

**CITY OF WEST LINN**  
**PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES**  
WORK SESSION  
**Wednesday, April 1, 2009**

Members present: Chair Michael Babbitt, Vice Chair Robert Martin and Commissioners Valerie Baker, Michael Jones, and Christine Steel.

Staff present: Chris Kerr, Senior Planner

Members absent: Commissioners Shawn Andreas and Dean Wood

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Michael Babbitt called the Planning Commission work session to order at 6:30 p.m. in the Willamette Room of City Hall.

**STUDY TOPICS:**

**1. Review and Prioritization of Planning Projects**

A joint Planning Commission/City Council work session was scheduled on April 6, 2009 for the purpose of reviewing and prioritizing the Planning Commission work plan. The Council had asked the Commissioners to suggest a ranking. Mr. Kerr pointed out some items that were on the Planning Department's priority list. Some were already in process. A consultant had already been hired to work on the Willamette Historic District. The staff would have a regulatory code package ready for the Planning Commission to review in about 60 days. The RFP had been issued for the Trails Master Plan. Chair Babbitt suggested the Planning Commission prioritize the items they had already generally agreed were things the Planning Commission should do: Comprehensive Plan and CDC updates; Sustainability Code amendments; bimonthly CCI meetings; and infill design standards. Mr. Kerr agreed to fashion and send the related memorandum to the City Council.

**2. Review and Discussion of implementing adopted City documents (e.g. Imagine West Linn, Neighborhood Plans, Sustainable West Linn Strategic Plan) as applicable to Chapters 5 and 6 of the Comprehensive Plan.**

Mr. Kerr related the City Council was pleased the Planning Commission was improving the Comprehensive Plan document. At this session the Commissioners examined two more chapters.

***Goal 5: Open Spaces, Scenic and Historic Areas, and Natural Resources.***

Mr. Kerr confirmed he had inserted the term, "habitat-friendly development practices," in the definition section of the Comprehensive Plan. The Commissioners acknowledged that the Historic Review Advisory Board (HRAB) likely knew more than they did about Historic Areas. They asked the staff to ask the HRAB to examine that part of Goal 5 and recommend how to make it current, correct some references, and clarify policies and action measures in this section. They wondered if the HRAB would already know what source would be used to identify where the archeological sites were that were to be inventoried and protected. They

wanted the HRAB to clarify where the historic areas were. They wanted to know more about the “historic Willamette Trolley rail corridor.” Commissioner Steel observed that many of the policies were worded like action items. Mr. Kerr related that some action items had been accomplished. The city had already obtained Certified Local Government (CLG) designation. He said the HRAB was working on an inventory and expected to finish it this year. He agreed to ask the HRAB to examine the two pages related to Historic Areas for Planning Commission review. The Commissioners asked the staff to make it clear to the HRAB that the scope was limited and was not for the purpose of making any policy changes.

The Commissioners then compared Scenic Environment and Natural Environment goals and policies to reconcile policies to preserve trees with policies to preserve views. The Commissioners generally agreed Natural Environment Policy 1 should call for implementing site design standards that prescribe how to place roadways and buildings “to preserve trees and scenic views.” Commissioner Baker asked why the Natural Environment section did not address wildlife corridors. She said it should acknowledge that habitat came with corridors. The Commissioners generally agreed this section should clarify that the city would preserve important wildlife habitat “and, if appropriate, wildlife corridors.”

Vice Chair Martin was uncomfortable with language in Policy 16 to “preserve locations for public facilities” in dedicated wetlands and riparian areas. He said government should be restrained from development in a wetland. He recalled the city had installed a ball field in Fields Bridge Park in the middle of a natural area. Some suggested the policy might be referring to a “public facility,” such as a trail or wetlands informational center. Vice Chair Martin stressed such areas were easily destroyed and the Comprehensive Plan should say they were to be protected. Mr. Kerr advised the city had to go through the permit review process just like a citizen had to do. The staff asked him to research the original intent of the policy and what the originators had in mind when they said, “public facility.” He agreed and anticipated that he would fashion language that clarified those were facilities that benefited the public, but did not affect the natural environment. Then Chair Babbitt pointed out that Policy 11 called for controlling activities and uses within the areas “to maintain ecological values, while providing for compatible recreational and educational activities.” The Commissioners recalled that the pipeline that had been installed in Wilderness Park had simply been the result of City error, not what the Comprehensive Plan and CDC said. Commissioner Baker recalled some citizens wanted to dedicate land in Savannah Oaks for a nature trail for educational purposes. That would be a “public facility.” Vice Chair Martin held that there were some riparian areas that just could not support use by people. Some Commissioners felt that Policy 11, together with Policy 16, would allow a pathway, but not a pipeline. The Commissioners then generally agreed to modify Policy 16 to say, “Where practical, obtain dedication of wetlands and riparian areas to the City to assure protection and maintenance.” They removed the rest of the sentence, “and to preserve locations for public facilities.” Mr. Kerr recalled the Planning Commission had approved the Goal 5 maps fairly recently.

***GOAL 6, Air, Water and Land Resources Quality***

The Commissioners asked the staff to insert a policy to incorporate the policies of the Sustainability Plan. They also wanted them to update the background information in this section by describing what the city had accomplished since it was written. For example, since then the city had met the goals of Title 3 of the Metro Urban Growth Management Functional Plan. Policy 6 which required existing households to hook up to the City's pipe sewer system also had to be reconciled with existing Municipal Code. Mr. Kerr advised "existing households" were those legally within the City. Vice Chair Martin recalled a study related to the Surface Water Master Plan reported that virtually every pipe in city was undersized. Mr. Kerr related that the new stormwater permitting process would result higher standards and more water being infiltrated than directed into pipes.

The Commissioners observed that Section 3: Land Resources (Solid Waste Management) was outdated. It referred to a city-operated recycling center that did not exist, and a recycling rate that might not be current. Commissioner Baker asked if the Commissioners wanted to incorporate language regarding reducing solid waste through use of electronics. Commissioner Jones recalled hearing some concern that heavy metals related to electronic communication had more impact than paper communications. The Commissioners asked the staff to update references to noise study results in Section 4: Noise Control. Commissioner Jones recalled that police found it challenging to enforce the Noise ordinance because they were usually called to investigate nuisance noise at night, when there was no one on staff trained to use the measuring device.

### **3. Planning Director Report**

Mr. Kerr reported the latest Urban Growth report from Metro forecasted the six-county region inside the metropolitan UGB would grow to need 220,000 to 300,000 more housing units, and the estimated capacity was 184,000 to 350,000 dwelling units. That was not as much growth as he had anticipated they would forecast. The entire report was available online.

Mr. Kerr said there had been no change yet to the Urban/Rural reserves designation map, however, the Metro Urban Reserve Steering Committee would examine it again soon. Metro had scheduled some open houses in various cities to describe the process and ask for feedback. Vice Chair Martin had wanted a list of contact information for every person who served on a body that would participate in that decision so citizens could lobby them. Mr. Kerr said he had found contact information for a representative of every body, but not everyone who served on them.

Mr. Kerr related that Planner Peter Spir would recommend that the CCI establish a more specific mission for the CCI at their April 15<sup>th</sup> meeting. The staff had also drafted some brochures to help the public understand how they could get involved.

### **4. Other Items of Interest from Commissioners**

Vice Chair Martin offered to produce a "searchable" Municipal Code in addition to the "searchable" CDC.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no other business, Chair Babbitt adjourned the Planning Commission work session at approximately 8:10 p.m.

**APPROVED:**



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**Michael Babbitt, Chair**

*5-20-09*

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**Date**