



PLANNING COMMISSION
WORK SESSION
Minutes of April 21, 2010

Members present: Chair Robert Martin, Vice Chair Michael Jones and Commissioners Laura Horsey, Christine Steel and Dean Wood

Members absent: None

Staff present: John Sonnen, Planning Director; Chris Kerr, Senior Planner; and Sara Javoronok, Associate Planner

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Martin called the Planning Commission work session to order in the Willamette Room of City Hall at 6:45 p.m.

Review Establishment of Historic Review Board

Javoronok advised that the Clackamas County Historic Review Board had terminated its agreement with West Linn to review applications to construct or alter houses in the historic district or that would affect landmarks. The City had until September 30, 2010 to set up its own historic review board. The new Historic Review Board (HRB) would be a quasi-judicial hearing body. The City already had an Historic Resources Advisory Board (HRAB), which worked on preservation projects. The City Council opted to use a single board to do both what the County HRB was doing and what the HRAB was doing. The HRB was to have at least one architect member and the other members were to have backgrounds in historic preservation or related fields. The staff was to draft the necessary code amendments and present them to the Planning Commission and the City Council.

During the questioning period, Javoronok confirmed the county board was a volunteer board with seven members, including an architect. She had discussed the new HRB with the HRAB and they had suggested using a transition period during which the two boards met at the same time. After that the new board would take over both boards' duties. Javoronok confirmed that the members of the HRAB would have to reapply to serve on the HRB. The staff, the City Attorney and State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) would train them so they understood the legal process. None of them was an architect, but the staff had heard from a local architect who might be interested. Javoronok reported that the City Council wanted preference given to applicants who lived in West Linn. Nearby cities that used design review boards included Oregon City, Lake Oswego (which had an HRAB and a Development Review Commission) and Forest Grove.

Javoronok anticipated the draft code would be presented to the Planning Commission in June. Horsey observed that the City would be recruiting members for the PUD/Infill task force at about the same time. Martin was sure the City could find enough people to volunteer to serve if it reached out to them. Horsey suggested the new board should have a member from the Holly Grove area. Javoronok related the HRAB had obtained Certified Local Government (CLG) grants to fashion a context statement for the Willamette and Holly Grove areas and they were using a grant to survey Holly Grove.

Review Draft Work Plan on PUD's

Kerr presented the staff report (see his April 16th Memorandum entitled, "Draft work program for the Residential Infill/PUD Code amendment project."). The document described the four phases of the Work Program and included a timeline and a draft City Council resolution. The resolution would allow the Planning Commission to appoint a seven-member task force. Kerr planned to present the draft to the Council on May 10th and he recommended that the task force be formed and begin working soon after that.

The Commissioners discussed the wording of the problem statement: "Historically, the City's PUD chapter has been the primary mechanism to achieve infill – with less than satisfactory results." They observed that could be interpreted to mean the Planning Commission had not done its job. But actually the Planning Commission had done its job and it was the code they had to follow that needed to be changed. The statement should be clearer that it was the PUD chapter - not the Planning Commission - that was not achieving its purpose and could be improved. The Commissioners also asked Kerr to attach the list of problem areas the task force was to look at. He had made a list of them as the Planning Commission discussed them. The list included questions such as what was small-scale residential infill development and how to deal with flag lots. The Commissioners wanted the project scope language to be clear that in addition to a focus on small developments the PUD code needed "fixes" that would also affect larger PUD developments. For example, one of the problematic parts of the current PUD code was that the presence of steep slopes made a PUD a requirement. Kerr confirmed that a PUD overlay was a "floating zone" that could be applied to any base zone, even the industrial zone. One example of how it could be applied was if the Mill wanted to redevelop, it could do that under the same PUD regulations as a four-lot subdivision. The City Council did not want the task force to address commercial or industrial sites. They wanted to look at commercial development regulations in a separate process. Staff was preparing to work on that process, too.

Kerr said the staff planned to try to identify potential infill locations within the UGB and provide that to the task force as background data. He said the proposed schedule was aggressive, but workable. He encouraged Planning Commissioners to encourage others to serve on the task force. While Kerr was on leave from the City during some of June and July Sonnen and Tom Soppe would assist the task force. The Commissioners wanted to be assured that the task force would not lose expertise before its work was done. Jones suggested specifying that the seven-member task force was to include two "current or former" Planning Commissioners. That way a Planning Commissioner whose term on the Planning Commission had expired could continue

to serve on the task force. The Commissioners agreed to that and they also agreed to specify that the task force was to have two "current or former" neighborhood association "officers". Kerr confirmed that potential infill sites would likely be found to be heavily concentrated in a few neighborhoods.

The proposed strategic framework process involved the public and tried to ensure that the task force, the Planning Commission and the City Council achieved basic agreement before the staff started drafting code. So it included public hearings and joint work sessions. The public would be able to raise their concerns in a non-confrontational setting so the task force could address them and work through them. The Commissioners wanted the completion date to be before a new Planning Commission began work next year. Horsey advised against scheduling public involvement events during a holiday season. The Commissioners and staff anticipated that task force work would be done by the end of November and the Planning Commission would act on it in early December. They would make it their goal to forward a recommendation to the City Council by December 31, 2010. They directed the staff to go forward with the program with the changes to the documents that they had discussed. Horsey was interested in how much time a task force member would be expected to devote to the effort. Kerr anticipated they would hold 10-12 meetings and start out with a staff report that included a lot of background material to read. Martin thanked the staff and asked them to put the work plan and timeline on the website.

The City was starting processes related to the new HRB, commercial development and PUD/Infill. Sonnen referred to the proposal that established legislative procedure and assured the Commissioners the Planning Commission would be asked to scope each project and decide how deeply it wanted to be involved in each project.

ITEMS OF INTEREST FROM THE PLANNING COMMISSION

The Commissioners observed that the deadline to submit the annual government ethics form had been April 15th.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no other business, Chair Martin adjourned the Planning Commission meeting at approximately 8:20 p.m.

APPROVED:



Robert Martin, Chair



Date