



MINUTES

(Approved on 01-15-2020)

TIME: Wednesday, December 18, 2019, 5:00 p.m.

PLACE: Council Chambers, 1st Floor, Tacoma Municipal Building
747 Market Street, Tacoma, WA 98402

PRESENT: Anna Petersen (Chair), Jeff McInnis (Vice-Chair), Carolyn Edmonds, Ryan Givens, David Horne, Christopher Karnes, Brett Santhuff, Alyssa Torrez

ABSENT: Andrew Strobel

A. CALL TO ORDER AND QUORUM CALL

Chair Petersen called the meeting to order at 5:02 p.m. A quorum was declared.

B. APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

The agenda for the meeting was amended to postpone Discussion Item D2 – Residential Infill Pilot Program 2.0 to a January meeting, in order to allow adequate time for staff to prepare materials responding to recent questions and discussion.

The agenda was approved as amended.

The minutes for the December 4, 2019 meeting was approved as submitted.

C. PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

D. DISCUSSION ITEMS

1. Human Rights Commission Collaboration on Housing Issues

Elliott Barnett, Planning Services Division, provided background information and reasoning for the collaboration between the Planning Commission and the Human Rights Commission. He also proposed a preliminary scope of work to the Commission, which consisted of the scoping process, communication strategy, analysis of current circumstances, proposal development, and implementation strategies.

From the joint session at the last meeting, there was significant interest in having a broad and inclusive communication strategy, improving communication between the two Commissions, and doing a policy analysis of equitable access to opportunity. The Commissions had discussed creating a joint task force, for which staff was requesting a motion to designate a number of Commissioners to. Mr. Barnett also asked for direction on how the Commission would like to structure the task force.

Additionally, Mr. Barnett noted that there were also other communities exploring the connection between growth strategies and equity. He went on to provide examples from an analysis in Minneapolis, i.e. increased housing cost vs. impact on low-income households and household's race vs. income level.

The joint task force would work with staff and consultants throughout the proposed stages to arrive at recommendations, which would be reported back to the two Commissions. The Commissions would be the official bodies to make recommendations to the City Council. Afterward, the task force could continue to advocate for the recommendations and serve as liaison to the community.

Commissioner Karnes made a motion that: "The Planning Commission establishes a housing equity task force jointly with the Human Rights Commission to provide focused input on equity and social justice issues as part of upcoming housing policy initiatives. The Planning Commission concurs with the preliminary scope of work for the task force as presented with the understanding that the scope of work substantially establishes duties and responsibilities of the task force and is subject to modification, and designates four Commissioners as the Commission's representatives to the joint housing equity task force." The motion was seconded by Commissioner Santhuff.

Vice-Chair McInnis, in reference to the tentative workload of the Commission in 2020, noted that both staff and Commissioners should be attentive to the quality of work, rather than the quantity.

The motion to establish the task force passed unanimously.

Chair Petersen volunteered to serve on the task force. So did Commissioner Torrez and Commissioner Karnes. Commissioner Givens indicated that he would like to help with the public engagement but refrained from fully committing to the task force.

2. VISION 2050

Ian Munce, Planning Services Division, began by providing context of the VISION 2050 plan to the Commission. VISION 2050 is a regional plan being developed by the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC), a regional planning body with leadership comprised of representatives from local jurisdictions that it serves including the City of Tacoma. It is also a continuation and update to the existing VISION 2040 plan.

The regional plan helps regulate the comprehensive plan at each local jurisdiction. The City of Tacoma's Comprehensive Plan has been well aligned with the VISION 2040. Staff has provided comments on the draft VISION 2050 plan, which is scheduled to be adopted in May 2020. Once that happens, the City's Comprehensive Plan might need some adjustments to remain consistent with the regional plan to obtain certification and secure transportation and other funding.

VISION 2050 is focused on growing along transit, which poses the question of whether to up-zone first for transit to hopefully follow later or to build transit first. The City is in favor of the transit-focused approach. VISION 2050 also has significant changes about climate change.

Commissioner Karnes asked for clarification on the growth allocation for the County and City, as well as the agreement between PSRC and Pierce County.

