



Meeting Minutes

Planning Commission

City Hall
601 4th Avenue E
Olympia, WA 98501
Contact: Joyce Phillips
360.570.3722

Saturday, September 24, 2016 8:30 AM The Olympia Center, 222 Columbia Street NW

Planning Commission Retreat

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Mark called the meeting to order at 8:45 a.m.

1.A ROLL CALL

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

Absent: 1 - Commissioner Darrell Hoppe

OTHERS PRESENT

Community Planning and Development Staff:
Director Keith Stahley
Deputy Director Leonard Bauer
Senior Planner Joyce Phillips

Elected Officials:
City Council Member Julie Hankins

Members of the Public:
Kim Andresen
Max Brown
Roger Horn
Phil Owen
Miguel Pineda
Aaron Rodriguez
Chris van Daalen

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

None

4. ICE BREAKER ACTIVITY

Former Commissioner Max Brown led an ice breaker activity that encouraged participants to consider places in Olympia that are important to each of us, the places we bring company when they visit from out of town, and what it is about those places that makes them special to us. The exercise included thinking about places in Olympia, where we grew up, and where we like to vacation. It concluded with discussion about how we can work to keep what is important in Olympia while making sure new development in Olympia has those components that make a community a special place.

5. BUSINESS ITEMS

5.A [16-1063](#) Discussion: Overview of Eco Districts

Chris van Daalen gave a presentation about the concept and formation of EcoDistricts, including examples from Orgeon and Washington states. An EcoDistrict is a comprehensive strategy to accelerate sustainable development at the neighborhood scale. Mr. van Daalen noted that the policy framework is in place and that Sustainable Urbanism is an opportunity to address climate change issues by focusing on more walkable and transit-oriented development while providing more housing options and diversity.

5.B [16-1064](#) Tips on being a Successful Planning Commission

Former Commissioners Roger Horn shared information from state statutes and the Olympia Municipal Code regarding the history, importance, and role of Planning Commissions. Former Commissioners Kim Andresen and Max Brown joined Roger as they discussed tips for current Commissioners to be fully engaged and prepared so they can have the best impact on the Commission and City of Olympia. Examples included being prepared for each meeting, understanding what the Council needs and expects from the Commission, considering public testimony, and communicating effectively with other Commissioners, Councilmembers and staff. The panel shared their approval of the fact that Councilmember Hankins has been regularly attending Commission meetings and the retreat, which hasn't always been the case with the Council Liaison in the past.

5.C [16-1065](#) Discussion: Addressing Homelessness in the City of Olympia and Surrounding Area

Aaron Rodriguez shared data with the Commissioners about the work he is doing regarding homelessness in downtown as part of the Downtown Strategy work underway. Mr. Rodriguez provided information regarding the number of homeless people in Thurston County, those who are considered to be "low income" and "cost burdened" in relation to the cost of their housing, and discussed the need for shared vocabulary and definitions as the jurisdictions in Thurston County work to address housing issues.

5.D [16-1066](#) Information Sharing from a Local Organization Working to End Homelessness in Thurston County

Phil Owen provided information regarding the homeless population in downtown Olympia, noting that approximately 80% of those who are homeless in the downtown are from Thurston County, including from smaller towns. Mr. Owen indicated that homelessness is a housing problem that can be solved. He stated that not all people who are low income or cost burdened will become homeless if they lose their jobs or miss a paycheck because many people living in those situations will be able to rely on friends or family to help. The importance of having affordable housing for all income levels was discussed.

6. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 1:05 p.m.