



PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Vancouver City Hall – Council Chambers – 415 W. Sixth Street
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www.cityofvancouver.us

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

July 12, 2022

REGULAR MEETING

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

CALL TO ORDER

The July 12, 2022, meeting of the Planning Commission was called to order at 4:00 p.m. by Chair Ledell.

ROLL CALL

Present: Marjorie Ledell, Zachary Pyle, Larry Blaufus, Nena Cavel, and Steve Schulte

ADOPTION OF MINUTES

Motion by Commissioner Cavel, second by Commissioner Blaufus, and carried unanimously to adopt the June 14, 2022 minutes as written.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM CHAIR AND STAFF

The Chair reminded Commissioners to notify her and staff for any future planned absences. Bryan Snodgrass indicated he was filling in for Rebecca Kennedy for this meeting.

WORKSHOPS

4:02 P.M. CLIMATE ACTION PLAN (CAP)

Aaron Lande, Policy and Program Manager, CMO; Rebecca Small, Senior Policy Analyst, CMO

Aaron Lande began the presentation with an overview of the plan, the Climate Action goals, community emissions from 2019, the estimated impacts of the CAP, and strategies of the plan covering transportation, land use, building and energy, natural systems, solid waste and wastewater, equity and the green economy and government operations. Rebecca Small presented an overview of the actions that are particularly relevant to the Planning Commission, including middle housing and upzoning, clean building performance standards, a green building policy, electric heat pumps in new construction, and transportation fueling. Staff will present the draft plan to City Council in August, and a public hearing in September.

Commission Discussion

The Commission and staff discussed the following topics:

- Regarding review evaluations, what are you hearing on moving faster? Staff responded the State legislature is ambitious. The chart on slide 12 shows in the grey section, reductions due to state

and federal actions. As we learn more about urban heat islands and how heat effects the community, it builds momentum to increase the urban tree canopy and expand green spaces.

- Regarding building and energy, considerations for goals related to active re-use and utilization of existing buildings. Staff responded there is an action item on that topic. When the plan is adopted, it will act as a starting point for the City to begin this process. There may be events in the future that effect the pace of the actions, but plan that there will be time to make up for slower periods throughout the process. Many of these actions will come to the Planning Commission, and also tied into other plans like the Comprehensive Plan.
- On middle housing, discussions with the local transit provider regarding inverting the current approach where lines are added after density is built. Staff responded there has been early discussions with C-TRAN. They have been involved with this process, and plan to have those conversations in the future.
- On housing development, the anticipated challenges or drawbacks, such as affordability, to these new building policies. Staff responded equity is a guiding star for this plan and we are working with our partners to make sure the changes are implemented in a way that benefit the community. For example, staff plan to work with affordable housing providers to accelerate the weatherization and insulation of buildings. The State recently issued an economic report regarding the impact of heating sources we use. For new construction, electricity is the more affordable option. These conversations will be ongoing, and plan to revisit this plan every four years to evaluate what is working or not working.
- On green building policy, based on what the Commission has heard in the past, flexible approaches to green building is highly valued. Staff agreed flexibility is a priority for green building, and potentially would develop the City's own plans and policies to meet the goals.
- How emissions are measured and take into consideration that people travel outside of the City as well as within. Staff responded the data is from regional vehicle miles traveled, which covers miles measured in the community via traffic counts. We work with the County to understand traffic volumes. If you commute to Portland from Vancouver, the first part of the trip would be counted. These counts include all people who travel in Vancouver, not just residents.
- How to calculate the impact of denser housing and displacing more carbon intensive sprawl outside of the City or in the greater County. Staff responded they would need to review the details of the modeling to understand how that might be measured.
- From slide 12, what are process and fugitive emissions? Staff responded process emissions refers to industrial emissions within the City. Fugitive emissions are non-productive emissions, such as a leak in a gas line.
- The process to prioritizing the topics covered in the presentation. Staff responded some actions have a greater impact but expect the City to be able to advance multiple actions simultaneously. Many of the actions will be incorporated into the regular business operations of the City. There are actions that are prioritized because they have a greater impact, community support, and cost effectiveness. There are grants available that address these issues and the City wants to be able to access those funds while they are available.
- Understanding what other communities are doing on this topic.
- Regarding building policies, it's important to make a decision quickly so that developers can understand the rules and requirements to adapt now.

