



City of Olympia

City Hall
601 4th Avenue E
Olympia, WA 98501

Information: 360-753-8447

Meeting Minutes Land Use & Environment Committee

Thursday, February 28, 2013

5:30 PM

Council Chambers

1. ROLL CALL

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

1.A OTHERS PRESENT

City Manager Steve Hall, Assistant City Manager Jay Burney, Community Planning and Development Director Keith Stahley, Associate Planner Stacey Ray, Associate Planner Michelle Bentley, Building Official Tom Hill, Fire Marshall Rob Bradley, Downtown Liaison Brian Wilson

2. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Langer called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- 3.A [13-0174](#) Approval of January 30, 2013 Land Use and Environment Committee Meeting Minutes

Councilmember Hankins moved, seconded by Councilmember Roe, to approve the minutes. Motion passed with the following vote:

Aye: 3 - Chair Langer, Committee Member Hankins and Committee Member Roe

4. COMMITTEE BUSINESS

- 4.A [13-0161](#) Legion Way Street Trees Status Report

Associate Planner/Urban Forester Michelle Bentley was introduced to the Committee. Associate Planner Stacey Ray delivered a brief presentation on the history of the trees on Legion Way and their current status. She said improper pruning (“topping”) of the Legion Way trees, combined with several severe weather events over the past couple decades, has made the trees unstable. Fifteen trees were removed after the January 2012 ice storm, but ten trees that have been characterized as “high risk” still remain. In addition, ten stumps from the trees that were cut down in 2012 still need to be removed before new trees can be planted.

Ms. Ray presented a summary of the Urban Forestry Budget. Current amounts in the budget could fund the removal and replanting of the Legion Way trees, but it is likely that little would remain for any other maintenance or work in other areas of the City. The dilemma is whether to expend the Urban Forestry budget on this single project, or whether to forestall some of the work on Legion Way.

Chair Langer and Committee member Roe inquired into what it meant by “high risk” in this situation. Ms. Ray stated the evaluation completed on the trees indicates they have the potential to fail in a matter of months, not years. She indicated the estimated cost for removal is between \$2,000 and \$2,500.

Chair Langer asked whether the City has a budgeted plan for hazard tree management. Mr. Stahley replied there is not a “budgeted plan,” and that from the budget perspective we simply draw from the \$40,000-\$60,000 which is available through the existing budget.

Committee member Roe proposed that the City use existing funds to remove the hazardous trees and the stumps along Legion Way.

Chair Langer asked how this would affect the program’s reserves for future projects. Mr. Stahley replied there will still be some funds available from the Tree Account and “minor funds” from other areas of the Urban Forestry budget.

Chair Langer stated the Council needs to think of longer-term funding issues for the Program in the next budget cycle. He also stated the City may be missing opportunities for community support and volunteer efforts. He stated that last year he had a \$200 check returned to him with a note from the City stating that the City does not currently do outreach for the Tree Fund.

The update concluded with the Committee having reached consensus to pursue removing the Legion Way hazard trees and stumps.

4.B [12-0192](#) Update on 2012 International Building Codes - State of Washington Adoption Cycle

Building Official Tom Hill addressed the Committee on the status of the City’s adoption of revised International Building Codes (IBC). Mr. Hill stated that changes to the IBC are done every three years, and the current amendments are for the 2009-2012 cycle. He said these building codes are for the purpose of establishing rules and regulations for the protection of life, environment, and property through the construction, alteration, removal, demolition, use and occupancy, location, and maintenance of buildings and structures.

These codes also cover the installation, repair, replacement or alteration of electrical, mechanical, and plumbing systems along with their associated equipment, appliances, fixtures, fittings and appurtenances. Within the codes are the process and authority for issuance of permits, collection of fees, and inspection of site to ascertain compliance.

Proposed Local Amendments for Consideration

- Definition for Single Room Occupancies - This would assist in proposals made to the City for development of smaller dwelling units to house transitional citizens. In checking with the State Building Code Council, this would not require them to review or approve.
- Use of the International Plumbing Code as an acceptable alternative for Uniform Plumbing Code - The Uniform Plumbing Code and the International Plumbing Code are overlapping codes developed by two organizations working to merge. Allowance of either would assist in minimizing code conflicts.
- Allowable distance increase from a marina gangplank to a marina fueling dock - Currently in the City of Olympia marinas, there are no boat fueling facilities. The Port of Olympia is working through the necessary studies and is reviewing the permitting process to propose a dock at its Swantown Marina.
- A decrease in the thresholds for sprinkler requirement in commercial buildings from 7,500 sq ft to 5,000 sq ft - A requirement that all new single family homes would install residential sprinkler systems at time of new construction.
- The State Building Code Council has determined that a local ordinance requiring fire sprinklers in accordance with Fire Sprinklers, Appendix S of the residential code may be adopted by any local government upon notification to the council.
- Exempting fences for use in Urban Agriculture and the use of 'deer' protective fencing around the gardens from obtaining building permits.

