



# Meeting Minutes

## Planning Commission

City Hall  
601 4th Avenue E  
Olympia, WA 98501  
Contact: Joyce Phillips  
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**Monday, February 27, 2017**

**6:30 PM**

**Council Chamber**

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**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Mark called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m.

**1.A ROLL CALL**

Commissioner Watts arrived after the roll call was taken.

**Present:** 7 - Chair Brian Mark, Vice Chair Mike Auderer, Commissioner Travis Burns, Commissioner Paula Ehlers, Commissioner Darrell Hoppe, Commissioner Carole Richmond and Commissioner Missy Watts

**Excused:** 1 - Commissioner Negheen Kamkar

**OTHERS PRESENT**

Community Planning and Development:  
Director, Keith Stahley  
Deputy Director, Leonard Bauer  
Senior Planner, Joyce Phillips  
Senior Planner, Amy Buckler  
Office Specialist/Minutes Recorder, Stacey Rodell  
MAKERS: John Owen

**2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**The agenda was approved.**

**3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**3.A** [17-0165](#) Approval of the February 6, 2017 Olympia Planning Commission Meeting Minutes

**The minutes were approved.**

**4. PUBLIC COMMENT - None**

**5. STAFF ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Ms. Phillips announced the following:

- The next Planning Commission meeting will be on March 6, 2017. There will

be a Downtown Strategy - Design Guidelines and Views Briefing and Downtown Strategy deliberations will begin.

- A written summary of the sign code update has been provided to the Commission and a detailed briefing will be conducted in April.
- This week the site plan review committee (SPRC) will consider the Pizza Parlor project proposed on Harrison Avenue near the Bark and Garden Center.
- Next week SPRC will consider four items - 2 for recommendations to the director and 2 as presubmission conferences to provide information to the applicants:
  - Capital High School Track & Field Renovation (recommendation)
  - Martin Way Residential (recommendation)
  - East Bay Flats and Townhomes (presubmission)
  - Capitol Plaza Building Improvements (presubmission)
- There will be a neighborhood meeting on Wednesday - March 1, 2017 at 5:30 p.m. in City Hall regarding the Olympia Community Care Center.

## 6. BUSINESS ITEMS

### 6.A [17-0197](#) Public Hearing on the Downtown Strategy Draft

Ms. Buckler presented a short briefing and noted written public comment will be accepted until Friday, March 3, 2017 at 5:00 p.m.

Chair Mark opened the public hearing.

Public testimony was received from:

Stewart Drebeck, a local developer, stated he felt the document was a good one which can help to create the vision, and he commended staff for their work during this process. His concerns were:

- Housing Chapter Page 1, second sentence - *The City's Comprehensive Plan includes a target of directing ¼ of the city's forecasted population growth into downtown. This translates into about 5,000 new downtown residents living in approximately 2,500 to 3,500 new residences over next 20 years.* Concerned about the word "directing" and feels it should not become a mandate by the City. He feels the expectation of building 150 housing units per year over the next 20 years is overly optimistic and the market will not bear it. Multifamily is a cyclical industry that overbuilds then stops because the banks won't lend. There is too much available land elsewhere that is far less expensive than Downtown.
- Housing Chapter Page 3 - *Avoid displacement of lower income groups from the downtown.* Concerned about the City mandating owners of existing lower income rentals from remodeling these units and raising the rent.
- Housing Chapter Page 4 - He feels the example of a potential quarter block development is unrealistic as it is too big for anyone to take on.
- Housing Chapter Page 11 - Concerned that the costs associated with rehabilitation or demolition of existing buildings make this an unrealistic option.

- Concerned about how Olympia might implement its goal of maintaining affordable units. He does not want to see the City implement rent control. That would be bad for the community and bad for people that own real estate.

Bonnie Jacobs, a long-time Olympia resident, referenced written testimony from the Friends of the Waterfront (FOW) organization. She praised the Planning Commission for their service, and stressed the importance of the waterfront as a treasured community asset. Their concerns are:

- View protection from the waterfront. When planning for more visitors and for 5,000 more residents, think about views and setback from the waterfront.
- The Shoreline Master Program minimum 30-foot setback is insufficient for a pathway and the setback distance should be increased.

Aaron Sauerhoff, a student at Evergreen State College, thanked everyone who put the thoughtful and thorough plan together. He is concerned about collaboration with experts who have the most current data regarding sea level rise and urged the importance of not missing any available data when implementing the Downtown Strategy.

