



Meeting Minutes

City Hall
601 4th Avenue E
Olympia, WA 98501

Land Use & Environment Committee

Information: 360.753.8447

Thursday, July 16, 2015

5:30 PM

Council Chambers

Special Meeting

1. ROLL CALL

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

2. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Langer called the meeting to order at 5:32 p.m.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

3.A [15-0689](#) Approval of June 23, 2015 Land Use & Environment Committee Meeting Minutes

The minutes were approved.

4. COMMITTEE BUSINESS

4.A [15-0694](#) Rezone Hearing Body - Potential Code Amendment

Principal Planner Todd Stamm summarized how, during the recent update of the Comprehensive Plan (CP), some members of the public suggested if the Plan were to allow for more rezone applications, the City's Development Code should be amended to provide rezone hearings to be held by the Planning Commission (PC) instead of the Hearing Examiner. He discussed staff's recommendation, approaches used in other jurisdictions, and the appeal process.

Discussion:

- Past site specific examples are few.
- PC Work Plan does have adequate time and space for this process.
- Many jurisdictions successfully utilize PC in this role.
- How staff determines oversight body in controversial cases.
- Cost of Hearing Examiner is paid by applicant and varies by case, from \$2,000 to tens of thousands of dollars.

Chair Langer supported using the Hearing Examiner for one year and then reassessing the effectiveness of the process.

Committee member Roe supported oversight by the PC.

Committee member Hankins supported PC recommendation to the Hearing Examiner who would have final decision making power.

Committee member Hankins moved, seconded by Chair Langer, to recommend Council not approve the proposed amendment but retain the current Examiner review of site-specific rezones and direct staff to report back to the Committee in one year to evaluate this process. The motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Planning Commissioner Roger Horn discussed an upcoming conference he will attend focused on defining the role of Planning Commissions, and outlined why he believes the PC has a role in oversight.

4.B [15-0684](#) Action Plan Update

Mr. Stamm briefed the Committee on the status of the Downtown Action Plan. He discussed a new timeline to better provide staff adequate time to review and integrate public input, keep the LUEC and Council informed on the development of the Plan, and help avoid conflicts with regularly scheduled Council business in the last quarter of the year.

The report was received.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Andy Landstein of 1001 Rogers NE expressed support for code development to be linked to the CP. He shared his concern about public outreach on this issue and those notified, or not, for engagement in the process.

4.C [15-0696](#) Critical Areas Ordinance

Principal Planner Todd Stamm discussed the Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA) mandate for comprehensive planning of critical areas. He gave an overview presentation defining critical areas and a review of the Best Available Science (BAS).

Discussion:

- Should the desired qualifications for consultant include habitat expertise?
- Budgetary constraints.

The discussion was completed.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Zena Hartung of 2240 Centerwood Ct. discussed the Indian and Moxlie Creek systems overlap and the importance of integrated work and combining municipalities.

She discussed revisions to creek systems within a contemporary awareness of ecology.

Daniel R. Einstein discussed the distinction between science and policy and urged the Committee to add the Blue Heron to the critical habitat ordinance and take a habitat-wide approach. He stressed the adoption of a fish and wildlife recommendation to put Olympia at the same policy level as Thurston County.

Planning Commission Chair Carole Richmond discussed her work at the Department of Natural Resources and the coordination of a project with the Nature Conservancy to define bioregions. She addressed some skills she believes would be desirable in a consultant.

Craig Horton of 421 Percival St. and founder of Fishtale Brewing Co. discussed efforts of the Westside group to protect the Blue Heron. He urged the Committee to not "just meet the minimum standards of the state" but to create policy to lead the state.

Planning Commission Chair Richmond recommended the sub area plan be part of this process and integrated as a resource for funding.

Discussion:

- Problems come from kicking the can down the road rather than addressing ways to protect and restore critical habitat.
- Changing community consciousness and working together on restoration pulls neighborhoods together.
- Public education and support for "habitat approach" rather than individual species approach.
- Undeveloped land in the Growth Management Area is typically not good land to develop.

4.D [15-0715](#) Status Reports and Updates

Downtown Liaison Brian Wilson gave a presentation highlighting positive developments happening in Downtown Olympia over the last month.

The report was received.

5. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 p.m.