

PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES



HYBRID/REMOTE AND IN PERSON AT THE MILL

January 8, 2025

CALL TO ORDER: 6:00 PM by Chair Connor Davis

MEMBERS PRESENT: Commissioner Bruce Morton, Commissioner Michael Duerr, Vice-Chair Janice Huxford, Commissioner Jennifer Davis, Council Liaison Ryan Donoghue

MEMBERS ABSENT: Jennifer Davis

STAFF PRESENT: Community Development Director Russ Wright, Senior Planner David Levitan, Planning Manager Christi Schmidt, Administrative Assistant Dawn Erickson

OTHERS PRESENT: No additional attendees

Chair Davis called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call: All were present except Commissioner Jennifer Davis. Vice-Chair Huxford moved and Commissioner Packard seconded that the absence be excused; motion carried unanimously.

Guest business: None

Approval of Minutes: Minutes of November 6, 2024 were approved as written. Commissioner Morton made the motion, and Commissioner Packard seconded; the motion was carried unanimously.

Election of Officers: Janice Huxford was unanimously elected as Chair, and Jennifer Davis was unanimously elected as Vice-Chair.

Discussion Items: Senior Planner Levitan thanked the Commissioners for their feedback from the survey distributed the previous week (Attachment 1). It will provide for a more substantial discussion at the joint meeting with the City Council on January 21, 2025. He referenced Attachment two, a *draft* lookahead to keep the Commissioners informed on upcoming topics to be covered and what drives the schedule (such as statutory deadlines). After a question about the specific purpose of the joint meeting, Director Wright stated that the purpose of the joint meeting was to bring the two boards together and to recognize the work done by the Planning Commission. Planning Commission is an advisory body, with Council being a regulatory body that passes legislation through ordinance. It was suggested that the role of the Council Liaison be redefined and how the information that goes to City Council is discerned. Director Wright said the flow of information from PC meetings to Council via staff and the Council liaison is currently very good.

Still, it would not be inappropriate for the PC Chair or Vice-Chair to attend Council meetings and share their perspective directly with Council regarding projects for which Planning Commission has made a recommendation.

The Commissioners also requested to be kept more informed on Capital Projects so that they are more prepared to answer questions from community members.

Commissioner Morton would like to discuss UGA expansion and past expansion requests that the county has denied. Staff informed the commissioners that the County Council only considers requests once every five years. It might be helpful to understand the reason(s) why the County denies requests for UGA expansion.

New Chair Huxford asked what the Planning Commission could ask for/from the City Council regarding information-sharing so that the Commissioners can stay informed and inform inquiring community members. The Commissioners want to avoid the same type of rumors around the recent Comprehensive Plan zoning amendment. Director Wright suggested a new agenda item where the Liaison could spend five minutes per meeting to provide Council updates. He also offered to provide staff time to train Commissioners on how to find information when asked questions by the community. Senior Planner Levitan agreed that training might be valuable. Commissioner Duerr suggested it would be helpful to review the scope and authority of the Planning Commission. Then, during the joint session, how the Council's priorities align with the Planning Commission's priorities can be discussed. It was agreed that legislative deadlines and community impacts would determine the priorities of the Planning Commission.

Commissioner Connor Davis emphasized that transparency on council actions is critical and would go a long way toward positive communication between the Council and the Planning Commission, citing the Chapel Hill property sale as an example. Director Wright again pointed to the defined roles of the two bodies. He requested some time to consider options.

Director Wright summarized that the two actionable items for the joint meeting are 1) better communication flow between the council and PC and 2) defining the Council's project priorities. He also suggested future surveys to get feedback before meetings on various topics throughout the year.

Commissioner's Reports: None

Director's Report: Director Wright shared that the 2024 department report is in progress and will be shared with the Commissioners when completed. Snohomish County Tomorrow is forming exploratory committee to improve communication across sub-committees. The city is looking to incorporate AI into workflows this year and will soon begin testing this.

Adjourn: Motion by Commissioner Morton to adjourn the meeting at 6:53 p.m. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully,

Dawn Erickson, Administrative Assistant