



PLANNING COMMISSION

February 2, 2021

APPROVED MINUTES

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Judi Roland called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. via Zoom due to Governor Inslee's "Healthy Washington – Roadmap to Recovery initiative" and the Governor's Emergency Proclamation 20-28 due to the Covid-19 Pandemic which establishes the official meeting place, as virtual.

a.) ROLL CALL/ESTABLISHMENT OF QUORUM

Commissioners present: Chair Roland, Vice-Chair Lee, Commissioner Stephens, Commissioner Moutzouris, Commissioner Khanal.

Commissioner Mason was excused.

Staff present: Planning Services Manager Jeff Dixon; Doug Ruth, Assistant City Attorney; Alexandria Teague, Planner II; Angela San Filippo, SKHHP Executive Manager; Administrative Assistant Jennifer Oliver.

Members of the public present: Tyler Bump, EcoNorthwest

b.) PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. December 8, 2020 – Regular Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Khanal moved, and Vice Chair Lee seconded to approve the minutes from the December 8, 2020 meeting as written.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY. 5-0

III. PUBLIC HEARING

There was no public hearing scheduled for this meeting.

IV. OTHER BUSINESS

A. Presentation by City Consultant EcoNorthwest on Proposed Development of an Auburn Action Housing Action Plan (HAP)

EcoNorthwest is a profession consulting firm that was hired in collaboration with neighboring jurisdictions of Burien, Federal Way, Kent, Renton, and Tukwila to assist in the development of a South King County Subregional Housing Action Framework document. EcoNorthwest collected sub-regional data necessary to support the development of individual Housing Action Plans for the first phase which was completed in August 2020.

The Second Phase, currently in process, builds on the contents of the South King County Subregional Housing Action Framework document developed in the first phase but focuses specifically on the City of Auburn. And this phase is independent and conducted under a separate contract component. This step was also the subject of a consultant selection and hiring process and resulted in the City choosing the same consultant, EcoNorthwest, as had worked on first phase. Use of the same consultant aids in efficiency and continuity.

As a first step for this phase, the City's consultant has prepared information specific to the City of Auburn. The consultant has prepared a draft "Auburn Housing Action Plan Existing Conditions Memorandum" which details the current conditions influencing housing capacity in the City. This document is the subject of the presentation for the February 2, 2021 regular Planning Commission meeting. This document not meant to stand alone but will be incorporated into the contents of the overall City Housing Action Plan (HAP).

This particular phase has an emphasis on a public outreach effort to solicit the publics feedback while the plan is under development and when a draft of the plan is available for public comment. To get the most relevant and valuable feedback, this outreach is targeted to persons impacted by or with knowledge about housing issues and circumstances in the City of Auburn. Broadview Planning, a City subconsultant, has developed a public engagement plan consisting of several actions that will be described in the Planning Commission presentation at the February 2, 2021 meeting. With restrictions in place due to the COVID-19 19 Pandemic, the city has implemented a new on-line tool as one method of gathering input: <https://speakupauburn.org/hap>.

When complete, this analysis, along with public input, will be used to generate recommendations and implementation steps in the completed Housing Action Plan, which will help the City of Auburn guide its housing policies and regulations and decisions over the 2020-2040 planning period. The City's contract with the Washington State Dept. of Commerce specifies that the HAP must be adopted by the City Council prior to the contract deadline of May 31, 2021.

Tyler Bump from EcoNorthwest presented to the Planning Commission a PowerPoint presentation on the Auburn Housing Action Plan. Mr. Bump gave a project overview and steps within the project. There are four major

components for the Housing Action Plan (HAP): Public Engagement which consists of Community Vision, solicit ideas from the community and assess changes. Existing Conditions which include data analysis, employment trends, population growth and policy evaluation. Recommended Actions are Public Input, Staff input, development analysis and prioritization. Adoption process would be Planning Commission and City Council.

Mr. Bump touched on building off South King County Subregional Housing Action Plan Framework which consists of: Public Engagement; Assess housing needs in 2040; Evaluate demographic & employment trends; Develop new strategies: Preserve existing housing, Increase housing production; increase housing choice; Evaluate neighborhood context for housing type allowances; Create the Housing Action Plan (HAP).

EcoNorthwest discussed the Existing Conditions and Housing Needs Assessment, South King County Subregional Income Distribution, Housing Affordability Cost Burdening, Displacement Vulnerability in Auburn, and Auburn's Housing Production Trends.

