

DRAFT Minutes
Stevenson Planning Commission Meeting

Monday, February 13, 2023

6:00 PM

MEMBERS PRESENT

Planning Commission Chair Jeff Breckel, Commissioners Auguste Zettler, Davy Ray, Charles Hales, Anne Keesee

STAFF PRESENT

Community Development Director Ben Shumaker, Planning & Public Works Assistant Tiffany Anderson

PUBLIC PRESENT

James & Sharon Joan Hatten, Mary Repar, Rick Jessel, Glenn Damon, Mr. & Mrs. Sciacca

Chair Jeff **Breckel** called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Preliminary Matters

1. Public Comment Expectations

Breckel welcomed everyone. He asked Community Development Director Ben **Shumaker** to provide participants information on providing public comments. He explained the tools to use for remote participants: *6 to mute/unmute & *9 to raise hand. Commenters must raise their hand and be acknowledged by the Chair. Individual comments may be limited to 3 minutes.

2. Public Comment Period

(For items not located elsewhere on the agenda)

>Mary Repar commented on water rates, housing needs, street trees.

3. Chair Annual Elections

Breckel opened nominations for the positions of Chair and Vice-Chair.

Commissioner **Zettler** nominated Breckel for the Planning Commission Chair position for 2023. Commissioner **Hales** seconded.

Commissioner **Keesee** nominated **Zettler** for the Planning Commission Vice-Chair position for 2023. **Breckel** seconded.

No additional nominations were provided.

Following the nominations **Breckel** called for a vote to approve the nominees as presented: Breckel for the position of Planning Commission Chair and Auguste Zettler to the position of Planning Commission Vice-Chair.

- Voting aye: Breckel, Ray, Zettler, Hales, Keesee.

4. December 12th, 2022 Minutes

MOTION to approve the minutes from the December 12th, 2022 Planning Commission Meeting as presented was made by **Hales**, seconded by Commissioner **Ray**.

- Voting aye: Breckel, Ray, Zettler, Hales, Keesee.

New Business

5. Parking Determination

Unstaffed Utility or Communication Facility

Shumaker requested the Stevenson Planning Commission determine the number of parking spaces required for a “Utility or Communication Facility”. This request is made by Planning Department staff in anticipation of several permit requests from the Stevenson Public Works Department for this type of use.

Issue: In SMC 17.42.090, the Zoning Code currently lists a number of use classifications and the corresponding parking requirement for each use. Requirements for the Utility or Communication Facility use are not listed. The Planning Commission is given the authority to determine the parking requirement for uses that are not specified.

Following a brief discussion, the Planning Commission concluded the following:

Findings

1. The Planning Commission supports the Comprehensive Plan’s objectives related to minimizing the impacts of development and to facilitating efficient short-term parking and minimizing off-street parking requirements.
2. When impacts of parking at Unstaffed Utility or Communication Facilities occur, they are minimal, intermittent and short in duration.

Determination

For the purpose of SMC 17.42.090, “Table of Minimum Standards—Off-Street Parking”, the Planning Commission determined Utility or Communication Facilities (Unstaffed) do not require any spaces in any district.

MOTION to adopt the determination as presented was made by **Zettler**, seconded by **Keesee**.

- Voting aye: Breckel, Ray, Zettler, Hales, Keesee.

Old Business

6. Subcommittee Reports

Shoreline Access, Downtown Parking, Annexation Policy

Shoreline Access. **Ray** reported he is reviewing the current plan and will be attending meetings on Wednesday and Thursday. **Shumaker** shared the consultants have been busy analyzing the current shoreline environment to determine where gaps are occurring. He added a stakeholder open house would be held on Wednesday, February 15th, 2023 at the Stevenson Community Library from 5-7 p.m. The following morning (Thursday) there will be a focus group at 10 a.m. to review the meeting results. Outreach to the public has taken place via mailers, social media, newspaper announcements and postings at City Hall. Stakeholders include shoreline property

owners, recreationalists and others with an interest in accessing the local shorelines.

