



MINUTES

(Approved on 12-18-2019)

TIME: Wednesday, December 4, 2019, 5:00 p.m.

PLACE: Room 243, Tacoma Municipal Building, 2nd Floor
747 Market Street, Tacoma, WA 98402

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

Human Rights Commission: Allen Ratcliffe, Ronita Boult, Lisa Snyder, Sara Rumbaugh

ABSENT: Brett Santhuff

A. CALL TO ORDER AND QUORUM CALL

Chair Petersen called the meeting to order at 5:04 p.m., declaring the special location of this meeting – Room 243, and that the first Discussion Item on Housing Justice Policy would be a joint session with the Human Rights Commission (HRC).

A quorum was declared.

B. APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

The agenda for the meeting was approved; and the minutes for the November 20, 2019 meeting was approved as submitted.

C. PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

D. DISCUSSION ITEMS

1. HRC-PC Joint Session on Housing Justice Policy

Elliott Barnett, Planning Services Division, began by introducing Andreta Armstrong, staff liaison for the Human Rights Commission (HRC), and provided background information on the initiative, noting that it was a request by Councilmember Beale. Mr. Barnett and Ms. Armstrong described each of their respective Commission. The Planning Commission makes recommendations to the City Council regarding land use, zoning, development and such; the HRC enforces anti-discrimination law and investigates discriminatory cases, as well as advises the City Council on discrimination matters.

The objectives of this meeting were to define the problems on inequity and collaboratively come up with recommendations to resolve them. The first step was to identify areas of focus on which both Commissions would like to collaborate.

Mr. Barnett showed a video produced by the Office of Equity and Human Rights discussing historical discrimination, particularly redlining, in Tacoma. The link to the video was provided in the agenda packet. Following the video, Mr. Barnett briefly explained the equity framework in the City's Comprehensive Plan,

which would serve as policy direction for staff to integrate into their work. He went on present the Equity Index, an analytical tool to determine accessibility to opportunity based on various factors. Also presented were the Tacoma's growth vision map, and two initiatives (Diverse Housing Types and Inclusionary Zoning) from the Affordable Housing Actions Strategy. Mr. Barnett described what the initiatives meant and what they could do in terms of housing equity. Then, he proceeded to go over ideas that the Commissions could use to increase equity as part of the overall scope of work. He also gave a timeline the project, starting with scoping in 2020 and the Commissions could expect to make recommendation to the City Council in 2021, which would call for policy and code changes thereafter. In conclusion, Mr. Barnett proposed potential areas of collaboration and approach options, then invited feedback and direction from the Commissions for next step.

Vice-Chair McInnis asked for more information on how the HRC operated and how they worked with Ms. Armstrong's team. The HRC looks into cases of discrimination and current issues such as healthcare, domestic violence, gender-neutral bathrooms, etc. The Commission typically splits into smaller task forces that would each be responsible for a specific issue. Ms. Armstrong added that, as a commission, the HRC worked on both individual cases and broader community issues including redlining. Vice-Chair McInnis also expressed interest in seeing data that the HRC had that might prove illuminating to the Planning Commission (PC) and in collaborating on public outreach.

Commissioner Givens wanted to conduct surveys on housing preferences to get a better understanding of what people looked for and, in turn, help make better recommendations on the subject.

Commissioner Ratcliffe (HRC) preferred a full partnership rather than an advisory or partial one. He also stated that he would like the collaboration to be more than "a token of involvement."

Commissioner Boultt (HRC) would like to see transitional and re-entry houses to be included in the Inclusionary Zoning action. There are individuals in the homeless community that are working but cannot afford a home. In addition to the lack of housing stock, zoning in the single-family zones also makes it more difficult for the homeless and people who had been in prison or institution to sustain a home and improve quality of life.

Commissioner Strobel suggested having cross-liaison staff or including updates on what other Commissions were working on, to diversify perspectives and remind Commissioners to look through another "lens" while making policy recommendations.

Commissioner Horne concurred with Commissioner Strobel, and added that he would like more technical analyses and supporting information to understand what they meant; for instance, what it meant for an area to have a low equity index, how zoning decisions would affect it and where to focus growth to increase equity.

Commissioner Torrez expressed her excitement for the coming HRC-PC collaboration and was interested in serving on the task force. She also supported the idea of the PC expanding their community engagement.

Commissioner Karnes wanted to look into the barriers that affected the Equity Index and how to connect people in those areas with the missing resources. He also wanted to survey perspectives from different demographics such as immigrants, seniors, students, etc.