The proposed local amendments do not amend the International Residential Code. In the event a local proposal is considered which would amend the residential code, the State Building Code Council (SBCC) is required by RCW 19.27.074 to approve or deny all county or city local amendments that **impact single family or multifamily residential buildings** before they can be enforced. The jurisdiction is required to submit residential amendments in writing after the amendment/ordinance has been adopted by the city/county legislative body.

Staff will meet with the various stakeholder groups during the month of May to present the new code versions and to field questions regarding those changes.

Staff is targeting the end of May to bring before the Council an ordinance adopting by reference these code amendments.

Fire Marshall Rob Bradley informed the Committee that in 2013 the Fire Department will be re-evaluating Olympia nightclubs to determine whether they need sprinklers.

Chair Langer asked how much it costs a commercial establishment to get a sprinkler system. Mr. Bradley replied that the cost is around \$15 per square foot. He stated some businesses

share walls with other businesses and could share the costs for installing a system in a building.

Committee member Hankins asked whether installing sprinklers will help with fire insurance premiums and Mr. Bradley replied that having a sprinkler system will lower premiums.

By consensus, the Committee agreed to move forward with the recommended amendments to the International Building Code as proposed.

4.C [13-0172](#) Downtown Project Phase II

Downtown Liaison Brian Wilson delivered a presentation to the Committee on the status of the Downtown Project. Mr. Wilson presented two handouts to the Committee showing the Downtown Project Phase II task list and implementation timeline.

Broad areas for future tasks include more clean-up downtown, increasing public safety, promoting economic development, and more placemaking projects.

The Committee commended Mr. Wilson and Program Specialist Nate Reilly for their outstanding work with the task and timeline handouts.

The report was received.

4.D [13-0177](#) Oral Report - Briefing and Discussion about Proactive
Development Review Process

City Manager Steve Hall presented a proposal to the Committee outlining various possible approaches to establish a more proactive approach to reviewing development proposals. Mr. Hall stated the task is to redefine how community development and planning is done in Olympia.

In a Powerpoint presentation, Mr. Hall outlined some current challenges and problems that a new approach would be designed to address, including:

- Growth and change - a driver that will continue to be a challenge.
- Surprise - community members are often surprised by proposals without enough notice.
- Focus has been more on process than on outcomes.
- Systems that lead to conflict.
- Pattern of winners and losers.
- City stuck in the middle.

Mr. Hall presented ideas for a general approach to address the challenges and problems, including:

- Establish a clear vision.
- Get help - hire a facilitator.
- Involve key system users.
- Take a multi-faceted approach.

- Look for best practices elsewhere.

Mr. Hall also presented some specific ideas for immediate action for the Committee to consider, including:

- Conduct a stakeholder inventory.
- Change the Olympia Municipal Code to allow for referral of projects directly to the Hearings Examiner.
- Reclassify a staff position to work proactively on major projects.
- Consider the Anacortes ordinance.
- Continue to use the Coalition of Neighborhood Associations as a forum for dialogue.

Mr. Hall also presented further details on stakeholder involvement, implementation, and expected outcomes, all of which are available in handout form.

Chair Langer said he likes the Anacortes approach, where potentially controversial projects can be taken to the Hearings Examiner early in the process, before a formal decision has been rendered, and when there is still time to perhaps modify the proposal.

Committee member Roe stated a proactive approach will help avoid embarrassment when the City is presented with a plan or an idea and the City has no clear ideas, such as with the Mercy Housing project.

Mr. Hall stated that identifying future preferred uses for City-owned buildings and land could help address situations like those identified by Committee member Roe.

Committee member Hankins suggested if a staff position is created or redirected toward proactive involvement in projects, he or she be steeped in public participation job experience.

The Committee commended Mr. Hall's strategy.

Mr. Hall stated the next step will be to draft an RFP to take the proposal to the next step.

The report was received.

4.E [13-0179](#) Oral Report - Status Reports and Updates

There were no reports or updates.

5. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

Next meeting is scheduled for March 28, 2013.