



# City of Olympia

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## Meeting Minutes Planning Commission

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**Monday, March 17, 2014**

**6:30 PM**

**Room 207**

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### 1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Brown called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

### 1.A ROLL CALL

**Present:** 9 - Commissioner Jessica Bateman, Commissioner Darrell Hoppe, Commissioner Roger Horn, Commissioner Carole Richmond, Commissioner Missy Watts, Chair Max Brown, Commissioner Jerome Parker, Vice Chair Kim Andresen, and Commissioner Judy Bardin

### OTHERS PRESENT

Deputy City Attorney Darren Nienaber, Community Planning and Development Deputy Director Leonard Bauer, Associate Planner Amy Buckler

### 2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was approved with the postponement of Item 14-0260 (Zoning Text Amendment - Professional) to April 7, 2014 and proceeding immediately to Public Comment.

**The agenda was approved as amended.**

### 3. PUBLIC COMMENT

Bob Jacobs of 720 Governor Stevens Avenue SE spoke about public policy making and who provides the information that the public gets. He used an example of the coal companies providing information about the coal trains. He advised the Planning Commission (PC) to use neutral parties as experts and cautioned against reliance on interested parties. He believes that private meetings exacerbate problems and does not allow for public access. He welcomes questions and comments from the Commission.

Roger Polzin of 804 Foote Street NW spoke about transparency and how private meetings destroy public credibility. He urged that processes be kept open and believes that more conversations with all parties, including developers, are necessary.

Zena Hartung of 3240 Centerwood Court spoke about the importance of raising

issues and commended Commissioner Bardin. She also supports moving forward on the Comprehensive Plan. She is very interested in seeing Olympia get developed, especially more downtown housing. She distributed a notice for an upcoming forum hosted by The League of Women Voters on the problems facing the City to have more downtown residency and supports a better balance in the community.

Jim Lazar of 1063 Capitol Way #203 identified himself as the Chairman of Citizens for Better Government and spoke about the ethical problems with private meetings. He urges City staff and Commissioners to attend trainings on governmental ethics.

Teresa Goen Burgman, a business owner whose property at 2501 Pacific Avenue SE will be annexed into the City, spoke about past problems.

Bethany Weidner of 14151 Sixth Avenue SW spoke about the problematic structure of City processes and how they could be addressed.

Jane Stavish of 4443 Frontier Court SE who lives in the urban growth area spoke about how she is frightened by this kind of behavior. She discussed the recursion of Commissioner Parker on a former issue and wants to know why more Commissioners did not recuse themselves at the last meeting.

Susan Macomson of 6110 88th Avenue NE spoke about corruption in government and believes that the recent meeting was not ethical. She felt shut out by the process.

Steve Segal of 3110 Redfern Drive NW spoke about his concerns of impropriety regarding the recent events and the open meetings act.

Karen Messmer of 1907 Lakehurst Drive SE a former planning commissioner and City councilmember spoke about the loss of public trust resulting from meeting with a property owner who has a vested interest in development. She believes the rezone process is now tarnished and this recent example should serve to demonstrate the need for ethics training and a conversation with the public to determine expectations for Commissions and Committees. She believes that there was a failure on the part of staff to alert the Commission to the possibility of impropriety.

Walt Jorgenson of 823 north Street SE expressed his concern about recent events. He believes that a public meeting is the only forum for these discussions. He recommends that a code of conduct be drafted and adhered to by City staff. He suggested that a good venue for a future public meeting might be development from a developer's point of view.

#### **4. DISCUSSION**

[14-0270](#) Discussion Regarding Issues Raised about Public Process

Discussion:

-Request to share all information about the nature and intent of the meetings.

- Comments on the allegations and clarification that the purpose of the meetings in question was only to engage developers in conversation so that Commissioners could better understand why implementation of the CP had stalled.
- Relationship with staff and how in this instance, and in general, staff supports the progress of the Commission and in no way undermines or determines that process.
- Request for Mr. Nienaber to address the meeting.
- The City's commitment to transparency and intention to foster public confidence and trust.
- Vice Chair Andresen organized the meeting because she was asked to do so and then recused herself from the meeting.
- Nothing was said that endangered public trust.
- The meeting was intended only to gather information to support a future public process.
- Definition of the Open Meetings Act.
- Statements and assumptions made about the meetings were inaccurate and misleading.
- Regret the meetings were perceived as "secret".
- Motivation for having the meetings was well intended and Commissioners are personally committed to a high degree of ethical behavior.
- The intention of distorting the relationship between the meetings and the issue of Professional Office/Residential Multifamily (PO/RM).
- Why there has been a lack of development after twenty years of discussion and effort to create it.
- The challenge of dealing with the reality of wanting development without meaningful input from developers.