4:53 P.M. UPDATES TO FOSSIL FUEL STORAGE REGULATIONS

Chad Eiken, Director, CDD; Bryan Snodgrass, Principal Planner, CDD; Lisa Grueter and Jason Hennessy, BERK Consulting

Chad Eiken introduced the workshop, covering the background for the fossil fuel facility moratorium and Council's direction to amend Title 20 VMC. Jason Hennessy provided an overview of the fossil fuel economy in Washington, the fossil fuel market, the composition for the price of fuel, population growth in Washington compared to rates of consumption, and the expected cost effects of code changes.

Commission Discussion

The Commission and staff discussed the following topics:

- Were new refineries planning to export gas? Staff and consultants responded that once gasoline is produced, it's a commodity. Once it enters the market, it's sold to the highest bidder, and most of these are locked into long term contracts. It's difficult to say certainly, but it may have been slightly affected the recent price increases.
- The impact to employment at refineries. Staff and consultants responded much of the process is automated and there are not that many employees at any one refinery.
- Of the three proposed refineries, the amount of public and private funds spent for the application process and potential future savings. Staff responded they would need to look into that question and will follow up with additional information on this.

Chad continued the presentation with a summary of the proposed fossil fuel code changes. Bryan Snodgrass presented more details of the proposed change, covering the new land use categories and changes to storage and handling regulations, definitions of cleaner fuels, cleaner fuels storage and handling uses, small storage and distribution facilities, new special use standards, and other code clean up amendments. Chad covered the stakeholder outreach process and the next steps for these proposed changes.

Commission Discussion

The Commission and staff discussed the following topics:

- Switching from a dirtier to a cleaner fossil fuel qualify or would it need to switch to a cleaner non-fossil fuel to qualify? Staff responded the recommendation is not to allow new cleaner facilities but to allow the option to conversion from conventional bulk facility.
- How many facilities are in Vancouver? Staff responded there are a mix of storage and trans-shipment facilities. There are 3 or 4 storage facilities.
- If an existing facility has current capacity of 1.5 million gallons, could they increase to 2 million under the proposed changes? Staff and consultants responded they could not increase capacity unless they converted to a cleaner fuel.
- How 15% expansion was chosen, and if it is enough of an incentive to convert. Consultants responded this was modeled on the Tacoma example, but they do not have cost estimates for seismic upgrades.
- Has anyone in Tacoma chosen to expand? Consultants responded this change was effective in December 2021 and there have not been any applications yet.
- The differences between the three cities proposals? Staff responded there are some differences, and we have a table that compares all three cities. Vancouver's proposal is simpler than the changes made in Tacoma.

- How many fossil fuel facilities might be built if these changes were not enacted? Staff responded of the stakeholders that staff communicated with, they did not express any concerns about not being able to expand, as most were out of space to expand. Staff did not hear about any new facilities.
- Has there been consideration to remove the conditional use permit requirement related to expansion? Staff responded Tacoma doesn't require a conditional use permit for expansion.
- Where would battery storage fall in this code or other code and should be addressed here? Staff responded it is not addressed in the code. Staff will look into this further.
- The reasoning behind removing the reference to a 2 million gallon threshold. Staff responded if it's limited to existing facilities only, we don't need that threshold. Staff wanted to build incentives to switch to cleaner fuels, which is where the expansion idea came from.
- Stakeholders comfort with the proposed changes. Staff responded they are comfortable with the level of specificity that was provided. There was some concern with the conditional use permit for cleaner fuels, as it's a discretionary approval and there is more uncertainty.