Mr. Bump went over the 2040 Housing Need that touched on the future housing needs through 2040 and Auburn's Future Housing Needs by Income Level.

EcoNorthwest presented The Housing Action Plans Public Engagement Goals:

- Reflect Auburn's diversity; Tell residents' housing opportunities and challenges.
- Remain focuses, yet flexible, on authentic public involvement during COVID 19 pandemic.
- Develop and maintain a consistent communications strategy; ensure equitable messaging and close the information loop.
- Clearly connect how community involvement and input informs HAP strategies.
- Present data that summarizes community perspectives on how new housing integrates into neighborhoods.
- Understand barriers to homeownership and best practices for creating opportunities for people to own their own home.

Mr. Bump reviewed the Public Engagement Update with the Commission which involves focus on race/social justice equity lens; engage with people and organizations who typically don't participate in planning processes; include an educational component to relay how different types of housing can support and enhance a diverse, and vibrant city. The outreach methods the EcoNorthwest are driving towards are: 10-12 individual interviews; 3-5 small focus groups; social media; website and distribution list: speakupauburn.org/HAP; community forums and public presentations.

The Public Engagement Timeline was presented to the Commission:

- January

- Finalize Plan, Questions, Stakeholder Contacts, Begin Interviews, Advertise Focus Groups.
- February
 - Planning Commission Update; Continue Interviews; Conduct Focus Groups
- March
 - Summarize Findings; Draft Recommendations.
- April-May-June
 - Draft HAP; Planning Commission Feedback; City Council Feedback; Public Comment & Community Forum Feedback; Final HAP

Concluding his presentation, Mr. Bump addressed the Commissions questions.

Chair Roland asked for clarification on the HAP due date and how realistic was that due date with the COVID-19 Pandemic happening that limits gatherings and in person meetings. Planning Services Manager, Jeff Dixon commented that the contract that the City executed with the State Department of Commerce in receiving the grant mentions a May 31, 2021 deadline. That grant was in-acted and finalized before we found ourselves in this current COVID-19 situation. Mr. Dixon spoke with the Department of Commerce Staff that are administrating that grant and they said the legislative date deadline is at the end of June.

The Commission discussed the importance of the public outreach methods that EcoNorthwest had mentioned in the presentation. With COVID-19 pandemic amongst us, there was concern that public forums were unrealistic. Mr. Bump, representative from EcoNorthwest explained that given the circumstances, they will do the very best they can to generate public outreach. Mr. Bump stated that they have been forced to be more strategic with who they are reaching out to. He also added that there are specific organizations they are communicating with. Mr. Bump asked the Commission that if they had any suggestions on who else to reach out to, to please let him know. The Planning Commission inquired about what type of organizations is EcoNorthwest targeting and Mr. Bump responded that it was a mixture of faith-based organizations, culturally-specific organizations and neighborhood associations and the school district. Planning Services Manager, Jeff Dixon included that outreach had been done with affordable housing builders, the Master Builders Association as well as housing experts associated with the Muckleshoot Indian Tribe, and nonprofit organizations in the City. Mr. Dixon explained that there were 3 different levels to the public involvement plan and that consisted of individual interviews with folks who may have a specific interest or knowledge with housing issues; and to use these to see if there is an opportunity to have meetings or phone calls with smaller groups such as a faith-based organization or cultural organization; and thirdly, a community forum with a larger group where people can voluntarily sign on to Zoom meeting which is similar to a public meeting.

The Planning Commission asked that with the trend of many people moving

out of the Seattle area and heading into south King County cities, has that been accounted for when forecasting future housing needs. Mr. Bump responded that although it will be a few years before they can account for that number when forecasting, EcoNorthwest spoke with 5 residential developers who were very interested in this project and noted the increase in demand for housing.

The Commission inquired about what kind of recommendations regarding the HAP will come back to them to evaluate and weigh in on. EcoNorthwest replied that there will be recommendations as part of the HAP. How those recommendations are picked up and adopted will likely be through either a Comprehensive Plan update, through a zoning code or land use regulation change or through a programmatic strategy and that's the implementation phase of this project. The recommendations that EcoNorthwest has seen from other projects they have worked on, are categories of land use and zoning recommendations and some of them are fairly small adjustments to development standards, or changes in regulations applicable to multi dwelling zones to support more housing. Other recommendations could be incentive zoning to create more affordable housing. It is hard to pinpoint exact recommendations that will come through until more information is developed through from public outreach and feedback from those conversations.

