



CITY OF  
**West Linn**

PLANNING COMMISSION

**WORK SESSION**

Minutes of February 15, 2012

Members present: Chair Robert Martin, Vice Chair Michael Babbitt, Russell Axelrod, Thomas Frank, Gail Holmes, Holly Miller and Christine Steel

Members absent: None

Council Liaison: Mayor Kovash

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. Each Commissioner talked briefly about his/her background and why he/she wanted to serve on the Commission.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Alice Richmond, 3939 Parker Rd., commended the new Commissioners for participating in making West Linn a positive city.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Commissioner Steel **moved** to approve the Minutes of November 16, 2011 with corrections. Commissioner Babbitt **seconded** the motion and it **passed** 4:0:3. Commissioners Axelrod and Frank and Chair Martin abstained.

Commissioner Babbitt **moved** to approve the Minutes of December 7, 2011 with a correction by Commissioner Steel. Commissioner Steel **seconded** the motion and it **passed** 4:0:3. Commissioners Axelrod and Frank and Vice Chair Babbitt abstained.

**ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

Commissioner Steel **nominated** Michael Babbitt to serve as Chair of the Planning Commission. Commissioner Miller **seconded** the nomination and Chair Babbitt was **elected** by unanimous vote.

Commissioner Steel **declined** to accept a nomination to serve as Vice Chair. Commissioner Steel **nominated** Bob Martin to serve as Vice Chair. Chair Babbitt **nominated** Gail Holmes to serve as Vice Chair. Commissioner Martin explained he preferred to see Ms. Holmes serve as Vice Chair. Chair Babbitt conducted the vote. Mr. Martin received one vote and **Vice Chair Holmes was elected** with four votes.

**ITEMS OF INTEREST FROM THE PLANNING COMMISSION**

Vice Chair Holmes asked for more information about funding the proposed esplanade. Mr. Sonnen advised that \$200,000 in SDCs had been accumulated since 2005 to construct a trail along the river. There is also potential for the proposed esplanade to replace a proposed multi-million dollar Willamette Falls Drive pathway. That route was very constrained and would be expensive to build. Funds otherwise allocated to that project might be used to build an esplanade instead. The esplanade was one of the components of the vision that the City Council had considered and tabled.

The Commissioners generally agreed to Commissioner Martin's suggestion to expose the recommendations of the water resource work group to the public in an informal manner before holding a hearing. That way the Commission could hear a broader range of opinions. After an internal/ legal review the Commission was to hold a work session to review the draft amendments and create a citizen involvement plan.

Commissioner Axelrod wanted to know which version of goals the Commissioners had discussed at the November meeting. Mr. Sonnen indicated the Commissioners had discussed an earlier version in November. After that meeting he had updated the document to reflect what the commission wanted and presented it to the City Council as the January 27, 2012 version. Commissioner Axelrod asked for a copy of the version that had been discussed in November.

Mr. Sonnen related the City Council's priorities. The Council had made economic development its highest priority. It planned to hire someone to guide the creation of economic strategies that would provide for the best use of public resources to facilitate development. It would look at the Highway 43 project through the lens of economic development. Mr. Sonnen was asked if the Council had decided to scrap the Highway 43 project. He said that the Council wanted a technical analysis of what made sense in the light of economic development. The staff was suggesting rolling Highway 43/ Willamette Falls Drive transportation related improvements into the TSP update process. The centers were currently on hold. Commissioner Miller said she found that somewhat disappointing after all the time and energy that had been put into community outreach. Vice Chair Holmes remarked it was wise to fold everything into an economic strategy before deciding what to proceed with. Others hoped the outreach work that had already been done would not be wasted. Mr. Sonnen planned to share their comments with the City Manager.

Mr. Sonnen said that a Council goal called for conducting a feasibility analysis of potential uses of the Blue Heron property and preparing a master plan for the site. Mr. Sonnen noted that the Council had asked for information on urban renewal. He noted that the Planning Commission had previously expressed interest in the topic so he would let the commission know when the presentation was scheduled. The Council decided the community should vote on whether or not the City should build an aquatic center. They also wanted to work on water infrastructure and the police station.

#### **ITEMS OF INTEREST FROM THE COMMISSION FOR CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT**

The Commissioners asked for an update on the CCI memorandum. Mr. Sonnen reported that the City Council had received it and at least one councilor indicated that they support it. The staff had circulated the memorandum to all the participants in the process. Mr. Jordan had held a work session to talk about how to incorporate the suggestions into administrative rules. The Commissioners asked him to follow up and verify that had happened.

#### **ITEMS OF INTEREST FROM STAFF**

Mr. Sonnen advised that the City Attorney would be at the next meeting to answer questions the Commissioners had posed related to bias, conflict of interest, and using the comprehensive plan to interpret code. He offered to alert the Commissioners whenever he heard about training opportunities.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no other business, Chair Babbitt adjourned the Planning Commission meeting at approximately 7:50 p.m.

APPROVED:



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Michael Babbitt, Chair

3-7-12

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Date