COMMUNITY FORUM

Cathryn Chudy was present to provide comments on the fossil fuel storage code changes. The City and consultants have done a thorough job of providing a sense of protection to the community for health and safety. She expressed concern if the conditional use permit was not included in the code changes and would like the community to be a part of the process to be able to review applications and understand potential impacts before it is permitted.

Dan Serres, Conservation Director for Columbia Riverkeeper, was present to provide comments on the fossil fuel storage code changes. He was encouraged by the depth of analysis that the City is going through and to echo what Cathryn Chudy said in her comments about the importance of keeping the conditional use permit to maintain community engagement in the process.

WORKSHOP

6:38 P.M. 2022 ANNUAL REVIEW COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AND ZONING CODE MAP AND TEXT CHANGES

Bryan Snodgrass, Principal Planner, CDD

Bryan Snodgrass presented an overview of four Comprehensive Plan and zoning map designation change requests, one Comprehensive Plan text change, and fourteen zoning text changes.

The first Comprehensive Plan zoning map change is the Stutesman proposal to change from general commercial to R-22.

Commission Discussion

The Commission and staff discussed the following topics:

- The proximity to the mall and transit seems like a good location to have housing.
- Concern for displacement of people in the mobile home park and notification of changes. Staff responded they have not been notified yet but will soon.

- Location could be suitable for middle housing options. Staff responded the cottage option would not be an option here, but other types of housing would be possible. If the cottage housing met the density requirements it might be allowed.

Staff continued the presentation with the Schwartz proposal, with a change from residential to commercial.

Commission Discussion

The Commission and staff discussed the following topics:

- What is LI/BP zone of the nearby property in the City of Camas? Staff responded it is light industrial business park, and this particular parcel does have some level of light industrial on it.
- The nature of the business on the site? Staff responded it's a consultancy.
- The residential nature of the area.
- Staff presentation of issues to the applicant. Staff responded there was a pre-application meeting, where staff identified potential issues.
- Would there be access off SE 1st Street and increased traffic? Staff responded there is access from SE 1st Street, and there is a signalized intersection there. Given the proposal, there likely would be slightly higher traffic.

Staff continued the presentation with the SRHV proposal, with a change from industrial to mixed use.

Commission Discussion

The Commission and staff discussed the following topics:

- Should consider the potential job loss with the loss of an industrial site.
- Denser residential near industrial could be beneficial for those who work near the industrial site.

Staff continued the presentation with the Lieser School redevelopment, with a change from R-6 to R-30.

Commission Discussion

The Commission and staff discussed the following topics:

- Encouraging applicants to make use of the recent housing code updates. Staff responded they have, and there has been discussion about utilizing the density bonus for affordable housing.
- Connection of the road through the site to SE Northgate Avenue. Staff responded they did mention that to the applicant, and there was some community concern for traffic in the neighborhood. More information will be provided at the September workshop.

Staff continued the presentation with the text changes to the Comprehensive Plan and zoning and the capital facilities plans.

Commission Discussion

The Commission and staff discussed the following topics:

- Why the School Impact Fees go up so often. LeAnne Bremer, representing the three school districts, was present to respond. The fees don't always go up, and there are many variables in the formula that impacts the fee. The fee depends on existing capacity to accommodate growth.
- What the implications would be of the proposed zone change to remove the Central Park Overlay. Staff explained that impacts would be limited in the R-9 single family area, which forms the bulk

of the neighborhood residential area, since land divisions and ADUs have been allowed under the Overlay and would continue to be allowed if the Overlay is removed. Impacts would be greater in the smaller area made up of multifamily zoned areas, where the Overlay has prevented properties with single family homes or duplexes from redeveloping consistent with the underlying zoning.

- Other zoning code text changes generated little discussion.

The audio connection to the virtual meeting was lost during this presentation. Staff will provide a thorough summary of the remainder of the presentation for the next workshop on this topic. There was no further discussion during the presentation.

ADJOURNMENT 7:19 PM

Marjorie Ledell, Chair

To request other formats, contact Julie Nischik, Community Development Department | 360-487-7813. WA Relay: 711 | julie.nischik@cityofvancouver.us