

## MINUTES

**Joint Work Session of the  
Eugene City Council and Eugene Planning Commission  
Harris Hall, 125 East 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Eugene, Oregon 97401**

**October 24, 2018  
12:00 p.m.**

**Councilors Present:** Emily Semple, Betty Taylor, Alan Zelenka, Jennifer Yeh, Greg Evans, Claire Syrett, Chris Pyror

Councilor Absent: Mike Clark

Commissioners Present: Kristen Taylor, William Randall, Chris Ramey, Lisa Fragala, John Barofsky

Commissioner Absent: Tiffany Edwards, Steve Baker

Mayor Vinis opened the October 24, 2018, Work Session of the Eugene City Council.

Planning Commission Chair Kristen Taylor opened the October 24, 2018, Work Session of the Eugene Planning Commission.

### **1. WORK SESSION: Joint City Council/Planning Commission Meeting**

Principal Planners Alissa Hansen and Terri Harding provided a brief overview of the Planning Commission's annual report and work plan.

#### Discussion

- Appreciation expressed for inclusion of a minority report when the Planning Commission makes a recommendation to the council.
- Support reinstating the Citizen Involvement Committee; would provide an invaluable avenue for community participation in important decisions.
- Suggestion made to consider designating a City Council liaison to the Planning Commission; would be particularly helpful with quasi-judicial issues.
- Request made for a list of all Planning Commission subcommittees and the issues each is addressing.
- The Planning Commission's objective is to determine whether a project or proposal meets the code; political implications are often raised with City Council.
- The Planning Commission can help the council gain clarity on complicated land use issue, surface alternative points of view, outline a process for public engagement, and identify potential consequences of a decision.
- Planning Commissioners are tasked with representing the entire city rather than a certain geographic constituency during a time of profound change; decisions may be unpopular with certain segments of community.
- A more extensive process for selecting Planning Commissioners is needed; particularly the interview process.
- A certain level of expertise and understanding of state and local planning processes is needed to serve effectively on the Planning Commission; support more robust appointment process.

- Suggestion made that Planning Commission provide input to the council on reinstating a Citizen Involvement Committee.
- There is tension between some of the pillars of the Envision Eugene process: the goal of protecting neighborhoods vs the desire to increase density and limit sprawl. There is also a level of incivility displayed by some members of the community towards the work of the Planning Commission and council; important to remind and educate the public about the process.
- The issues that emerged during the South Willamette project are a good example of a process that should have been referred back to the Planning Commission for further deliberation.
- The City Council needs to provide leadership around neighborhood livability and density issues.
- Important to remember that success comes with positive, incremental changes.
- Encourage the public to attend Planning Commission and City Council work sessions and meetings that occur before issues are scheduled for a public hearing.
- Doing minimum outreach and public involvement on land use issues is not effective; consider going beyond what is required.
- Improving public involvement and outreach is always helpful, but public should also be accountable and make an effort to be engaged.
- More regular updates on what the Planning Commission is working on would be helpful; particularly ward-specific information.
- A greater culture of engagement is needed; important to appreciate, desire, and actively solicit input from the community.
- Consider diversity of city when designing public engagement efforts; invest in public engagement up front for big community issues.
- Consider use of reader boards to advertise issues and opportunities for involvement.
- Clear direction from the City Council to the Planning Commission is very helpful; use benchmarks and motions to clarify goals and direction.
- Those in the community who practice strategic ignorance or are unaccepting of a democratically made decision can hold the City Council hostage on an issue; recognize those situations where adequate outreach has occurred.
- Project timelines may be dictated by state law or other factors; may limit the amount of involvement.
- Additional funding should be directed to neighborhood newsletters as a means to keep residents informed.
- If the council receives a significant amount of conflicting testimony on an issue, that is a good indication that the issue should be referred back to the Planning Commission.
- Important for the Planning Commission to consider and present the potential consequences of a decision when advising the council.

The meeting adjourned at 1:29 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Beth Forrest*

Beth Forrest  
City Recorder

Link to the webcast of this City Council meeting: [here](#).