

DRAFT
Utility Advisory Committee (UAC)
Meeting Minutes
April 3, 2014

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chair Thad Curtz.

Roll Call

- ☒ Thad Curtz
- ☐ Barbara Day
- ☒ Dever Kuni
- ☐ Carol Law
- ☒ Lorelei Walker
- ☐ Chris Ward
- ☒ Carole Richmond
- ☐ Margaret Drennan
- ☒ David Dunn
- ☒ Jennifer Sievert
- ☒ Steve Fossum

Councilmember Cheryl Selby was in attendance as the Council liaison to the UAC.

Approval of Agenda

The agenda was approved.

Approval of Minutes

The March 6, 2014 meeting minutes were approved with some minor edits.

Public Comment

Jane Stavish, who lives in the urban growth area, attended the meeting to give comment on the onsite septic agenda item. Ms. Stavish commented that the focus should be to encourage infilling or increasing the density in areas with existing sewer rather than allowing increased density in areas that are served septic. She said it seems that the City is moving “backward” by trying to increase density attached to septic rather than encouraging density where there’s currently infrastructure to handle the density. Ms. Stavish wonders if the City annexed more area than they should have and now rather than pushing increased density in areas that are sewered, the City is going into the outlying areas that have been annexed and never been sewered. She noted that septic systems were originally designed as temporary situations until municipal sewers became available. Human waste now has personal care products residues in it and septic systems do not have the same treatment that LOTT would provide. Citizens in these areas are dependent upon wells on their own properties that are used for drinking water and agriculture purposes, so septic systems are also a concern for contamination to the wells. She really feels this is the wrong direction to allow onsite septic systems and to allow increased density to these areas.

DRAFT
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Ms. Stavish also gave comments on the agenda item to increase sewer fees. She asked if the main driver is to just increase revenue or is it to encourage conservation of water and decreased sewage to LOTT. Ms. Stavish feels if the main driver is to decrease sewage flows to LOTT, she supports this increase and suggests using the additional funds for programs to educate citizens on how to decrease flows. She Use the funds for rebate programs to help people purchase washing machines toilets and shower heads that are more efficient.

Glenn Sutt attended the meeting to give comment on increased garbage/recycling rates. Mr. Sutt owns two Papa Murphy pizza stores in the Olympia. He is concerned about the increasing garbage costs at his businesses. He compares the prices to Shelton where he also has another Papa Murphy store and pays 30% less for garbage. Mr. Sutt asked the question: Why is Thurston County landfill the City's only option to dump waste/garbage? Is there a state law that we have to use them? He feels they are a monopoly. Can the City do something else? Mr. Sutt has spoken with Dan Daniels and he understands that the rates have slowly increased over the several years. A UAC member asked if he has tried curbside composting. Mr. Sutt explained that his stores do not produce compostable materials; it is mostly garbage and some cardboard (which is recycled). Chair Curtz mentioned that the Waste ReSources staff are speaking at the meeting tonight and invited him to listen to the presentation. Ron Jones with the City's Waste ReSources mentioned that the City has a staff person that can provide businesses with technical assistance by doing a waste assessment.

Announcements from UAC and Staff

Committee Member David Dunn mentioned the Strong Towns presentation item that was scheduled on the UAC workplan for May 2014. David said that they will not be on the west coast until late summer/early fall and their speaking fee is costly (not sure of the budget for the City). Andy and Committee Member Dunn will discuss next steps.

Andy announced the Neighborhood Coalition meeting on April 14th at 6:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers. Staff will present information on the current efforts to update the Storm and Surface Water Plan and the topic of Low Impact Development meeting. The UAC is welcome to attend. The Planning Commission has also been invited.

City Council has scheduled a special study session on May 13th, 5:30 p.m. on the work efforts in SSW MP, LID and the Land Acquisition.

Andy announced that he was appointed as the Water Resources Director.

New Committee Member Dever Kuni was welcomed as a new member of the UAC. She introduced herself and her background.

DRAFT
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Meeting Minutes
April 3, 2014

Olympia Planning Commission (OPC) Update

Olympia Planning Commission liaison, Carole Richmond, updated the Committee on the OPC's activities. The OPC heard comment from the public at the March 17th OPC meeting related to the misunderstanding on the public's part where they thought there was a violation of the Open Public Meetings Act. This relates to a business item for a zoning text amendment for a professional office/residential multifamily (PO/RM) that currently prohibits retail commercial development over 10,000 sq. ft. Several members of the public spoke to object to two separate meetings that the OPC held with developers, but the meetings were not about the zoning text amendments. Committee Member Richmond explained that these meetings were not considered quasi-judicial matter.

