

PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Monday, February 8, 2016

6:00 PM

MEMBERS PRESENT: Hoy-Rhodehamel, Ashley, Morris, Anderson, Van Pelt

Mary Repar

6:02

Preliminary Matters

Ashley opens the meeting and assumes chair duties.

1. OFFICER ELECTIONS **Morris** nominated **Anderson** as Planning Commission Chair. Seconded by **Hoy-Rhodehamel**. Unanimously approved
Hoy Rhodehamel nominated **Morris** as Planning Commission Vice Chair and **Ashley** seconded. Unanimously approved.

Anderson assumes chair duties after election.

2. CHAIR SELECTS PUBLIC COMMENT OPTION #2
3. MINUTES: **Hoy-Rhodehamel** moved and **Van Pelt** seconded approval of January 11, 2016 Meeting Minutes. Unanimously approved.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Repar made a comment on proposal for roads made by Public Works at the last City Council meeting. She stated she has an issue with the way it was presented in regards to how a driveway and private road are constructed and evaluated. She stated she does not feel comfortable with an outside developer submitting proposals instead of a community member. **Repar** stated developers should have less of a say and there should be more comment from the public and she does not want to see another subdivision being left unoccupied. **Van Pelt** agreed stating there is a problem when others are moving to Camas or White Salmon and not to Stevenson. **Shumaker** explained that there is no statutory requirement in place for Planning Commission to review Public Works standards, but they could request more public involvement before adopting rules. He suggested the Planning Commission could write a letter to City Council wanted to provide their input on the issue.

New Business

5. TRAINING & GUIDANCE **Shumaker** presented an Attorney General training on Open Public Meetings Act and asked for guidance on the public involvement strategies the Planning Commission uses.

The training was based on RCW 42.30-Open Public Meetings Act. He said it is key to understand their responsibilities as stewards of the public trust. **Shumaker** focused the early part of the presentation on knowing what a “meeting” is and what an “action” is. He said these concepts are liberally construed and include any discussion between three Planning Commission members on Planning Commission topics. He noted how hard it is for them to avoid three of them gathering together in such a small town, but stressed the need to avoid discussing City business when they do. He indicated that that business can only be discussed at regular meetings which have been established by ordinances/resolutions so the public knows what time and date a meeting will be taking place or special meetings after staff conducts the publication/notification procedures necessary to hold them. **Shumaker** talked about the public sign-in sheet and that only those who choose to speak at the meeting are required to sign-in, others can attend the meeting but we cannot force them to sign in. Disruptions and executive sessions were discussed and **Shumaker** said dealing with disruptions will be the topic of a future training. **Shumaker** described the \$100 penalty for violating the Open Public Meetings Act and noted the recent effort to increase that penalty to \$500.

Shumaker said the handouts set the stage for the Planning Commission to set their own expectations for public involvement strategies and referred them to the past practices of establishing a public involvement plan when the issues are first characterized. He asked what feedback on whether that process is effective. He also asked if there was any input on past meetings and how they can be improved upon.

Hoy-Rhodehamel stated her grievances with the same message being repeated over and over again during the Vacation Rentals workshops, she asked if there could be a possibility of getting a lot of feedback from the public in the beginning. She suggested letting the word get out and have feedback from public percolate after workshops/meetings. **Repar** stated some people will not come to the end because of word of mouth. **Van Pelt** asked if friends could be asked to attend the meeting if something in particular is of interest. **Shumaker** said it is more than OK to have friends come to the meetings and also encourages the group to have people contact him for information in advance of meetings. **Van Pelt** felt that during the vacation rental workshops it was being steered by one or two people who had a lot of input but not necessarily reflective of the whole community’s interest. **Repar** felt that the information being discussed is not specifically laid out on the website and most of the public do not see it, they get notified by friends or family. She felt that people should be heard and it may spare the group heartache later because by the time people start to participate, they are more passionate about the agenda items. She encouraged the use of press releases to the paper when items require community input. **Anderson** suggested placing information in the first part of the paper and as much information as possible. **Anderson** also talked about the anticipation that preceded the Downtown Traffic meetings held by the City Council and felt it led to successful and fruitful discussions. **Shumaker** compared the Planning Commission’s Vacation Rentals public involvement strategies to the one for Chickens. One was far more involved (questionnaires, workshops) based on the strategies selected early in the policy update process. He felt it’s important for the group to choose the path in which to take and evaluate how

effective the different options are. He said it's important to figure out different ways of getting information out there and utilizing the newspaper. He said perhaps Facebook might be an option as well.

Old Business

6. 2016 WORK PLAN

Shumaker described possible topics for the 2016 Commission Work Plan. Regarding the Parking Code update he said the Portland State University students denied the project so we might need to consider consultant support. **Anderson** stated he has some trepidation in regards to making a qualified recommendations on the Lot Line Issues and requested training. He asked **Shumaker** if he could present information via the Powerpoint that was put together a few years ago. **Anderson** wanted to review the parking issues because people with property are willing to invest but the amount of parking that's required currently is restrictive. He said it makes Stevenson not look friendly to development. **Anderson** stated one potential solution would be to adopt a two or five year moratorium for parking requirements. **Shumaker** talked about the increased supply of parking compared to when the current regulations were adopted. Places like 1st Street and Cascade Avenue have significantly added to the supply, but we aren't sure what the current demand is. He then referenced the numerous approaches the City could take, including tradeoffs when other amenities are provided. **Shumaker's** approach to the update would involve re-inventorying the parking supply and developing a usage model that can be used to evaluate policies. **Anderson** stated parking should take place right away with proper training and presentations done by Staff to help familiarize the group with subject matter.

