



Meeting Minutes

Land Use & Environment Committee

City Hall
601 4th Avenue E
Olympia, WA 98501
Information: 360.753.8244

Thursday, April 21, 2016

5:30 PM

Council Chambers

1. ROLL CALL

Present: 3 - Chair Julie Hankins, Committee member Clark Gilman and Committee member Nathaniel Jones

2. CALL TO ORDER

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

OTHERS PRESENT

City Manager Steve Hall
Community Planning and Development Director Keith Stahley
Building Official Todd Cunningham
Senior Planner Amy Buckler
Senior Planner Linda Bentley
Senior Planner Nicole Floyd
Public Works Director Rich Hoey
Water Resources Director Andy Haub
Engineering & Planning Supervisor Eric Christensen
Senior Planner Laura Keehan

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was approved.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- 3.A** [16-0440](#) Approval of March 17, 2016 Land Use & Environment Committee Meeting Minutes

The minutes were approved.

4. COMMITTEE BUSINESS

- 4.A** [16-0471](#) Briefing on Proposed Development Code Updates to Address Sea-Level Rise in Downtown

Ms. Buckler and Mr. Cunningham gave a briefing.
Proposed Development Standard - Require floodproofing two feet above lowest "base flood elevation" - up to 16 feet elevation:

- Create a more consistent standard
- Provide upfront certainty about requirement
- Ensure City can require floodproofing if project is SEPA exempt

Evaluating Other Implications:

- Construction Costs
- Flood Insurance
- Design
- Heights
- Historic Preservation
- Potential SEPA Exemption Areas
- Overall alignment with Downtown Strategy

Floodproofing Options:

- Build on fill placement (Raised slab)
- Platform or piles (Stilts)
- Foundation designed to keep interior dry (Dry Floodproofing)
- Foundations which allow water to pass through (Wet Floodproofing) - Note: This method has no reduction impact on flood insurance cost.

Advantages and disadvantages of the floodproofing options were presented.

Public Comment:

Ron Thomas stated flexibility is important for flood requirements and good urban design for new buildings being developed as well as the existing structures.

Zena Hartung stated there are a lot of ways you can encourage existing building owners to upgrade without taking a punitive approach.

Daniel Einstein stated he would like the downtown Olympia sinking issue and seismic activity to be considered in the floodproofing approach. He suggested bringing the topic of taxation to the citizens to help fund some of the infrastructure changes associated with sea level rise.

Roger Horn asked how the 16 foot minimum requirement was determined. Mr. Christensen explained the 16 foot elevation would be an incremental step toward preparing ourselves for sea level rise. An elevation of 16 feet would add one foot to the minimum finished floor elevation required by the current flood prevention ordinance for properties within Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) mapped flood hazard areas. This would be two feet above FEMA's coastal flood elevation (14 feet) for downtown. As Todd Cunningham indicated, this would reduce the flood insurance rates for those properties. The 16 foot elevation would also provide 1.2 feet of freeboard over the 100 year flood elevation (14.8 feet) estimated by Coast & Harbor, the consultant that put together the *Engineered Response to Sea Level Rise* in 2011. A 16 foot elevation would protect structures through the end of the century based on low sea level rise projections and to approximately 2050 for high sea level rise projections. It may also be noted that Seattle requires structures be elevated 2 feet above FEMA base flood elevations.

The report was received.

4.B [16-0386](#) Storm and Surface Water Plan Update

Ms. Keehan presented an update.

Responsibilities:

- Flooding
- Water Quality
- Aquatic Habitat

New Challenges:

- Climate Change and Sea Level Rise
- Unknowns regarding Low Impact Development

Improvements in Stormwater Management:

- New stormwater treatment technologies
- Low Impact Development (LID)

Gains in Scientific Knowledge:

- Further understanding of Puget Sound water quality problems
- Effectiveness of different restoration techniques for various local habitat conditions

The information was received.

