



COMMITTEE FOR CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT MEETING NOTES

Thursday, June 7, 2018

5:30 p.m. - Meeting – Rosemont Conference Room

Present: Ken Pryor, Ramiah Ramasubramanian, Gail Holmes, Teri Cummings, and Gary Walvatne.

Citizens Present: None

Staff Present: Darren Wyss

The following meeting notes are a general representation of the discussion. For full meeting content, audio is found under the Committee for Citizen Involvement using the specific meeting date www.westlinnoregon.gov/meetings.

1) Call to Order

Meeting called to order at 5:30 p.m.

2) Public Comments

No members of the public were present.

3) Continued from May 31, 2018 meeting – Planning Process: Continuation of Problem Identification & Topic Review

Chair Pryor introduced the item and discussed a summary of the last meeting. He noted his concern that the executive summary was overly brief and he preferred the history be provided as valued background information. One item of importance was the hiatus taken by the CCI and what led to that change. That important point in history was removed without an adequate replacement. He summarized the concerns he raised in the prior meeting such as providing a resource for citizens to express their concerns, to educate citizens on the development process and to provide an opportunity for citizens to be involved in the land use process. He also spoke to the state land use process that provides a regulatory framework for the City to follow. Member Holmes also provided background of the CCI actions prior to the hiatus. She noted the CCI function to be an independent body on land use issues.

The Committee had a general discussion of past CCI actions. The Committee noted those actions included citizen education.

Member Walvatne arrived at 5:50 pm.

Member Ramasubramanian discussed his concerns with the progress on the development of the draft document. He summarized his comments from the last meeting and noted his dissatisfaction with the answers received. He noted the core points of concern that the CCI should be an independent body from

the City Council. The Committee provided examples of Council members appearing to direct the CCI actions to follow the path they preferred. Chair Pryor considered the CCI review of the land use process and noted that a review of the land use code was delayed. He explained the length of the land use review process. The time taken by the Committee to consider the process, only to become sidetracked on specific issues that further delayed the review. An example was the 120-day process became a guide that distracted the discussion. The goal was to provide problem statements on specific issues, the number of discussions on the 120 day rule became a frustration for the committee due to the distraction from the main points in developing problem statements. The Chair noted they didn't want to have a "check the box" problem statement. The goal was to understand the incremental process, identify the issues, define the problem statements and work toward the summary statements for Council. Member Walvatne noted he participated in all of the training classes. That training provided a better understanding of the issues related to the statewide regulations versus local regulations. Chair Pryor agreed and noted to move forward tonight the best method would be to go through point by point.

Chair Pryor agreed to review his comments and consider each point that he feels is worthy of being presented again to the CCI. He will prepare that material and present it to the Committee at the next meeting. Member Cummings asked about the purpose of the document. The Committee noted it was to define the problem statements and provide the working group the background they needed with adequate information on the issue for them to understand and consider the proposed changes.

Member Ramasubramanian cautioned the direction provided in the document. He valued the role of an independent CCI that would not follow in lock step with Council. The Committee should prepare a document that identifies issues and provides adequate information for a working group to properly evaluate the identified problems. The Committee valued an introductory summary that provided their guidance for the working group to consider. The goal was not to tell the working group what to do or the outcome expected, but that the committee sought to identify their issues and ask that those issues be given special attention.

Chair Pryor provided feedback on the tone at the Neighborhood meetings. There is still general mistrust with the local citizens and city hall. Part of the issue will be resolved with education, other issues will be resolved with citizen input and feedback on the input provided. He noted that was his goal in providing a strong introduction with a clear history of the CCI. He noted it will be a link from the CCI to the work group on issue identification; not define how the solution should be decided but to provide the past struggles that lead to the problems identified.

Member Cummings attempted to resolve some of the issues with the executive summary. She noted who supported the text and those who objected to the text. A compromise was developed as an attempt to bring closure to the issue of the Executive Summary. Member Ramasubramanian noted his ongoing concern about growth of the project scope. Over the months the scope of the project has changed and appears to have grown. As the project moves to its conclusion, he hopes the process becomes clear and is consistently applied. The committee continued the extensive discussion of the executive summary. The general concern was a goal to limit the solution development versus allowing for some solutions as guidance to the working group. Overall the committee concurred that flexibility is sought to provide the committee the information they need to process complex issues.

Chair Pryor considered how to address process changes in the report. He noted in his experience, the best process was to educate the workgroup and the public. His experience in the private sector differed to the logic followed in this report. The report was designed to avoid developing solutions to the identified problem statements. As the committee reviewed the final draft, certain statements were found to provide a mixed message. Chair Pryor felt the report should be clear and not so limited that the message originally proposed is lost.