Joel Baxter, a representative from the Olympia Master Builders (OMB), feels the plan is mostly easy to read and understand and will be a good tool for citizen involvement. While OMB members do not often build in downtown, they wanted to weigh in on the Downtown Strategy because they care of the vitality of downtown and believe it is important to the region. His concerns are:

- The plan's priority of walkability and the desire to add 5,000 residents to Downtown. He feels the current restrictions on building height may create a challenge of obtaining the goal of increasing housing units. OMB does not want to eliminate views, but housing goals as well as walkability can only be supported by increasing density.
- When considering affordable housing incentives an actual affordable housing dollar amount needs to be established in order to determine if a developer can meet this goal of supplying affordable units.

Bob Jacobs, a long time Olympia resident, referenced written testimony from the FOW organization. Two themes he sees are holistic and long-term. Different interests have to be balanced in order to have a healthy community, and we need to prepare for growth, for example by setting aside park land and putting view protections in place. He reiterated the following concerns of FOW:

- The Shoreline Master Program minimum 30-foot setback is insufficient for a pathway and the setback distance should be increased. Only 20 feet of that is flat land. Fifty-five feet would be better for trail users and private businesses (e.g. for outdoor seating).
- Appreciate the recommendations to get people to the waterfront but need to think about the experience people have when they get there.
- View protection - the draft recommends the Capitol Dome view be defined as only the Capitol Dome, not including the Drum. FOW thinks both the Dome

and the Drum are important to the view. (The draft also includes a typo that states the recommended view is the Capitol “Drum” - intended to be Capitol “Dome”)

- Isthmus - urges that the Downtown Strategy should include a recommendation to remove the Capitol Center Building from the isthmus and replace it with a grand public open space.

Chair Mark closed the public hearing.

**The public hearing was held and closed.**

**6.B**      [17-0188](#)      Deliberations, Amendments to Critical Areas Ordinance (CAO) and Shoreline Master Program

Chair Mark opened the deliberation of the Critical Areas Ordinance (CAO) amendments.

Commissioner Richmond made a motion to accept amendments as proposed by staff at the public hearing on January 23, 2017, using the language that was originally proposed, rather than the amended language considered at the meeting on February 6, 2017. There not being a second, this motion did not move to a vote.

Commissioner Hoppe stated he is uncomfortable accepting the amendments to OMC 18.32.300-330 as written. He believes there is insufficient science to move forward with the proposed language to protect the Heron. He is in favor of revisiting these amendments upon the next CAO review.

Commissioner Richmond indicated there was a report provided with a letter from OlyEcosystems. The report is from the Habitat Stewardship Program, Environmental Services section of the Public Works Department. This is the best available science to support the amendment of OMC 18.32.300-330.

Vice Chair Auderer asked Commissioner Richmond about her opinion on the “regulatory taking” of the property in these rookeries. Commissioner Richmond said she had thought the legal department would have provided clarification by this meeting but they have not provided this information yet. Due to her experience in property law she feels these regulations do not fall under the “regulatory taking” criteria, as development is allowed to occur with these amendments.

Mr. Bauer indicated legal staff replied prior to this meeting. He summarized the legal staff’s response, indicating the proposed language, given the reasonable use and other code provisions that would remain in effect, would not result in a regulatory takings.

Commissioner Watts indicated the amendments to OMC 18.32.300-330 are too prescriptive for property owners and she doesn’t have enough information to make a recommendation on these amendments at this time.

Commissioner Hoppe motioned, seconded by Commissioner Watts to recommend to City Council adoption of amendments to the Critical Areas Ordinance (CAO) and related codes in OMC 18.02.180, 18.32.500, 18.32.515, 18.20.320, 18.20.420, 18.20.810 and to the Shoreline Master Program 1.6, 3.17, 3.22, 3.58, and to support the non-regulatory measures to protect the heron. The remainder of the proposed amendments OMC 18.32.300-330 will be deliberated upon at a future meeting of the Planning Commission. The motion passed unanimously. Commissioner Ehlers recused herself from voting.

## 7. REPORTS

Commissioner Richmond attended the February 14, 2017 City Council meeting and reported about the briefing on affordable housing and homelessness. There was a discussion about a proposal to raise property taxes to fund a partnership with Lacey and Tumwater to build 500 affordable housing units.

Vice Chair Auderer reported on a recent meeting he attended for the Olympia Downtown Association (ODA) regarding economic development.

Chair Mark indicated the community kickoff meeting for the Gateways project will at the Olympia Center in room 101 & 102 on March 30, 2017 from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Community members can meet with staff and the consultants working on the gateways master plan.

Chair Mark reported on a recent Land Use and Environment Committee meeting he attended. He presented the proposed 2017 Planning Commission work plan to the Committee. They approved of the plan and were in favor of a joint meeting with the Planning Commission.

## 8. OTHER TOPICS

The Commissioners asked for some clarification regarding the Downtown Strategy plan. Mr. Owen and Ms. Buckler provided clarification.

## 9. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:58 p.m.