4.C [16-0387](#) Low Impact Development (LID) Code Revisions

Ms. Keehan and Ms. Floyd presented an update. The City of Olympia typically strives for environmentally sensitive development regulations and LID is the correct thing to do so we have been an early adopter. Current code changes are being driven by the requirements of our 2012 Phase II Municipal stormwater permit issued by the Department of Ecology. The permit requires us to make LID the preferred and commonly used approach for land development.

Why LID?

- Reduces hydrologic impacts of development
- It is mandated by the Department of Ecology

What will LID achieve?

- Will reduce the hydrologic impacts of new development
- Replenishes groundwater
- Maintains stream flows
- Reduces pollutant loading to surface waters
- In some cases, with redevelopment, LID may reduce existing hydrologic impact

Current Work Program - the project is shifting from policy framework to implementation:

- Coordination meetings with plan reviewers, inspectors, and counter staff
- Evaluating needed updates to forms, permits, processes, etc.
- Legal team review nearly complete
- Complete draft will be available May 10, 2016 in line with the Study Session

- Modifications from the Planning Commission Draft will be identified

Staff sought guidance from the Land Use and Environment Committee (LUEC):

Question: Does the proposed schedule seem appropriate?

Committee Response: Yes

Question: Do you think we are on the right track with minor revisions?

Committee Response: Yes

Question: Does a delayed effective date make sense?

Committee Response: Yes

The information was received.

4.D [16-0479](#) Critical Areas Ordinance Update

Ms. Bentley presented an update:

- Add provisions to allow City or Hearing Examiner to increase buffers to protect habitat corridors
- Amend exemption for "small wetlands" to allow exemption only for smaller, isolated wetlands and/or require mitigation
- Amend various sections that allow greater than 25% reduction in stream and wetland buffers (with "reasonable use" as an exception)
- Add enforcement and penalties for unauthorized alterations
- Update stream and wetland typing
- Add additional requirements for groundwater monitoring wells and wellhead protection areas
- Include seismic and erosion hazards in Landslide Hazard Areas section

Timing and Deadlines - Phase 1: Required Critical Areas Ordinance (CAO) update. The Growth Management Act (GMA) requires that cities review their CAO every eight years to remain consistent with the Act. The review and update deadline for Olympia is June 30, 2016, but under RCW 36.70A.130(7) all cities and counties may take an additional year to complete their CAO updates as long as they are showing substantial progress.

There are two substantive statutory requirements to address as part of Phase 1:

- Critical Areas Review for Best Available Science - The City hired ESA Associates to do a Best Available Science (BAS) review to ensure that our policies and development regulations are based on the most current science and best management practices for designating and protecting critical areas.
- Anadromous Fish - Cities are required to give special consideration in their development regulations to preserve or enhance anadromous fish population and habitat.

Phase 1 may also include changes to clarify existing language, meet revised state and federal guidelines, or add new environmentally sensitive areas to protect as follows:

- Adopt updated Washington State Wetland Rating System for Western WA

- Clarify maintenance responsibilities for groundwater monitoring wells for drinking water
- Wellhead Protection Areas
- Adopt seismic hazard regulations

The consultant has finished its initial review of our current code to identify where BAS suggests revisions or updates, such as updated critical areas buffer minimums and buffer averaging, particularly for wetlands, steep slopes and ravines; and updated references to state and federal critical area protections laws. The consultant also noted areas where the code could be clarified, made more internally consistent, or where better enforcement and penalty sections should be added.

Timeline Phase 1

- Jan 2016 Hire consultant team (Complete)
- Feb-Mar 2016 Consultant BAS review (Complete)
- Apr-May 2016 Code amendment recommendations and drafting
- June 2016 Planning Commission Public Hearing
- July 2016 City Council Resolution to Adopt

The report was received.

4.E [16-0427](#) Status Reports and Updates

Mr. Stahley indicated upcoming meeting topics for:

LUEC May 19, 2016:

- Review of Engineering Design and Development Standards (EDDS)
- Northeast Sub Area Plan update
- Building Code update

LUEC June 16, 2016:

- SmartGov Rollout
- Action Plan update

The report was received.

5. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:11 p.m.