Mr. Bauer read these comments from his memo to the Planning Commission on March 13, 2014: "The meetings occurred on January 31 and March 3, 2014, between some members of the Olympia Planning Commission, City Councilmembers, and professionals in the development community. The meetings were originally requested by two members of the Planning Commission, who had discussed the need to gain a better understanding of the perspectives of realtors, developers, and financiers of development. They specifically discussed the need to understand apparent challenges of developing areas of the City of Olympia that are planned to accommodate significant percentages of new growth projected in the City's Comprehensive Plan - such as downtown and designated urban corridors. One Commissioner organized the meetings with local realtors, developers, and representatives of finance institutions. City staff were not involved in organizing the meetings. I attended the January 31 meeting at the invitation of the Commissioner organizing them. Invitations to each meeting were also made to at least some City Councilmembers. Meetings were held in a roundtable format, with no formal agenda. At the beginning of each meeting, it was clearly stated and agreed that there could be no discussion of any issues that could become the subject of review by either the Planning Commission or City Council, including no discussion of any specific permit or specific site. At no time during either meeting was there any discussion of any potential zoning code or map changes - including no discussion of the PO/RM zone text amendment that is currently under review by the Planning Commission."

**The Commission discussed the issue and addressed the concerns of the public.**

## 5. ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Community Economic Revitalization Committee (CERC), formerly the Community Renewal Area (CRA) Ad Hoc Committee, met with Mayor Buxbaum and Councilmember Hankins to review the Economic Development Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan (CP). They will make some modifications and those will go directly into their Public Hearing Draft. Commissioners can attend that meeting to comment.

The record for public comment on Item 14-0260 (Zoning Text Amendment - Professional) has been extended to the April 7, 2014 meeting to support greater public input.

## 6. INFORMATION REQUESTS

Chair Brown requested a joint meeting to be organized with downtown businesses owners, perhaps the Parking and Business Improvement Area (PBIA) Board or the Olympia Downtown Association (ODA).

Commissioners Parker and Bardin asked to be given examples of buildings that are 50,000 square feet to illustrate the amendment proposal for the PO/RM discussion. Commissioner Parker would like a description of the role of the design review and how design standards are used.

## 7. BUSINESS ITEMS

[14-0266](#) Recommendation for Zoning Text Amendment - Professional Office/Residential Multifamily (PO/RM) Zoning District

**The recommendation was postponed.**

[14-0262](#) Discussion about the OPC Recommendation on Topics Related to Urban Neighborhoods/Corridors

Mr. Bauer outlined the purpose of the discussion to review the substance of and rationale for the Planning Commission's December 13, 2013 'Urban Neighborhoods' and 'Urban Corridors' recommendations, and to choose a representative from the Commission to represent these recommendations before the City Council.

The Commissioners discussed who will attend the meetings and determined items 6, 7, 8 and 15 will need an explanation of Commission rationale.

Chair Brown, and Commissioners Horn and Bardin will attend the session meetings for items 6 and 7.

Commissioners Bardin, Horn, and Parker will attend the session for item 8.

Commissioner Richmond will attend the session for item 15.

The Commission discussed rezoning criteria.

**The work session was completed.**

## 8. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

[14-0260](#) Approval of February 24, 2014 Planning Commission Meeting Minutes

**The minutes were approved as amended.**

[14-0261](#) Approval of March 3, 2014 Planning Commission Meeting Minutes

**The minutes were approved as amended.**

## 9. REPORTS

The Commission discussed if there should be a change to the reports section of the meeting and redefining what constitutes a meeting and which meetings should be discussed and reported on. It was decided that content is the key and when pertinent information to planning is discussed, then a report describing that would be useful to the Commission. Commissioners will use their own judgment to determine what is pertinent.

Finance Subcommittee:

Commissioner Horn discussed the need for volunteers on that committee. He will be meeting with Councilmember Cooper, Chair of the Finance Committee, on March 21, 2014 to discuss expectations and concerns.

Commissioner Parker and Vice Chair Andresen attended the March 13, 2014 Capital Facilities Plan Project Funding meeting with advisory committee chairs, Council members, staff liaisons and other representatives at the Olympia Center.

Commissioner Parker explained he had learned in doing the Commission's work on the 2014 Capital Facilities Plan, how dire the city's finances are. He shared that he did not, and believes the public does not, realize the severity of the situation. It was an informational session with no definite conclusions.

Commissioner Bardin stated to clarify she wrote two letters, and did not ask for the resignation of Vice Chair Andresen in either letter.

Leadership Team:

Chair Brown reported he will attend the General Government Work Session on March 14, 2014 and present the Planning Commission's Work Plan. He reported on the Joint Meeting with Citizens Advisory Committee on March 6, 2014.

Utilities & Advisory Committee:

Commissioner Richmond gave a brief report on the meeting she attended on March 6, 2014.

Design Review Board:

Commissioner Hoppe reported the Port of Olympia's Warehouse Two roof and side (of building) will be painted a soft gray rather than the original choice of bright white in order to reduce glare. He discussed the exemption in the Olympia code for renovated buildings 50,000 square feet or larger from any landscaping or vegetative requirements.

**10. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 9:51 p.m.