.

- Concern that some of this is already built into the Parks Plan, and how this would impact the landscape code and other regulations. Want to make sure we make this policy consistent with the rest of the Plan.

- Need a clear statement of what "greenspace" is. Trails are sometimes parks. Waterfronts and plazas are often parks.

- Idea is that when we create an office building, create a little greenspace with benches. Or create a sub-division with a little trail.

- Like the idea and the "homework" related to the proposal. Concern that some of this is already addressed in the July Draft.
- The creation of urban green space is scattered throughout the Plan draft, but not the idea that people really need this.
- Don't want to get too prescriptive.
- Planner Ray directed the Commission to PN11.1 in the July Draft, which addresses greenspace. Scattering the concept throughout the Plan occurred because there are so many ways greenspace is addressed through regulations.
- Concern about lands in private ownership. Would these be considered greenspace even if they are unbuildable?
- Question about scale. Would a property owner be required to install greenspace for their single-family residence? Or is this a requirement that would apply to a subdivision?
- Intent was that it would apply to subdivisions and multi-family.
- Suggestion that this concept could be a vision statement also - lots of trees, urban canopy. Commission agreed.

Planning Manager Stamm suggested that because weather conditions have taken a turn for the worse, the Commission table this discussion until a future meeting. Staff will work with Commissioner Bardin to bring back some more information about current situations and new language.

The Commission agreed to table this discussion until a future meeting.

7. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

13-0044 Approval of November 28, 2012 Planning Commission Meeting Minutes

Attachments: [Draft minutes](#)

Chair Parker asked if the Commission agreed to review draft minutes prior to the meeting, and bring revisions forward at the meeting. All agreed.

Commissioner Tousley moved, seconded by Commissioner Reddick, that the minutes be approved as amended. The motion passed unanimously.

8. REPORTS

Commissioner Ingman reported on the Council's Mithun demonstration on January 8th. There was some interest in using the

software to review the Shoreline Master Program (SMP) recommendations. A training will be provided for identified users. He hopes there will be continued conversation about its application, including for the Views and Heights deliberation at the meeting on March 4.

Planner Stamm agreed the tool is valuable. He asked Mr. Stahley if they could use it on March 4, or prior to a work session, and Mr. Stahley wasn't sure if there would be time.

Commissioner Ingman clarified it will be used for the Council's SMP decision. The tools are capable of, and it would be nice, to have more detail applied, but that is a money issue.

Commissioner Horn asked where does the Finance Subcommittee go from here. Last year they got an early start, and he would like to do the same this year. He would like to talk to the Mayor and Councilmember Langer about what the expectations are so the schedule can be considered. Topics to cover are the plans and roles for the Long-Term Community Development Strategy and review of the Capital Facilities element. Last time it was the Leadership Team that met with the Mayor and Jane Kirkemo, so that might be an appropriate way to initiate the conversation. Commissioner Tousley is interested. Roger will plan more information for the next meeting.

Chair Parker notified the Commission that Commissioner Kizza needs to resign from the Design Review Board (DRB). Commissioner Ingman proposed that he and Commissioner Kizza work alternately to serve on the DRB. Commissioner Kizza is willing to try it.

Chair Parker moved, seconded by Commissioner Bardin, that Commissioners Kizza and Ingman work in tandem to fill seats on the DRB until April, subject to reconsideration of the appointment after new members arrive. The motion passed unanimously.

Planning Manager Stamm thinks this will probably work, but wants to check with Legal Council as a precaution since this hasn't been done before.

Chair Parker announced there will be a green house event at the Griswold's Office Supply location this weekend.

Commissioner Bardin reported on the Utility Advisory Committee (UAC). The drinking water and stormwater utilities have the ability to acquire land for facilities, and they are looking at a proposal to do this through easements. Also, following a pilot project, UAC is considering a proposal that garbage and recycling be picked up on one side of the street only in select neighborhoods. This is an effort to reduce carbon

emissions. UAC has recommended to City Council that the issue of plastic bags should be a regional issue, not just a City issue.

Chair Parker reported on the Leadership Team. He proposed they could entertain a roving member. If anyone is interested in attending one of these meetings, please contact Chair Parker. It is important not to have a quorum at these meetings.

Chair Parker referred the Commission to the attached memos in the packet. There is not a prepared staff briefing, but if you have questions, send them to Planner Buckler.

The meeting adjourned at 9:31 p.m.

9. OTHER TOPICS

13-0049 Memo: What is the Action Plan (Implementation Strategy)?

Attachments: [Memo: What is the Action Plan?](#)

13-0047 Memo: Proposed Adoption Timeline and Phases

Attachments: [Memo: Proposed Adoption Timeline and Phases](#)

13-0046 Response to Commissioners' Information Requests, Part 4

Attachments: [Info Request Document](#)

10. ADJOURNMENT

Accommodations