



City of Olympia

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Meeting Minutes - Draft Finance Committee

Thursday, March 13, 2014

5:30 PM

Olympia Center - 222 Columbia St
NW - Room 102

Special Finance Committee Meeting

1. ROLL CALL

Present: 3 - Chair Jim Cooper, Committee Member Nathaniel Jones and
Committee Member Cheryl Selby

OTHERS PRESENT

Administrative Services Deputy Director Dean Walz
Assistant City Manager Jay Burney
Public Works Transportation Director Mark Russell
Public Works Water Resources Engineering and Planning Supervisor Andy Haub
Public Works Transportation Senior Program Specialist Michelle Swanson
Community Planning and Development Director Keith Stahley
Parks Arts and Recreation Associate Planner Jonathon Turlove
Planning Commissioners Kim Andresen and Chair Jerome Parker
Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee (PRAC) Chair Jim Nieland
Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) Co-chairs Clark Gilman and Anne
Fritzel
Arts Commission member Erin McGown
Utility Advisory Committee (UAC) Chair Thad Curtz

2. CALL TO ORDER

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

3. COMMITTEE BUSINESS

14-0247 Oral Report - Status Reports and Updates (Meeting with Advisory
Boards to Discuss Capital Facilities Planning)

Mr. Burney distributed a recommendation letter packet from advisory committee
chairs for the Capital Facilities Plan (CFP).

Committee member Jones spoke about the excellent feedback provided by advisory
committee chairs and how information in past letters has been used and integrated.

Committee member Selby suggested that Council, chairs, and staff were the three legs of a 3-legged stool.

Mr. Walz distributed and explained the CFP project funding schedule for 2014. He said the utility tax percentage will diminish due to falling revenue from the phone tax. He highlight some changes to the CFP and described the department submittal process, internal staff review, and how appropriation is determined. He discussed revenue sources, including grants.

Mr. Burney outlined known funds and allocation of those funds.

Chair Cooper asked chairs to provide an overview of their letters and give an update of their concerns.

Chair Curtz addressed how Utilities does budgeting and the possibility of changing from a six-year window, which he believes is too short sighted, to a twenty-year window. There has been a shift in funding for aquatic habitat, and policy documents underscore it is equally as important as water quality and stormwater flow. He discussed the set threshold for transportation and impervious surface issues. A sub-committee will be formed to address urban forestry and produce a final draft suggesting what the City can do to restore the urban forestry program. He recommended that Olympia follow the example of many cities in Washington that consider the needs of the forest as part of the capital planning process.

Chair Parker spoke about the central theme in the Planning Commission recommendations and the need to align the CFP more closely with the Comprehensive Plan (CP). He described how programs have their own inertia even though the emerging focus is on more density and less sprawl and supports linking proposals to funding. He discussed the unsatisfactory resolution on the Olympia School District and the need for a better methodology. The issue of using school portables was discussed and how the money does not come from the CFP. Impact fees are received after the budget has been determined and this sequence raises questions about transparency, which was better in the past. School District impact fees are on the agenda for Council. There were questions about a twenty-year cycle versus the current six-year cycle for CFP. The CP is a twenty-year horizon which contains the CFP.

Co-Chair Fritzel spoke about the limited progress and frustration on bike facilities. She is excited about the bicycle corridors which will create significant changes to stormwater. Currently BPAC is looking for small but significant changes that can be done with limited funding.

Co-Chair Gilman expressed appreciation for current funding and the problem with building bike infrastructure only on new streets which may not be where it is needed.

Chair Kurtz spoke about transportation funding continuing to go towards infrastructure for automobiles and discussed the proposal for Legion Way to become an east/west bike corridor.

BPAC will develop a connectivity plan and has had some initial help from staff. Ms. Swanson discussed the requirements for bike boulevards.

Chair Nieland discussed the overlap areas between Parks and other groups. He is waiting to hear back on an urban forestry project. The Olympia Center is a critical component of the Parks Department. The parks maintenance problems were addressed and a review of facilities that require heavy maintenance due to deterioration was outlined. When deferred maintenance is not funded, serious problems arise. Special interests advocating for new parks seem to trump required and deferred maintenance funding. One example of small investments for a minor project is McGrath Woods. LBA park proposal is very expensive but could address the need for more playing fields because there is not much land available to serve this need and heavy demands are already placed on existing parks. Because maintenance funding has been reduced, this creates even greater deferred maintenance problems. He explained why the Sunrise dog park was closed and how the experience led to developing criteria for a dog park. Recent repairs to the Garfield Trail were performed by volunteers but current restrictions on volunteers are prohibiting wider participation by interested individuals and groups. He suggests that street trees be considered part of City infrastructure.

Mr. Burney explained that volunteer restrictions will be loosened and become more consistent with other municipalities.

Mr. Walz gave a history on the bonds for City purchase of isthmus land and the Percival Landing improvements.

Chair Parker spoke about the skepticism of the public when the CFP is not adhered to because of an incomplete representation of the funding reality. The possibility for school districts to provide playing fields to park service was discussed and the need for greater cooperation was acknowledged. The CFP is a snapshot in time but implementation must be tied to solving past and future problems.

Other Discussion:

The public needs to know the real budget and the problems a lack of funding for street, parks, and building maintenance causes. It was agreed that the City needs to do a better job of communicating facts, perhaps creating an annual report on the budget. Liability issues could be dealt with at the neighborhood level by informing the community on the basis of affects to neighborhoods.

Mr. Stahley expressed concern about the impending Percival Landing crisis due to deferred maintenance.

Mr. Turlove explained that existing revenue streams for parks are completely out of scale with the wishes and needs of the population.

Commissioner McGowan described the Music Outloud project.

Chair Cooper described the upcoming project which dedicates a sidewalk block to a musician and becomes a venue for public entertainment in the area during the summer. The results of the Art Space survey will be coming soon. The City entry signs have the old logo and would be another project which coincides with the "eight gateways" part of the CP.

The 1 percent for the Arts funding has not been allocated since 2009.

Mr. Walz pointed out the feature "Budget 365" on the City website.

The discussion was completed.

4. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:24 p.m.