Shumaker has been meeting with Shoreline property owners and has been sharing feedback with the consultants. The shorelines under evaluation are along Rock Creek, Rock Cove and the Columbia River. He confirmed trails are still a part of the discussion, and Skamania County and Port of Skamania County are both involved. He offered a brief explanation of the state's requirements for a Shoreline Access Plan as well as what it will provide to Stevenson regarding identification of access points and budgeting guidance for capital improvements.

Downtown Parking. Keesee was unable to attend a recent City Council workshop that addressed parking. She asked **Shumaker** to provide information. He noted the pending approach to parking regulations will likely be more comprehensive, with more of an effort to develop solutions. Finding a way to balance the impact less onsite parking will have on overnight street parking will involve working with Public Works.

Costing out a parking improvement plan would provide a way to determine the value of a parking space. An in-lieu parking fund paid via developers is under consideration, as is re-striping to capture additional space, relocating fire hydrants, and development of a municipal lot. **Shumaker** provided an example of switching the parking lane to the north side of Vancouver Avenue. This is possible, but the expected increase in traffic along Russell and Second Street would need to be evaluated.

Zettler and **Breckel** both commented acquiring a lot would add substantial expense and time to any project. **Hales** spoke to his experience in various sized cities and suggested a reasonable inventory of parking sites leads to people figuring it out.

>Repar stated home driveways need to be sized appropriately to prevent vehicles from encroaching onto sidewalks or streets.

Shumaker noted the parking study performed last September did not identify a significant demand for parking. Commissioners suggested July may be a better time for a survey to gain additional data.

Annexation Policy. Hales reported he is not sure where the collaboration the County stands currently but that City Councilmember Michael Johnson is interested in participating.

Shumaker advised the county Planning Department is experiencing staffing changes which may be affecting communication. He went on to say the sub-committee is looking to better understand what densities are permitted inside and outside City limits. He stated work is being done with the city's GIS consultants to get the base mapping in place and develop some draft material for use in comparisons.

Hales and **Breckel** suggested a working group be formed to connect with Skamania County to lay out the steps for working together.

Breckel agreed with the need for basic information. He stated it is also important to get an understanding of the physical characteristics of the land and how it is being currently used. He shared the importance of being aware of the cost annexation of low-density parcels can bring to a city. (Hales' internet connection was then lost.)

Discussion

7. Staff & Commission Reports

Planning & Public Works Assistant. Tiffany Anderson was welcomed as the new Planning and Public Works Assistant. She introduced herself and provided details on her background and experience.

Broadband. Shumaker reported broadband is on the City Council's priority list. A number of opportunities have come up, including technical assistance grants from Washington state; large increases in federal funding through the recent Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, and programs and tech assistance from WSU Extension to determine the existing infrastructure in place for broadband delivery and how/if residents can access it.

Breckel spoke of rural communities and their need for broadband service. He likened it to a necessary utility much like electricity because of its use in shopping, medical care, education, services and other daily activities.

>Repar commented on the need for a public utility that provides reliable, affordable and consistent internet connectivity.

Permit Applications & Systems. Fully updated planning permit applications are on the city's website in advance of changing to more online options to increase efficiency. The city is in a partnership with Skamania County for building official services. Getting the intake protocols aligned will reduce Andersen's workload as the applications can only be submitted when complete. **Breckel** pointed out it will help clarify what information the public needs to complete a permit.

East Loop Road Water & Street Project. State gas tax grant funds have been awarded to address several road projects, including East Loop Road where a water line replacement will also be completed.

8. Thought of the Month

Zoning Reform Discussion.

<https://www.planning.org/podcast/arbitrary-lines-author-nolan-gray-on-zoning-reform-and-hitting-plannings-reset-button/>

Adjournment

MOTION to adjourn at 7:24 p.m. was made by Commissioner Keesee, seconded by Commissioner Zettler. No objections.

Minutes recorded by Johanna Roe