



CITY OF
West Linn

PLANNING COMMISSION
WORK SESSION
Minutes of December 7, 2011

Members present: Chair Robert Martin, Gail Holmes, Holly Miller, Laura Horsey, Christine Steel and Dean Wood
Members absent: Vice Chair Michael Babbitt
Council Liaison: Teri Cummings
Staff present: John Sonnen, Planning Director

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Martin called the meeting to order in the Council Chambers of City Hall at 6:45 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENTS (None)

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Commissioners corrected the draft. Commissioner Horsey **moved** to approve the Minutes of November 2, 2011 as amended. Commissioner Steel **seconded** the motion and it **passed** 5:0.

WORK SESSIONS

Discuss preliminary project docket for 2012 / Identify Planning Commission goals and priorities for 2012

Director Sonnen distributed copies of "Draft Proposed Long-Range Planning Projects for 2012." He asked the Commissioners to go through the list and recommend projects to prioritize. He explained how the list was organized and highlighted new projects such as the parking management project and the historic projects, which had deadlines and had to be done. He anticipated the staff would be able to work on some of the code fixes. He reported the Council tentatively planned to make a decision about Highway 43/Willamette Falls Drive – Phase II in February. The results of the Listening Tour showed it was one of the top five projects. He was asked why the trails master plan was not on the list. He explained it had been taken out of the document because the Planning Department was not the lead on that project. It was a Parks Department project. Commissioner Steel commented that the TSP and the trails plan should be coordinated. Commissioner Holmes wanted to know what type of parking the parking study would look at. Sonnen clarified it would look at all parking within a study area that was not yet defined.

Mr. Sonnen anticipated the staff would be able to work on the code fixes listed under Item 10 - Unrelated, substantive code fixes, and a few of the easier fixes listed under Item 13 – Significant

CDC fixes. The Commissioners asked why there was a project to modify the Mixed Use District. He explained otherwise the zone might not be able to accommodate the new police station without multiple variances. Commissioner Horsey wanted to know if the siting committee had reviewed existing zoning before recommending the police station site. Sonnen advised the issue was not whether the project could be done there, but that it would likely have to have multiple variances.

Director Sonnen asked the Commissioners to go through Item 13 – Significant CDC fixes, and identify which of those fixes to move forward first. The Commissioners highlighted the following projects:

- 13(n) - Reevaluate notice requirements; consider expanding the notice distance. Sonnen agreed to bring back examples of what other jurisdictions did and discuss the different types and costs of notices.
- 13(e) – Consider removing exceptions for the height of places of worship and government buildings. Sonnen agreed to refine the project so it was just focused on office buildings, which did not necessarily have to be taller.
- 13(h) – Amend the sign code to allow blade or projecting signs in the Willamette Falls Commercial District. Sonnen advised the staff could work on a few discrete code changes like that and other relatively easy fixes such as 13(i) which would allow outside restaurant tables to be positioned further out on the sidewalk. He advised that the entire sign code needed to be rewritten, but there were not enough staffing resources to do that next year.
- 13(l) – Consider increasing the number of lots along cul-de-sacs under certain circumstances. Provide specific requirements for retaining walls. The Commission had asked for the cul-de-sac fix in the past. Some large retaining walls had slipped by the staff and the Planning Commission a couple of times during development review.
- 13(m) – Provide opportunities for applicants to offer a fee-in-lieu of certain public improvements, such as sidewalks, where they are appropriate. The staff wanted a fix that would allow the fees to be collected until they could be used to install sidewalk along the entire block. Commissioner Wood suggested it would be logical to allocate the money to the trails plan.
- 13(j) – Refine the submittal requirements for Class II design reviews. That way what the Planning Commission approval required would actually be done.

Director Sonnen then asked the Commissioners to highlight which of the projects numbered 14 through 33 they wanted to move forward.

Item 17 – Organize the Robinwood Commercial Area to participate in the Main Street Program. Commissioner Miller questioned whether this was a City priority. Sonnen clarified the county ran the Main Street program. This project would use county resources and some City planning resources. Commissioner Holmes asked the staff to check on whether Robinwood was eligible to be in the Main Street Program.

Item 21 - Wildlife Habitat Areas, Phase II protection options. Chair Martin suggested the project be to “Create an environmental plan that addresses wildlife, water and the environmental health of West Linn.” He explained that taking a comprehensive look at the ecosystem would help the City avoid the unintended consequences of the piecemeal approach: When development was required to address runoff on site less water flowed into lower level ponds and they dried up. Sonnen related Washington State used the comprehensive approach.

Item 14 - Refine the commercial design regulations. Commissioner Horsey would apply them all along Highway 43. Sonnen related the City Council had directed the staff to work on it and they had been doing related research. Due to limited staffing resources it would likely have to be done concurrently with the first center plan.

Land Use decisions map - Commissioner Wood suggested offering a map showing prospective buyers the land use decisions that had been made on property in commercial zones. He reported the Holiday Inn Express site was for sale and the sign was misleading regarding the amount of buildable area. Sonnen advised that the staff shared preapplication records with and advised potential developers who checked with the City.

Item 27 – Tree protection. Commissioner Horsey wanted to move this item up. Sonnen advised it would not be an easy project to move forward due to the amount of public outreach that would be required.

Item 23 – Update the neighborhood plans.

Item 24 – Prepare Hidden Springs neighborhood plan

Item 25 – Implement neighborhood plans.

The Commissioners wanted to know how Planning Commission decisions could ensure neighborhood plans were implemented. Mr. Sonnen would ask the City Attorney to offer them a refresher regarding the relationship of the code and the Comprehensive Plan.