Commissioner Edmonds commented on the equity and accessibility issue of homeownership, which she believed should be a component of the discussion on equity. She elaborated that low priced houses were scarce on the market as they would be sold very quickly, which did not give those that might need extra time a chance to compete. Another issue was homeowners who tried to sell their house but could not afford to fix up the house ending up selling for less than what they could have. Lastly, Commissioner Edmonds wanted to implement education on credit/debt management, especially for the lower income population.

Commissioner Snyder (HRC) mentioned the idea of the City buying houses and selling at a lower price to those that were redlined; though, she acknowledged it was an improbable idea. She agreed that it was necessary to bring in other groups such as Associated Ministries, loan officers, bankers, etc.

Commissioner Rumbaugh (HRC) stated that there was little diversity in the meeting room, which suggests some limitation on what the Commissions might do. She called for protection of low-income housing stock and neighborhood identity. She also brought up issues with legal system evictions and time limits to stay in subsidized housing. She commented in favor of establishing a housing task force.

Chair Petersen discussed the scope of work of the PC, which was to advise the City Council on zoning and policy for the Comprehensive Plan. While it was important for the Commissioners to consider other factors in their recommendations, it was necessary to remember what the PC could do and focus on making changes within their capacity. She added that jobs were a big issue, using the example of neighborhood centers where most jobs are low paying ones. Though the PC could not directly create jobs, they could structure zoning to facilitate putting better paying jobs in those areas. Chair Petersen liked the idea of an advisory committee and periodic updates, as well as asked for a new format of public engagement process (e.g. breakout sessions with designated focus topics).

Commissioner Givens additionally requested outreach to the LGBTQ community.

Mr. Barnett indicated that staff would be developing an outreach strategy to focus on a number of issues mentioned in this meeting. There were also other departments working on some issues such as real estate and removing barriers, which staff would acquire updates and provide to the Commissions. He also asked for interest from the Commissioners in developing the scope of work for the task force, this would not necessarily mean committing to being on the task force.

Chair Petersen stated that Commissioner Strobel and herself had met with Councilmember Beal and, therefore, would like to continue. However, they would need to discuss availability and commitment level.

Vice-Chair McInnis requested meeting minutes of the HRC.

Commissioner Ratcliffe (HRC) volunteered to participate in the scope of work development.

Commissioner Givens noted that the Comprehensive Plan amendment was a yearly and lengthy process; he wanted to look for immediate changes to respond to the housing situation.

Commissioner Strobel moved to suspend the meeting to allow for public comments, which was seconded by Commissioner Karnes and passed. The citizen asked for clarification on Commissioner Rumbaugh's comment about police causing evictions. Commissioner Rumbaugh explained that there were rules on how many domestic violence calls would trigger eviction, but referred to the police for more information.

Commissioner Strobel would like to have the HRC to review the Comprehensive Plan and identify inequitable aspects for amendment. He pointed out that neighborhood councils had requested amendments and the HRC could do the same.

Chair Petersen requested an overlap of the historical redlining map and zoning map to identify potential correlations and issues.

The meeting was recessed at 6:23 p.m. and resumed at 6:37 p.m.

2. Transportation Master Plan Amendments

Jennifer Kammerzell, Public Works, provided background information for the Transportation Master Plan (TMP), originally adopted in 2015 and amended in 2018, with extensive public outreach. The 2018 amendment was to update the TMP regarding performance measures. She also recapped the timeline of past events, emphasizing the PC meeting in June 2019 and update requests. Both Planning Services and Public Works recognized that it was important to incorporate the Tacoma Mall Subarea Plan into the TMP.

Mr. Barnett spoke of the Tacoma Mall neighborhood as the second biggest designated regional growth center, which made it a priority in the Tacoma's growth vision. The Tacoma Mall Subarea Plan identified a list of transportation capital projects but did not integrate them into the TMP, hence the need for the amendments.

Ms. Kammerzell and Mr. Barnett collaboratively detailed the proposals, which consisted of scoring criteria, removing or combining overlapping projects, etc. The primary objective at this meeting was to get informal head nod from the Commission for inclusion of those recommendations in the 2020 Annual Amendments process. The Commission complied.