Shumaker stated the Zoning Code needs to be modernized, however it is not the content but the format. He suggested better use of tables to make it easier for everyone to read the code. **Anderson** asked if a chart would be a substitute for text. **Shumaker** confirmed and said it helps remove much of the legalese that frustrates people. He also said that the Zoning Code reformat could a way for the Planning Commission to still accomplish something while they take a less public role than they took during the overnight lodging issue. He reiterated it is not policy setting but reformatting.

Reaper asked what the plan was for beautifying Stevenson with flowers. She stated through the Grange they are planning on planting bulbs. She suggested hiring a landscape architect as review the whole of downtown rather than just parts. Native planting would be key for landscaping. **Anderson** stated Stevenson Business Association is working with the City Administrator to beautify Stevenson. He stated there are planter areas throughout Stevenson and there has been talk about refreshing what is already there. **Anderson** said it is important to understand that upkeep on landscaping is a continuous job.

Anderson said there has been a person hired as the Main Street Program Coordinator and the Planning Commission's Work Plan should try to advance some of what that person is putting together for the National Main Street Program. There is a tax credit for being a part of the National Main Street Program. The coordinator looks at Highway 14 and Russell St. and sees what can be done to make Stevenson interesting and exciting. He is also putting in efforts for fundraising for the Stevenson Park Plaza. **Anderson** stated the lines are blurring between downtown and the waterfront and the

City and Ports efforts are starting to come together. He said there are some really great plans to revitalize downtown. He pointed out that webinars are great examples of getting everyone on the same page and moving in the same direction. He said he would like to see movement by the Economic Development Council to put a strategic plan in place. **Shumaker** suggested the early part of 2016 to be training heavy with coalition being built on the parking project.

Anderson felt the critical areas update is important to keep on the work plan for later in the year and the parking project should be talked about in conjunction with the Stevenson Park Plaza. He stated he feels it is a multiple month project. **Shumaker** talked about the labor needed to gather data for the parking plan and his hope to engage the Stevenson Business Association to help with that effort. **Van Pelt** agreed and stated the code is old and currently it is economically impossible to go in and develop. **Ashley** felt that parking needs to be addressed. **Morris** asked why the traffic issues were not started with the Planning Commission. **Van Pelt** stated truck traffic should be a priority over anything else on the Work Plan. **Morris** agreed and stated he feels there needs to be a joint effort with City Council. He felt it would be great to work together in designing the way traffic flows, getting the public involved and determining whether or not the roads should be one or two way. **Anderson** discussed the tax structure benefits for trucks to use 14. **Morris** said WSDOT's primary purpose is to get people from point A to B and said the City needs to step up to determine how those people can get through town in the safest way possible. He reiterated that he felt Planning Commission should be more involved in the process in joining forces with City Council. **Shumaker** asked what involvement the Commission would like to see and offered to write a letter to the City Council. He was unsure what the points the letter should make and sought direction from the Commission. **Shumaker** described the letter from last year regarding the Emergency responders on 1st Street and the Commission's need for traffic analysis when it reviews development as a quasi-judicial body. He said a traffic study has not been done and is not in the budget for 2016. **Morris** asked saw an opportunity to address traffic patterns as part of the parking discussion. **Shumaker** agreed that it was highly inter-related. **Repar** said there has been many public meetings and involvement in the process already and it would be hard for the Planning Commission to take over in the middle of that. **Morris** said if the Commission were to write a letter he said it should certainly detail the interconnections between the parking project and the traffic issue. He offered that the Commission is seeking direction or involvement and is available to hold workshops in 2016 to discuss both issues. **Shumaker** asked if Morris has support from his fellow Commissioners. **Van Pelt** and **Ashley** both agreed to support the letter. **Repar** asked how the Planning Commission plans to approach it differently than what the City Council has already done. **Van Pelt** said the Commission could be one more group to help and come at the issue differently. **Morris** said City Council has not discussed how parking and traffic issue are inter-related. He said the letter would first state the problem, secondly to ask for direction and to be included in the problem solving part of it. **Anderson** said he does not see how it is inter-related. **Hoy-Rhodehamel** agreed. **Morris** said parallel parking does not provide enough parking as angled parking does. **Shumaker** stated that the supply vs demand study for parking could

easily justify the need to switch to diagonal parking, but it could also reveal that it is not needed. **Anderson** stated that might be a good way to remind City Council that Planning Commission is willing and able to help if issues come up in reviewing parking.

Shumaker summarized what he heard about the 2016 Work Plan: Training, Shoreline, Parking and if possible, Zoning Code. He stated towards the end of the year Critical Areas, and Conditional Use reviews in October.

Staff Reports

7. VERBAL REPORTS:

Shumaker updated the group with the status of Cascade Avenue Quiet Zone which will go into effect on February 29th.

Discussion

8. COMMISSIONERS' UPDATES **Ashley** said Mardi Gras Benefit for the music program at the school will take place at the FOE on February 20th.

9. THOUGHT OF THE MONTH: None.

10. PERMIT UPDATE

Adjournment - 8:10 PM

Approved _____; Approved as Amended _____

Scott Anderson, Chair
Minutes by Sofia Urrutia-Lopez

Date: