



Meeting Minutes - Draft

Utility Advisory Committee

City Hall
601 4th Avenue E
Olympia, WA 98501

Contact: Jesse Barham
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Thursday, February 1, 2024

5:30 PM

City Hall, Room 207

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Lamson called the meeting to order. Committee member Vernon read the Tribal Acknowledgment.

1.A ROLL CALL

Present: 6 - Committee member Dennis Bloom, Chair Kristin Lamson, Vice Chair Sherry Chilcutt, Committee member Donald Krug, Committee member Arland Schneider and Committee member Eleanor (Pat) Vernon

Absent: 1 - Committee member Dani Clark

1.B. STAFF PRESENT

Water Resources Director and Staff Liaison Jesse Barham
Drinking Water Utility Director Mike Vessey
Water Resources/Drinking Water Utility, Engineering & Planning Supervisor Susan Clark
Waste ReSources Senior Planner Ron Jones
Environmental Habitat Planner Kym Foley
Administrative Specialist Lindsay Walker

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chair Lamson announced that staff requested a change to the action type of file numbers 24-0103 (Utilities Chapter of the Comp Plan) and 24-0107 (Natural Environment Chapter of the Comp Plan) from recommendation to referral.

The agenda was approved as amended.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

[24-0087](#) Approval of December 7, 2023 UAC Meeting Minutes for the Comprehensive Plan Work Session

The minutes were approved.

[24-0090](#) Approval of December 7, 2023 UAC Regular Meeting Minutes

The minutes were approved.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT - None**5. ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM UAC AND STAFF**

Committee member Vernon resigned from the UAC. Tonight's meeting was her last one. Chair Lamson and City staff recognized and thanked Committee member Vernon for her service to the committee.

Jesse Barham provided the following announcements:

- Advisory committee stipend forms due March 31st.
- Information about a tour of the LOTT wastewater treatment plant.
- Postponing item, 2023 end-of-year financial briefing, to the March 7th UAC meeting.
- The UAC advisory committee recruitment was extended until February 16th in the hopes of getting more applicants. Interviews are expected to occur in March.
- March 27th is the Council meeting where outgoing advisory committee members will be recognized, incoming members appointed and 2024-2025 work plans approved.
- The City applied for continued coverage under the 2024-2029 Western Washington Phase 2 Municipal Stormwater Permit.
- Provided information on a grant/loan from Department of Ecology to construction a stormwater quality project on Brawne Avenue. The Ecology-funded list is currently out for public comment.

6. BUSINESS ITEMS**[24-0103](#) Utilities Chapter of the City of Olympia Comprehensive Plan Update**

Susan Clark and Ron Jones provided the briefing. UAC members discussed, commented and suggested edits to February 1st draft of the Utilities Chapter. UAC members suggested the following:

- Revision to the new last paragraph in section Introduction - Utilities Shape the Future to revise the new last sentence and add a new last sentence to read: Additionally, Olympia's utilities are subject to a municipal utility tax which serves as a source of operating revenue for the City. Because Olympia's utilities are user funded, the cost of the municipal utility tax is paid by utility customers are part of their rates.
- Revision to the new general advancing Olympia's social equity goals challenge to read: While keeping utility rates as low as possible and structured in a way that helps advance the City's social equity goals, City-owned utilities will also need to balance establishing utility rates necessary to address ongoing utility maintenance needs and the increasing need to replace aging infrastructure.

- Revision to the new PU2.12 to read: Changes to the municipal utility tax will consider impacts to City utilities' ability to deliver service. This includes long range infrastructure and the City's operating budget needs and social equity goals.

Committee member Krug, seconded by Committee member Vernon, moved to accept the additions and amendments to the February 1st draft of the Utilities Chapter as discussed and suggested by the UAC during the meeting.

Committee member Bloom, seconded by Vice Chair Chilcut, moved to refer the "Utility Advisory Committee Recommended Utilities Chapter" forward to the Planning Commission for a briefing and eventual public hearing.

[24-0107](#) Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update - Natural Environment Chapter

Kym Foley provided the briefing. Staff and UAC held a discussion. Chair Lamson asked staff to consider adding language and using the term "environmental justice" into the Utilities chapter. "Social equity" is currently used in the Utilities chapter. Chair Lamson said this would make a good cross-referencing between both chapters.

Committee member Vernon, seconded by Committee member Bloom, moved to refer the "Utility Advisory Committee Recommended Natural Environment Chapter" forward to the Planning Commission for a briefing and eventual public hearing.

[24-0104](#) Review Draft 2024-2025 Work Plan

Jesse Barham reviewed the current draft work plan with the UAC. Mr. Barham confirmed that since the draft work plan was sent to the UAC, he was able to confirm business items with the Finance Director, Climate Program Manager and Stormwater staff. Another review of the City's Comprehensive Plan update could potentially be added to November 2024.

Chair Lamson requested the following tax information during the City-wide Budget Drivers for 2025 scheduled for June 2024 with the City Finance Director:

- Municipal utility tax
- Franchise fees for private utilities (Why are the tax rates different between private vs. municipal)
- State utility excise tax
- Can more information about these taxes be on the City utility bill? The UAC wants the City to be more transparent to customers about the taxes assessed on City utilities. Provide information that the taxes go to fund general fund programs.

The UAC will do a final review and recommendation of the 2024-2025 work plan at the

March 7th UAC meeting.

Information only. No action requested.

7. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Lamson adjourned the meeting at 7:38 p.m.

UPCOMING

Next UAC Meeting:

Thursday, March 7, 2024 at 5:30 pm