



City of Olympia

City Hall
601 4th Avenue E
Olympia, WA 98501

Meeting Minutes - Draft City Council

Information: 360.753.8447

Tuesday, December 3, 2013

5:30 PM

Room 207

Special Study Session

1. ROLL CALL

Present: 6 - Mayor Stephen H. Buxbaum, Mayor Pro Tem Nathaniel Jones, Councilmember Jim Cooper, Councilmember Steve Langer, Councilmember Jeannine Roe and Councilmember Julie Hankins

Excused: 1 - Councilmember Karen Rogers

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE

City Manager Steve Hall

Deputy City Attorney Darren Nienaber

Assistant City Manager Jay Burney

Community Planning and Development Director Keith Stahley

2. BUSINESS ITEM

2.A 13-0999 Consider the Community Renewal Area (CRA) Feasibility Study and the Next Steps in the CRA Process

Mayor Buxbaum noted that Lorelei Juntunen with ECONorthwest was not able to be in attendance; however, he felt that the staff and the Committee would be able to fill in and that we should move forward.

Mayor Buxbaum provided a brief overview and status report on the Community Renewal Area (CRA) process since the City Council last considered the matter on October 1, 2013. He noted that the Ad Hoc CRA Committee had met twice and discussed governance, boundaries, use of condemnation and next steps for the CRA. He said that the Ad Hoc CRA Committee had also met with 14 members of the CRA Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) on November 20 and the CAC had considered these same questions and provided feedback to the Ad Hoc CRA Committee. He noted the meeting summary was included as an attachment.

Mr. Stahley presented an overview of the work the consulting team has done to date including an overview of Component A - the Investment Strategy and the Feasibility Study that focuses on downtown. Mr. Stahley briefly reviewed the factors that were

contributing to blight in downtown including the presence of fill materials, contamination, impacts of sea level rise and the presence of blight. He noted the consultant team has determined that the CRA is technically feasible and recommends moving forward. The next step would be to determine how to do that.

Councilmember Langer provided an overview of governance options for the CRA and stated that the Ad Hoc CRA Committee and the CAC felt it was best that the City Council be the governing body for the CRA.

Mayor Pro Tem Jones provided an overview of the three boundary options that the Committee considered. He said that the Committee and the CAC preferred the larger Option 3 that included both the lands along West Bay Drive and the Port. Mayor Buxbaum summarized the Committee's and the CAC's discussion about condemnation. He stated that condemnation should be included and used only for properties that are blighted, vacant, and economically unproductive.

Mayor Buxbaum then asked if there were questions from Councilmembers.

Councilmember Cooper asked whether the State law already limited condemnation to only properties that were deemed to be blighted and threats to health and safety. Mayor Buxbaum responded that this was a good question and one that could use additional research by Foster, Pepper, our CRA legal consultant. He noted that the purpose of condemnation under CRA may be different than the purpose of condemnation for a general government purpose. Under CRA, a condemnation could be for the purpose of creating economic development. Mayor Pro Tem Jones noted that economic development activity would have a public benefit.

Councilmember Cooper asked whether CRA had been considered for the other opportunity sites identified in the Investment Strategies report. Mayor Buxbaum responded that the CRA tool had been considered for all the sites; however, it was not deemed to be the best fit, at least initially, for any of the areas outside of downtown. Councilmember Hankins asked about the use of the design charrette. Mayor Buxbaum responded that the use of the design charrette would be something that the Council could consider at its January retreat. He noted that the consultant team had prepared some suggestions for how a design charrette might fit into this process and how an urban design team could be used to support that process and provide visualizations. He suggested that the consultant's proposal for the charrette should be shared with City Council prior to the retreat. He noted that the primary purpose of the charrette would be to build the capacity of the community to work together to make decisions and that this process would be consistent with Council's goal of improving our community development process.

Mayor Buxbaum said that he felt the Isthmus would be the best area to focus on given City Council's investment in the area, the existence of blight, and the fact that Percival Landing is in need of repair and that there is not a clear path forward.

Councilmember Roe asked about the relationship of the Isthmus and Percival

Landing. She wondered what the discussion had been at the joint CRA/CAC meeting on November 20. Councilmember Langer responded that he thought it was necessary that redevelopment of Percival Landing be considered in conjunction with redevelopment of the Isthmus. Mayor Pro Tem Jones added that the City will be doing a periodic assessment of the condition of Percival Landing and this information would be beneficial as Council considers next steps. He felt that it was important to include private parties in these discussions.

Councilmember Roe said she thought it would be beneficial for the City Council to meet with the CAC again.

Councilmember Cooper asked what the role of the CAC would be going forward and what the role of the Ad Hoc CRA Committee would be.

Mayor Buxbaum closed the meeting by saying that he hoped this information would set the stage for the City Council's 2014 Retreat. He looked forward to discussing the work of the Ad Hoc CRA Committee, the CAC, and the next steps in the CRA process at that meeting.

The discussion was completed.

3. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.m.