BUSINESS OF THE EVENING

Waste ReSources Master Plan Update – Ron Jones, Senior Program Specialist with Waste ReSources, presented information on staff's current efforts to update the 2008-2013 Zero Waste Plan. Ron explained that the current plan was the first plan ever for the City of Olympia. There is no regulatory state requirement to have a master plan and it ties onto the Thurston County plan and also chapter 12 of the Comprehensive Plan.

Also in attendance at the meeting were Dan Daniels, Waste ReSources Director and Jessica with Cascadia Consultant Group. Cascadia is on contract to assist City staff with the research and the data analysis of the plan.

The UAC deliverable for this item was to provide guidance to staff on the goals, objectives and strategies of the draft plan.

Ron reviewed the updated Plan goals with the UAC:

- 1) Waste reduction
- 2) Increase recycling and composting
- 3) Rates and fees
- 4) Safe and efficient operations

Ron reviewed the timeline for the Zero Waste Plan update with the UAC, which includes coming back to the UAC with a draft Plan in June 2014.

The UAC had the following comments/suggestions:

- All the goals and strategies seem to be equally "weighted". Suggestion to provide financial information (staff time and funds) which will help to prioritize the goals. Suggestion to focus money/efforts on construction and demolition (C&D) and multi-family, which are huge contributors to the waste stream. Suggest creating a high-level matrix to show the goal priorities/funding to bring to the June 2014 UAC meeting.
- Does the Plan have a strategy for hazardous material disposal? Is this a problem in the City of Olympia? Disposal of hazardous materials is an effort that the City coordinates with Thurston County. They have a HazoHouse facility at the Thurston

DRAFT
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Meeting Minutes
April 3, 2014

County Waste and Recovery Center (WARC) and the City promotes this facility for proper disposal, instead of placing these items in garbage carts.

- Create more incentive for organics and recycling participation.
- Suggest neighborhood waste drop off sites to eliminate the need to drive to drop off items (in order to reduce CO2 emissions).
- Support the analysis and review of Olympia's current glass recycling and the possibility of adding commercial recycling.

Wastewater Volume Based Billing Proposal - Andy Haub, Water Resources Director, and Diane Utter, Water Resources Engineer, presented information on City staff's recommendations to change to a volume-based wastewater rate structure. The UAC deliverable was to provide guidance and feedback to staff.

This concept was brought forth to the UAC during the development of the 2013 Wastewater Management Plan. Andy explained the current rate structure for the wastewater utility. The proposed changes would only affect single family residences and duplexes. LOTT's rates are also a component of the City's wastewater bills to customers. This proposal for a volume-based or tier rates is for the City's portion only. The basis of the proposed rate structure is to evaluate winter flow rates and apply tiers to customer base.

The UAC had the following comments/suggestions:

- Supportive of a two-tiered, but not a three-tiered rate structure because of economic concerns. They feel a three-tiered rate structure could potentially cause higher utility bills for larger families where they are already being charged a consumption-based rate for drinking water.
- Interested in finding out if other jurisdictions have this type of wastewater rate structure.
- Do the change to the rate structure incrementally.
- Requested that City staff talk to LOTT about considering a tiered rate structure. Staff said that they can approach LOTT staff with this subject.

Andy noted that the UAC will review the proposal for wastewater volume-based rates again in October 2014. The timing of this would coincide with the City's rate process in the fall of 2014. When adopted, the new volume-based/tiered wastewater rates would be effective January 2015.

Wastewater Municipal Code Updates for Onsite Septic Systems – Diane Utter and Andy Haub, presented information on the proposed regulation changes related to onsite septic systems. The UAC deliverable was to review and provide input to staff and City Council.

The changes would affect the Olympia Municipal Code (OMC) Chapter 13.08 and the Engineering Design and Development Standards (EDDS) sections 2.050 and 3.110.

DRAFT
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Meeting Minutes
April 3, 2014

The proposed changes include:

- Make it easier for properties with septic systems to convert to sewer.
- Encourage more infill development.
- Allow some additional septic systems to be repaired rather than connected.

The timeline for the changes are:

- Write code language and have City legal staff review.
- Update UAC in September 2014.
- Public hearing and adoption by City Council in late 2014.

The UAC was supportive of the proposed changes. They moved and approved a motion to write a letter of support to the City Council.

Adjournment

Chair Thad Curtz adjourned the meeting at 8:34 p.m.