3. Residential Infill Pilot 2.0

Mesa Sherriff, Planning Services Division, provided a brief overview of the program. This meeting would cover updates of new project types and potential to improve the process. He presented maps of the types of infill from the Pilot Program 1.0 (Detached Accessory Dwelling Units, Two-Family Housing in the R-2 Zone, Multi-family Housing in the R-3 Zone, and Cottage Housing in all except HMR-SRD) in comparison to the proposed types in the 2.0 version (Two-Family Housing in the R-2 Zone, Multi-Family Housing in the R-2 + R-3 Zone, Cottage Housing in all except HMR-SRD, and Density-Based Housing in all Residential Zones). He went on to explain the changes between the two versions as well as criteria that remained unchanged. Also presented were some examples on how the number of units would be calculated in density-based housing. Mr. Sherriff, then, moved on to describe the application process, as well as affordability and sustainable design ideas that would require feedback from the Commission.

Vice-Chair McInnis was concerned with multi-family housing in R-2 and R-3 zoning, especially when the Commission had just gone through a significant discussion on rezoning.

Commissioner Givens shared his concern on the ownership structure regarding financing and affordability, but commented favorably on the density-based housing type.

Commissioner Horne inquired about the difference between cottage housing and detached accessory dwelling units. In terms of typologies, they are basically same; but cottages are allowed to be larger in size.

Commissioner Edmonds, adding to Commissioner Givens' comment, asked about the ownership structure. She also wanted to know if reducing the lot size requirement would consequently reduce the size of the building. Furthermore, if the building size remained unchanged on the reduced lot size, yards and setbacks would be affected, which might in turn alter the streetscape of the neighborhood and be perceived negatively by the public.

Commissioner Karnes commented on the parking requirement, wanting to make sure that any pilot programs or potential code changes would be consistent with the long-term vision.

Chair Petersen supported the idea of excluding any parking requirement and pointed out some inconsistency for parking requirement in different types of housing. She stated that it might not be necessary to change the lot size at this point in the pilot program, and might be more appropriate to reevaluate it at the end. The same applied for the multi-family housing type. However, she did not object releasing the prepared materials to the public for review, she simply wanted to bring the comments to staff's attention.

Vice-Chair McInnis added that there was no good way to see if a program was working efficiently. He would like some parameters on how to determine whether program was successful or not. Mr. Sherriff reported that there was feedback from applicants on the process. It would also be ideal to gather feedback from the residents around the area.

Commissioner Horne inquired about the reason to reducing the lot size and the number of applications each type had received. Except for the multi-family housing, there were three applications for each of the other types.

Commissioner Givens agreed with Chair Petersen on parking requirement. He would prefer removing it from the released materials and later re-adding it if necessary, than vice versa.

Brian Boudet, Planning Services Division Manager, appreciated the Commission providing feedback, especially on the parking requirement and affordability. He asked for verification on whether the Commission would prefer a tier-2 with affordability concept or move forward with the additional flexibility in the base program.

Commissioner Karnes noted that with limited number of applications, it would be difficult to evaluate whether reducing the required lot size proved effective.

Chair Petersen suggested removing the affordability component and asked the Commission for head nods.

Commissioner Strobel commented that, from a development standpoint, the program had such a small market that developers were not inclined to invest and commit resources. There might not be any useful feedback until a non-pilot infill program was launched.

In reference to the missing-middle housing being a big component of the affordable housing discussion, Mr. Boudet added that any construction in the City was, at some level, an infill or redevelopment project. This pilot program served as a test for more substantial code changes in the future.

Chair Petersen stated that units built as part of the pilot program could be used as examples to support and convince the public to accept potential code changes.

Commissioner Edmonds asked whether the program was for new constructions only or remodels as well. Commissioner Givens supported that the program included remodeling.

E. TOPICS OF THE UPCOMING MEETING

- 1) Residential Infill Pilot Program 2.0
- 2) Links to Opportunity
- 3) VISION 2050
- 4) Year-End Review

F. COMMUNICATION ITEMS

The Commission acknowledged receipt of communication items on the agenda.

Mr. Boudet informed the Commission that the meeting on December 18, 2019 would be Ian Munce's last meeting before his retirement.

The Urban Forest Management Plan was adopted by the City Council on Tuesday, December 3, 2019. This would likely result in some projects involving the Commission.

The Climate Change Resolution was on the docket to be adopted at the next City Council meeting on Tuesday, December 17, 2019.

After the last meeting on November 20, 2019, Sound Transit provided follow-up materials on the Tacoma Dome Link Extension project, which had been forwarded to the Commission.

Commissioner Strobel moved to cancel the meeting on January 1, 2020. It was seconded by Commissioner Karnes and passed unanimously.

G. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:56 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:***

http://www.cityoftacoma.org/government/committees_boards_commissions/planning_commission/agendas_and_minutes/