

PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Vancouver City Hall – Council Chambers – 415 W. Sixth Street
PO Box 1995 – Vancouver, Washington 98668-1995
www.cityofvancouver.us

Marjorie Ledell • Steve Schulte • Larry Blaufus • Zachary Pyle • Nena Cavell

June 14, 2022

REGULAR MEETING

Vancouver City Hall - 415 W. Sixth Street, Vancouver WA

CALL TO ORDER

The June 14, 2022, meeting of the Planning Commission was called to order at 4:30 p.m. by Chair Ledell.

WORKSHOPS

4:30 P.M. BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS INTRODUCTION TO DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION

Alicia Sojourner, Director, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI)

Alicia Sojourner lead a discussion with the Commission intended to build a common understanding and definitions of diversity, equity, and inclusion. They lead the Commissioners in an activity and discussion to demonstrate learning and talking about unfamiliar concepts. The Commissioners discussed why the City is working to advance DEI, why DEI matters to the community, and how it applies to the Planning Commission. The Commission and staff discussed the role of government in race and equity and examples of explicit and implicit racially-biased laws in history. The Commission and staff discussed how racism shows up at many levels, including systemic, institutional, interpersonal, and internalized racism, the importance and normalization of discussing race in planning, how equity applies to city planning, and the timeline for DEI programming at the City of Vancouver.

ROLL CALL

Present: Marjorie Ledell, Zachary Pyle, Larry Blaufus, and Nena Cavell

Absent: Steve Schulte

Motion by Commissioner Blaufus, second by Commissioner Cavell, and carried unanimously to excuse the absence of Commissioner Schulte.

ADOPTION OF MINUTES

Motion by Commissioner Blaufus, second by Commissioner Cavell, and carried unanimously to adopt the April 26, 2022 minutes as written.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM STAFF

There were no communications from staff.

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COMMUNITY FORUM

Meredith Herbst was present to provide comments in support of diversification of housing options, lower minimum lot and floor areas, and any reductions/removal of parking mandates (i.e. Minimum parking requirements).

WORKSHOPS

6:38 P.M. CLARK COUNTY HOUSING CODE UPDATE

Jacqui Kamp and Jenna Kay, Clark County Community Planning Department; Bryan Snodgrass, Principal Planner

Bryan Snodgrass introduced the workshop on Clark County’s housing options study and action plan for the unincorporated Vancouver Urban Growth Area (VUGA). Jenna Kay presented an overview of the County housing options study and action plan, the project schedule and phases, the project advisory group and community engagement efforts. Key findings of the study included increasingly expensive housing in the VUGA, single family homes dominate but don’t reflect the local needs, the supply of land for medium and high density housing limits what is built, and the increased demand for renter and owner occupied housing of all types. The housing action plan objectives address middle-income households, affordable housing for low to extremely low income households, diversity in housing types and sizes, and access to transportation corridors and transit. Jacqui Kamp presented the County Council decision and strategies for implementation. The strategies address housing options, affordable housing, programs and partnerships, and advocacy. The Council will continue to monitor the implementation of the plan and may elect to proceed with implementation of medium and long term strategies.

Commission Discussion

The Commission and staff discussed the following topics:

- Calculation of additional units that would be built if all the recommendations are implemented. County staff responded they will have a clearer picture of that when they start to write the code and determine what data is needed to monitor the strategy implementation.
- The intent regarding the State mandate to redefine “household”. County Staff responded it was related to the Fair Housing Act to not define what makes a household.
- The breakdown of County land for commercial versus residential use. City Staff responded the County Buildable Land report shows for commercial land, there are 300 acres in the City and 400 acres in the County. For industrial land, the City has 1,200 acres available, and 900 acres in the VUGA.
- For development of affordable housing in commercial areas, how that affects land that is targeted for commercial development and how those projects are reviewed and approved. County Staff responded the details are still being worked out. For housing in commercial zones, it is specific to affordable housing and will likely utilize regulated affordable housing with criteria from the State Housing Finance Commission. There will be further discussions of how to implement this policy.
- What the revised open space requirements from recommendation HO-10 might look like. County staff responded for higher density units, it can be difficult to make the project feasible with parking and landscaping requirements. They are considering some changes to make those projects more feasible in those zones.

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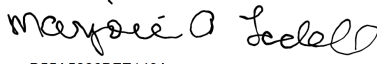
- What is the typical term for affordability expiration? County Staff responded it is typically 30 years but would need to confirm with other staff.
- Does the County have any programs like the City's Multi Family Tax Exemption (MFTE) program? County Staff responded the County is not eligible for that program.
- What are equivalent high density zones between the City and the County? County Staff responded the County has an R-43 zone, and the City's highest density is R-35. The City has recently proposed an new R-50 zone.
- The interaction of County and City policy, as applied to areas the City may annex in the future, and any recommendations to be aware of that may lead to actions for the commission in the future. City Staff responded one item to be aware of is the upcoming discussion of the City's Comprehensive Plan, which will likely have an annexation element. Continued communications between the County and the City will continue to be important for planning processes. The County is also planning a Comprehensive Plan update that will start in 2023. The Buildable Lands Committee looked at the ability to meet current growth targets and the models used to project housing needs for the future.
- Has there been discussion of easing of State laws regarding multi-family structure ownership? County staff responded there was a discussion of the condominium issue, and there is a strategy for the Council to address issues via changes to existing laws. SB-5024 passed to fix the issue with the defect liability law. At this point, there is not enough information on the impact of this change to see if it allows for more condominium development.
- What roles were represented on the committee and where were there points of conflict? County staff responded the advisory group consisted of those who are most impacted by high housing costs, including people experiencing homelessness, people of color, neighborhood community organizations, housing developers (private, non-profit, public, innovative building), and regulators of building projects (City and County staff). There were many priorities among this group due to the wide range of perspectives. Strategies related to parking were more controversial. Another strategy that posed a challenge related to balancing needs for affordable housing and preserving commercial land. From the public, there were livability concerns and impacts to existing neighborhoods.
- What role do updates to the manufactured housing code play in affordable housing? County staff responded there are a few strategies that address this. One short term strategy provides a resource page for those that live within manufactured home parks that have been bought and need to relocate. There is a longer term strategy to study existing manufactured housing parks to identify potential for displacement and strategies to mitigate displacement.
- Any discussion to establish partnerships to create subsidized housing? County staff responded there are strategies in the plan to look at what the County can do for subsidized housing, including an inventory of County land to consider for affordable housing. Another strategy includes an affordable housing liaison with the County to help the developer through the process.
- How to develop benchmarks that address the needs of the diverse group of stakeholders? County staff responded they encouraged continued participation from the group that participated in the study. The County will need to assess the existing quantitative data and create a public facing site to monitor progress. There is interest in the number of units built and the cost of those units.
- Addressing diversity, equity, and inclusion in the strategies. County staff responded they support those efforts and include those values in all the projects they implement. There are efforts for outreach and inclusion of diverse groups for advisory groups and provide information in multiple languages. Staff acknowledged there is more work to be done in this area.

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ADJOURNMENT 7:35 PM

DocuSigned by:

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Marjorie Ledell, Chair

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