

CITY OF WEST LINN
PLANNING COMMISSION

Minutes of June 3, 2009

Members present: Chair Michael Babbitt, Vice Chair Robert Martin and Commissioners Laura Horsey, Michael Jones, Charles Lytle, and Christine Steel

Staff present: Tom Soppe, Associate Planner; Richard Seals, Finance Director; and William Monahan, City Attorney

Members absent: Commissioner Dean Wood

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Babbitt called the Planning Commission meeting to order in the Council Chambers of City Hall at 6:58 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Jones moved to approve the Minutes of, May 6 2009. Steel seconded the motion and it **passed** 4:0. Lytle and Horsey abstained.

PUBLIC COMMENTS (None)

PUBLIC HEARING

(Note: The staff reports and all related documents for the hearings are available through the Planning Department.)

PUD-09-01/SUB-09-01/WAP-09-02 6-Lot PUD, Subdivision and Water Resources Area Permit at 19650 Suncrest Drive

Chair Babbitt reported the applicant's had submitted a letter saying they wished to continue the hearing to June 17, 2009. **Jones moved to continue PUD-09-01/SUB-09-01/WAP-09-02 to June 17, 2009** with the understanding that the applicants had granted an extension of the 120-day rule. **Martin seconded** the motion and it **passed** 6:0.

ITEMS OF INTEREST FROM STAFF

Finance Director - Audit Information and General Questions

Richard Seals, Finance Director, distributed copies of the Annual Financial Report. He reported that he had joined the City last October; the City had submitted the June 2008 audit to the Secretary of State in February 2009; the City was now caught up on audit filings with the state; and the most recent audit was the first totally clean audit in several years. It was available on the City website. He said the next project was the budget. It had been passed from the Citizens Budget Committee to the City Council, which would consider it at a public hearing on June 22, 2009. It would be in effect July 1, 2009.

During the questioning period, Seals explained the City had a revolving five-year strategic plan. Each fund had its own five-year plan in conjunction with the five year Capital Improvement Plan. Budgeting (proposed spending) and then auditing (actual spending) were done in a continuous

cycle. Budgeting was both a bottom up and top down process because departments suggested what they needed but the five-year strategic plan also guided the process. When asked, Seals reported that the City was pursuing one more staff person's PERS account before they closed the embezzlement case. That would be accomplished soon. He reported the City had received recognition from Standard & Poors in October and that reinstated their credit rating and allowed the City to refinance some bond issues at better interest rates. The budget documents themselves had received national recognition as a communication tool. The 2008 audit document had been submitted for consideration for a national award. Seals related that six to eight months ago bond markets got really tight and many cities could not sell bonds. But four months ago buyers came back to the market and the City was able to refinance existing bonds and sell more at about 3.5% interest. Those rates would likely hold for another year or two. National recognition was the first step to a better credit rating and lower interest rates. He hoped the City would receive an upgrade at the end of 2009 that would mean even lower interest rates.

Seals clarified that except for the City Council, boards and commissions did not have their own budgets. Expenditures for things like Planning Commissioner training would come out of the Planning Department budget. He was not sure what percentage of citywide fees came from planning and building department activities, but it might be 2% - 3%. He said City residents had paid citywide parks maintenance fees for several years. No other nearby cities applied such a fee. West Linn utility fees were the second lowest in the area. Steel asked if an unsuccessful land use applicant received a refund of permit and application fees. Seal clarified they were not buying a permit, and generally, the work they had paid for had been done even if the application was denied, so the money would not be refunded, unless there was a balance left from a deposit. When asked, he acknowledged City officials had discussed floating a bond for open space. He clarified a graph on page 13 of the report showed the average monthly utility bill per household.

Martin had read about Activity Based Costing (ABC costing) and asked what Seals thought about that method. Seals said the City did not use it now, but they might consider it if they had a problem determining how to allocate funds. ABC costing allocated funds based on the activities in each fund or department. It might tend to pit one department against others, or it might bring about more efficiency. Martin asked how CIP funding for master plans was reflected in the budget. Seals said when projects in the five year strategic plan were selected for funding they were put in the current budget. The rest remained unfunded CIP projects and were not shown in the budget. Steel asked if the City planned to cut back or save money in the coming fiscal year. Seals said they were always looking for efficiencies. West Linn's budget was very lean compared to other cities. He said in the last budget the City did not even meet its own policy for reserve levels for 3 out of the 15 funds. But they were just able to meet them in the currently proposed budget.

ITEMS OF INTEREST FROM THE PLANNING COMMISSION

Planning Commission rules

Jones moved to change the quorum rule from "four" to "a majority of the members of the Planning Commission." **Martin seconded** the motion and discussion followed. Monahan clarified that "quorum" referred to the number of members present to conduct business. It remained the same unless someone left the meeting. When a member stepped down due to a conflict of interest, but did not leave the room, the Planning Commission could continue to conduct business. In that case a legal vote would be that of the majority of members who were

qualified and present to vote. For example, if seven Commissioners were at the meeting, and two had stepped down, the other five could conduct business and it would take at least three votes to make a decision. He clarified the motion only pertained to the quorum necessary to open a meeting and conduct business. Jones stated for the record that the Commissioners had discussed making this change in work sessions. **The vote was conducted and the motion passed 6:0.**

ADJOURNMENT

There being no other business, Chair Babbitt adjourned the Planning Commission meeting at 7:27 p.m.

APPROVED:



Michael Babbitt, Chair

8-19-09

Date