Sustainability-related projects. Director Sonnen explained the Sustainability Advisory Board was going through the same prioritization process. The SAB had technical staff (1/3 Planning Department FTE) and a budget to work with.

The Commissioners then discussed whether there could be a Planning Commission role in long term planning. They noted the Commission had not been involved in things like siting the police station. Director Sonnen related the planning staff had not been consulted about the police station site until after the site was selected. That was the City's prerogative as a property owner. Commissioner Horsey wanted to know how the Planning Commission could contribute to broader City planning efforts. Sonnen suggested she talk to Mr. Jordan. The Planning Commission took a five minute break. Commissioner Wood left the meeting.

The Commissioners had already identified which Item 13 code fixes they wanted the City to accomplish in 2012. Chair Martin asked each Commissioner to list her/his top projects in the remaining part of the project list.

Top projects among Items 14 - 33

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| Steel | 14 – Refine the commercial design regulations
15 – Overhaul the Mixed Use District
17 – Organize the Robinwood Commercial Area to participate in the Main Street Program |
| Holmes | 17 – Organize the Robinwood Commercial Area to participate in the Main Street Program
15 – Overhaul the Mixed Use District
18 – Overhaul the Sign Code
23, 24, 25 – All the neighborhood related projects |
| Horsey | 14 – Refine the commercial design regulations
17 – Organize the Robinwood Commercial Area to participate in the Main Street Program
27 – Tree protection |
| Miller | 14 – Refine the commercial design regulations
17 – Organize the Robinwood Commercial Area to participate in the Main Street Program
21 – Wildlife Habitat Areas, Phase II – protection options |
| Martin | 14 – Refine the commercial design regulations
18 – Overhaul the Sign Code
21 – Wildlife Habitat Areas, Phase II – protection options |

Chair Martin observed there had been four votes each for Items 14 and 17; and two votes each for Items 18 and 21. Mr. Sonnen planned to relay Planning Commission priorities based on those counts. He would reorganize the list and give it to Chair Martin to verify that the revised document reflected what the Commission wanted to move forward.

Goals for 2012

The City Manager had asked the Planning Commission to list 2011 Accomplishments and 2012 Goals. Director Sonnen would fashion the list of accomplishments. Chair Martin asked the staff to tell the Council that the Commission expected to finish the projects it was working on now and work on the TSP update. The Commissioners considered a potential goal to be more influential in big picture planning, including strategizing, siting and annexations. Sonnen would

ask the City Attorney for advice on conflict of interest. Another goal could be to fulfill its quasi-judicial responsibilities.

The memo asked the Commissioners to list tools for success. They suggested business cards; using planning models to predict growth; help understanding economic development in relation to Highway 43 and help understanding urban renewal. Chair Martin asked the staff to research what training was available to planning commissioners.

The memo asked what the Commission anticipated its greatest challenges or obstacles would be. The Commissioners recalled the challenge that the trails plan got to the Commission before it had been approved by the advisory board. Sonnen commented that the way the Commission handled that was an accomplishment. Commissioner Steel indicated she was still concerned about the process because the Parks director had assembled a team of dissenters without using a public process to select the members. Commissioner Holmes recalled the Commissioners had learned they needed a minority report as well as a majority report.

Commissioner Horsey suggested a separate CCI goal to encourage citizen involvement through the Commissioners' conduct at meetings. They could operate in a manner that set the tone for clarity and inclusion. Commissioner Holmes saw a need to let more people know there was a CCI and what it did.

Director Sonnen would draft the response to the City Manager's memorandum and ask Chair Martin to authorize the final version before it was forwarded to the City Council.

Finalize recommendation to City Council regarding public involvement

Chair Martin related that Vice Chair Babbitt had emailed that he would agree with the letter as it was. The Chair recalled the City Attorney had pointed out the letter did not specify what action the CCI wanted the Council to take. Director Sonnen recalled the meeting with the City Manager. Mr. Jordan had been poised to implement the recommendations through administrative rules. Sonnen suggested sending the letter to the Council and "cc"-ing Mr. Jordan. Chair Martin directed the staff to add language to the effect that Mr. Jordan had suggested the changes could be accomplished through changes in administrative rules and the CCI urged the Council to direct that to happen as soon as possible. They should "cc" Mr. Jordan and send copies of the letter to all who had testified.

ITEMS OF INTEREST FROM THE PLANNING COMMISSION

Commissioner Holmes was concerned about what style the homes built on the remaining lots in Arbor Cove would be and if that could be a problem to the community. Sonnen advised single family homes were not subject to design review.

ITEMS OF INTEREST FROM THE COMMISSION FOR CITIZEN INVOLVMENT

The Commissioners considered a letter from Lynn Fox in which she expressed concerns related to making City documents available at the Library and the lack of documents regarding a recent Metro meeting on Stafford. Chair Martin asked the staff to find out if the City satisfied Goal 1 by making documents available online at the Library instead of on paper. Then they were to respond to Ms. Fox's letter with that information and also explain the City did not participate in the Stafford meeting, Sonnen had just been present to observe it.

ITEMS OF INTEREST FROM STAFF

Director Sonnen had looked into the issue of the boat launch at Maddox Woods. He reported the approval documents authorized the applicant to put it in, but did not require it. Commissioner Steel wanted to know what was happening with the Locks. Sonnen explained it was a federal project. The City only knew what was reported in the newspaper.

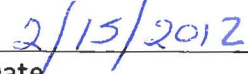
ADJOURNMENT

There being no other business, Chair Martin adjourned the Planning Commission meeting at approximately 10:15 p.m.

APPROVED:



Robert Martin, Chair



Date