Vice-Chair McInnis inquired about economic opportunities for people to move to Tacoma, specifically what was being done to create more jobs in Tacoma and Pierce County. In the past five years, many companies have moved to the east side of Seattle and taken the jobs with them. Mr. Munce responded that cheaper properties or housing did not seem to help decentralize jobs. He, then, stated that the Tidelands areas held thirteen percent of vacant or underutilized land in the region, providing opportunities for family-wage manufacturing jobs.

3. Links to Opportunity

Mr. Munce wanted to start with the regional context that led to the Links to Opportunity project. In alignment with its focus of growing along transit, the PSRC received some funding from the federal government for a growing transit community initiative, leading them to give \$500,000 to the City for the Downtown Subarea

Plan. The City also secured \$2 million out of \$20 million nationally to do the streetscape design on Hilltop, which was not covered in the Hilltop Tacoma Link Extension project. Mr. Munce went on to explain the extensive foundational work that helped the City obtain the fund and the community's support.

Commissioner Santhuff was excited to see the projects moving forward and praised the renderings provided in the packet. He appreciated the fact that businesses (i.e. cafés, restaurants, etc.) with sidewalk seatings were envisioned, and would like to streamline the permit process for such businesses to occupy the sidewalk. Commissioner Santhuff also commented that the Martin Luther King (MLK) area had a lot of rich architecture and signage with character; he wanted to make sure that they are preserved and taken into consideration with the streetscape design.

Commissioner Edmonds was pleased with the building frontage designation and the idea of using parking spots in the summer, which would encourage community interactions. She also hoped that Mr. Munce would remain available to the City in his retirement.

Commissioner Karnes expressed interest in finding ways to integrate other local transits into the Tacoma Link extension project to improve mobility. Mr. Munce suggested having Pierce Transit provide update on what they had been doing and what they could commit.

Commissioner Givens inquired about the possibility of a project that would impact the streetscape and if there was any pattern book or plan to provide to the developers in such situation. Mr. Munce explained that staff was coordinating existing projects with the design to continue the theme. Brian Boudet, Planning Services Division Manager, also noted that, according to the design manuals, new infrastructures would be required to meet standards if the area had specific streetscape plans.

Commissioner Horne asked if there was any emphasis on sustainability or using sustainable materials referenced in the VISION 2050 plan. The City has a separate task force working on those issues.

Commissioner Karnes asked about the timeline of the project phasing, specifically regarding construction and whether it was scheduled to be prior to the opening of the Hilltop Link extension. Mr. Munce explained that the funding took two years to get authorization, which subsequently delayed the progress. The intent would be to coordinate and carry out the projects at once, but it was difficult to say.

E. TOPICS OF THE UPCOMING MEETING

- 1) 2020 Amendment – Minor Plan and Code Amendments
- 2) Affordable Housing Action Strategy
- 3) Infill Pilot Program 2.0

F. COMMUNICATION ITEMS

The Commission acknowledged receipt of communication items on the agenda.

Mr. Boudet indicated that it was Mr. Munce's last meeting before retirement and expressed appreciation for his work for the City at all levels.

In reference to Commissioner Santhuff's comment on the MLK area, Mr. Boudet indicated that there was a growing effort from the Historic Preservation Office to preserve its character. The Dome District also had a similar issue of transit development and historic buildings. Some ideas within district levels were being explored.

Regarding street cafés, there was a lot of discussion on the subject, stemming from the pilot project with McMenamins. The City Council has a lot of interest in promoting street cafés and making the permit process easier for them.

Mr. Boudet also responded to Commissioner Karnes' question on the Hilltop connection to transit. There would be an opportunity in February or March to have Pierce Transit come back to the Commission to provide a status and solicit feedback on their Long Range Plan.

Moving forward, on top of the Tideflats Subarea Plan, the Pacific Avenue Corridor Plan would begin in the next few months after the onboarding of staff and consultants. Mr. Boudet noted that there would be a significant increase in the Commission's and staff's workload. On that note, he thanked the Commission for their work in the past year, especially for the extra community outreach and open houses in association with the 2019 Annual Amendment and other major projects.

Mr. Boudet also mentioned that staff would arrange lunch meetings for individual Commissioners with senior staff in January and February.

G. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:07 p.m.

****These minutes are not a direct transcription of the meeting, but rather a brief capture. For full-length audio recording of the meeting, please visit:***

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