



City of Olympia

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Meeting Minutes Planning Commission

Monday, December 1, 2014

6:30 PM

Room 207

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Brown called the meeting to order at 6:33 p.m.

1.A ROLL CALL

Present: 8 - Chair Max Brown, Vice Chair Kim Andresen, Commissioner Jessica Bateman, Commissioner Roger Horn, Commissioner Missy Watts, Commissioner Darrell Hoppe, Commissioner Jerome Parker, and Commissioner Carole Richmond

Excused: 1 - Commissioner Judy Bardin

OTHERS PRESENT

Community Planning and Development Deputy Director Leonard Bauer
Associate Planner Amy Buckler
City Manager Steve Hall
Deputy City Attorney Darren Nienaber
Mayor Stephen Buxbaum
Mayor Pro-Tem Nathaniel Jones
Council Members Julie Hankins, Jeannine Roe, Jim Cooper, and Stephen Langer

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chair Brown, with agreement from all Commission members, moved agenda items 3, 4, 5, & 6 to after the discussion with Council.

The agenda was approved as amended.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

[14-1160](#) Approval of November 17, 2014 Planning Commission Meeting Minutes

The minutes were approved as amended.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT - None

5. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ms. Buckler discussed the Tanasse Building appeal process and the decision by the Hearing Examiner to deny.

Commissioner Parker attended the hearing and shared his observations of the process as thorough and transparent. He expressed appreciation for the expertise of the current Hearing Examiner.

Mr. Bauer gave a report on the budget including details about increasing the Urban Forester position to full time status, building up the tree hazard account, and a possible future Economic Development Coordinator position.

Discussion:

- Urban Forest position does not oversee critical areas ordinance which will be overseen by an associate planner

6. INFORMATION REQUESTS - None

7. BUSINESS ITEMS

[14-1163](#)

Joint Meeting with City Council - Recognition and Discussion of Future Work Plan

Mayor Buxbaum expressed his intention to facilitate tonight's meeting as a forum for feedback and discussion from the Planning Commission. With the Comprehensive Plan (CP) about to be approved, he considers it a milestone for the City and encouraged Commissioners to attend the meeting of the first reading. He shared his appreciation to the Commission for their service and emphasized the critical role played by the Commission in offering leadership and guidance with the Action Plan work. He discussed the importance of intergovernmental relationships in this time of heightened stress and challenges to small cities.

Councilmember Langer, chair of the Land Use and Environment Committee, discussed the role of PC recommendations in Council decision making processes. He stressed the Action Plan implementation of policy in making the CP meaningful and in translating generalized statements into actionable achievements.

Major Pro-Tem Jones shared the deliberate efforts of this Council to be engaged with all advisory committees and reliance by Council on the PC's recommendations.

Chair Brown discussed the need for mutual appreciation between the two groups and outlined areas of interest for future focus and research.

Discussion:

- PC recommendations on the Capital Facilities Plan.
- How to best move from policy to program implementation and institutionalization.
- Questions and concerns about the specific role of the PC.
- Critical issues to the future of the City consume considerable PC time and a clearer

role would help steer PC deliberation to relevant issues.

- How to address conflicting public opinion expressed at the recent public hearing on proceeding with neighborhood center planning before developing a Downtown plan.
- Developing and communicating a picture perspective to support useful efforts and meaningful results.
- Conversations between Council and PC are constructive and contribute to positive exchange.
- Lack of continuity between past Councils and advisory committees.
- Building coherence and continuity takes time and patience.
- High value on items coming forward from the CP for an Action Plan.
- Developing an operational way to support communication between Council and PC.
- Learning organization strategy is crucial for forward movement.
- Moving up the critical ordinances issue.
- Development of a rating system for prioritizing issues from Council.
- Improving direct communication between Council and PC because breakdowns inevitably occur when staff interprets requests.

The discussion was completed.

[14-1161](#) Recommendation on Proposed Scope of Actions for Neighborhood Centers

Chair Brown proposed moving forward on developing those changes based on input gained from the public hearing: refine language creating a new proposal, another public hearing to generate public input on the new proposal, final deliberations.

Discussion:

- Questions at the public hearing deserve an explanation before holding another public hearing.
- Road maintenance concerns expressed should be acknowledged.
- Recognize major themes to address for clarification, then generate an informational sheet with points of clarification.
- Timely response to public concerns and syncing achievable actions to Action Plan.
- Presenting code amendments changes to the public will help to inform future work direction.
- What is the best way to engage the public and is code language engaging.
- Using graphic diagrams to illustrate neighborhood centers.
- Writing code which purposefully enables desirable buildings and projects.
- Requiring sub area planning to use decision protocol consistent with decision by neighborhoods about neighborhood centers.
- Developing code language for transition businesses and mobile vendors.
- Allowing higher density uses on outskirts of neighborhood centers.
- Economics of building new structures and concept of anchor stores.
- Explaining zone and build out differences to help residents in understanding how development will look.
- Sign code issue as a separate topic.

Requests for staff:

- Revising the Master Plan to include and clarify differences between new developments and existing neighborhood centers.
- Removal of parking minimums.
- New approaches to home occupation flexibility and defining work/live spaces.
- Dialoguing with local banks to determine financing options.

Chair Brown proposed allowing higher density development in proximity to neighborhood centers. Commissioners voted unanimously to allow.

The recommendation was completed.

[14-1162](#) Election of 2015 Planning Commission Officers

Commissioner Richmond, attending the meeting by phone, communicated her qualifications for Finance Sub Committee Chair position and outlined her vision for the future.

Commissioner Bateman discussed her interest in the Finance Sub Committee Chair position.

Commissioners voted by paper ballot. Commissioner Bateman was elected to the position of Finance Sub Committee Chair. Chair Brown and Vice Chair Andresen will retain their current positions.

The election was completed.

8. REPORTS

Commissioner Richmond and Vice Chair Andresen attended the Low Impact Development training. Commissioner Richmond gave a report.

The 2015 PC Work Schedule was discussed and meeting dates were agreed on.

9. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:20 p.m.