The Committee reviewed statements on the conduct of the neighborhood meetings and the pre-

application conference meetings. The problem statement identified that the conferences are to educate the applicant on the process. However, the issue is an education; for the applicant and for the public. Providing a message to limit feedback in these meetings at the same time as a message of promoting citizen involvement is a mixed message. Chair Pryor felt the comments were from the applicant's perspective. He preferred a more balanced approach to the outreach. Member Holmes noted it should be for the applicant, but the feedback has to be more balanced to consider those attending the conference to learn the process.

Chair Pryor volunteered to review the Executive Summary and provide edits for consideration by the committee at the next meeting. Member Holmes volunteered to review the document and provide her comments as edits to the document. The Committee discussed the value of the neighborhood meetings, the concerns raised and how their issues are incorporated and any feedback provided by the decision maker in the land use process. Chair Pryor noted there are still inconsistencies in the draft document that are either confusing or misleading. More cleanup is needed before the document is ready for publication. He asked for members to complete their own review and identify quick changes that may be needed.

Member Ramasubramanian noted that the scope of the project has changed over the past year. He again noted the difficulty of addressing how to review comments raised by members. He asserted that time would have been saved if there was clear direction from Council on the CCI's role and goals for this project. Member Walvatne provided examples from the Planning Commission, as they have learned their role; the ability to process decisions as a group improved.

4) Member Comments

Chair Pryor asked for comments from the membership.

Member Ramasubramanian noted after the last meeting he reflected on the six months he has spent as a member of the committee. He asked what was achieved during this time and was discouraged. He is frustrated at the time it takes to complete any process. In addition, he believes the goal of the CCI being an independent commission has not been met. He believes that one or two individuals are dominating the path of the committee. He explained that much of his free time has been dedicated to the CCI. He was frustrated that those who dominate the committee did not dedicate time to their committee assignments. In addition, he has noted that committee assignments are not being taken seriously. The CCI presence is not separated on the city website. The draft of the meeting notes have not been provided on the website. He asked why staff have not been following council policy. He is concerned that the staff do not follow instructions. He asked what staff is doing. He understands that the committee cannot direct staff. Then staff should have clear direction on the tasks they should be directed to do. He asked members to review audio files and consider all the policy statements that staff makes. He concluded that staff roles should be more defined. He believes the professionalism of the committee needs to change. During the six months, the culture has not changed at all. He believes, when he listened to the last week discussion; the Mayor was visibly angry. He does not think he should not suffer the Mayors anger. He believes there are serious differences between the audio files and the written meeting notes. He asked for a clock to time members and assure that each member has time to speak, but that also did not happen. He noted when he comes here to spend time, he is deciding not to spend time on other responsibilities he has. There is not an appreciation for the time he has spent. He believes last week was a red line, he did not appreciate the Mayors anger. He decided to resign and asked the Chair forward his letter to the mayor.

Member Cummings asked if he would be willing to sit with the Mayor. He noted that his legitimate points were not considered by the Mayor. Instead he believes that history was rewritten by the mayor. Further, that the Mayor imposed his role on the committee impacting the independent function of the CCI. He noted the comments he provided were thoughtful, his comments were specific and that Councilors generally were driving the process. Specifically, he believes Mayor Axelrod and Councilor Martin led the

way on the CCI. His focus from the start was the CCI be independent from Council and instead he found it was dominated by Council. Finally, he expressed a concern that when published reports attacked the CCI, the Council did not come to their defense. He volunteered for the CCI hoping to do something positive for the city. Instead he received negative feedback and felt the committee has lost its validity. He noted no interest in any mediation, his decision was made and final.

Member Cummings asked that members reach out if they do not feel heard or if they have concerns. She appreciated Member Ramasubramanian's dedication to the independence of the watchdog role for the CCI and his focus on this vision. She appreciated the comments and then noted that Council does have a strong role on this independent committee. She hoped he would reconsider that position. Member Ramasubramanian stated that at this six-month period he has nothing to show for his work and noted this group's leadership, and the leadership from Council supporting this concept is missing. He reviewed carefully his decision and is comfortable with the decision he made. In the end, his role and ability to question as an independent CCI has been stifled.

Member Cummings noted she had a similar frustration. Her goal is to distill the document and complete the project, which is to improve the land use process. Member Ramasubramanian noted the core question is the independence of the CCI. He felt it was an extension of Council.

Chair Pryor noted the process is difficult and there were two changes made that he found important. The changes to DeNovo was an important change to the CDC and second the flow chart was an important aide that improved the understanding of the process. Member Cummings asked Member Ramasubramanian again to sit with the Mayor and have a conversation and he declined based on the previously stated reasons. He thanked the members for welcoming him and his time on the committee. Member Cummings asked him to submit not only his concerns but his suggestions on the needed changes.

5) Adjourn

Meeting was adjourned at 7:25. The next meeting, Tuesday June 19, 2018, at 5:30 p.m. and will be held in the Rosemont Room located in City Hall.