The Planning Commission asked if housing costs are being discussed with this project. Mr. Bump replied that they are very focused on cost and affordability on housing for the whole range of household incomes. The Commission stated that it was important for families to have areas for kids to go outside and play and with just apartments that could make that difficult. Duplexes and Triplex's would feel more like a home for families. Tyler responded that that is actually one of the things they are currently evaluating if whether Duplex's or Triplexes' should be allowed more broadly in more zoning districts, as that would that create more housing that's affordable to folks in the community today and in the future.

The Commission commented that Auburn seems to have less homelessness compared to Seattle, Bellevue, or even Kent. The Commissioners asked how Auburn is in that regard. Mr. Bump commented that homelessness is a problem in every community even if its not as visible here in Auburn as it is in other communities. What EcoNorthwest is finding in the data is that there are many families that are doubled up in one housing unit. Also, related to this, the study looks at the housing needs broadly and the results show there is a need for housing in the 0-30 percent AMI, which represents 'cost burdened' residents. The affordability varies by jurisdiction and that the housing need and the cost burdening seen in Auburn is different then what it is in Kent or Seattle. However, it is still there and the existing need for folks to be less cost-burdened at lower income levels now and in the future. The Planning Commission asked what can be done to help close that gap and Tyler commented that there will be some recommendations developed to help move the needle and at least start the discussion about what can be done.

The Planning Commission asked if the study takes into account geographic limitations so as there are growth rates, traffic, or other topography that could come into play, could that impact some of the recommendations on the types of housing to satisfy the population growth? Mr. Bump responded that to some extent its accounted for the way that Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) does their population forecast in looking at existing development capacity in cities. But to the Auburn-specific geographic location, he thinks that's can be

influenced by the implementation recommendation such as zoning code projects. Future recommendations will determine that information.

Chair Roland asked what will happen when EcoNorthwest has completed the HAP document at the end of June. Planning Services Manager, Jeff Dixon comment that with EcoNorthwest assistance, they will prepare a document that analyzes the existing conditions, what the future need is, and then come out with particular strategies and recommendations at the end of June. Staff will then have before them a list to choose from and some ideas from EcoNorthwest on how effective some those ideas might be. Staff will pick and choose from that list and possibly make some changes to the development regulations such as the Zoning Code or Public Works Standards. Some of those changes would come before the Planning Commission if there were changes to the Development Regulations or it could be some changes to the Housing Element; or policies in the Comprehensive Plan. The policies in the Comprehensive Plan could change to focus on some particular needs in the housing chapter or other chapters in the Comp Plan. City Council could be asked to institute some new programs as well. Mr. Dixon pointed out that the City of Auburn doesn't have perfect control over housing affordability or the housing supply that is in the City. There are many other factors about the availability of land, how developers choose to develop properties that are free market enterprises, and the City doesn't necessarily have complete control but does have some influence potentially by our regulations and fees. Tyler commented that Auburn is doing a lot of things right at the moment. Some of the barriers that they have come across with other jurisdictions, they have not come across for Auburn and that is a positive thing.

The Planning Commission asked if Tyler Bump from EcoNorthwest will come back to present additional information. Jeff Dixon stated that at a minimum there would be a presentation with the findings that could be shared with the Commission by Staff.

B. Election of Officers

Pursuant to the Planning Commission's adopted Rules of Procedure (provided as Attachment A), Subsection III.2 states that the Planning Commission shall elect officers at the first regular meeting of each calendar year, or as soon thereafter, as possible. Since the Planning Commission did not meet in January 2021, staff requests that before the close of the February 2nd meeting, officers should be elected for year 2021. The results of the election will take effect at the following meeting so that new appointees are prepared to serve in their new capacity. The term of office of each officer shall run until the subsequent election.

Chair Roland opened nominations for the 2021 Chairperson and asked the Commission to provide nominations.

The nominations for the 2021 Chairperson are:

Judi Roland

Jennifer Oliver, Administrative Assistant asked for a vote by Show of Hands on each of the nominees individually.

Chair Roland declared, by majority vote of Commissioners, 5-0, Judi Roland was

elected as the Planning Commissioner Chairperson for 2021.

ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRPERSON:

Chair Roland opened nominations for the 2021 Vice Chairperson and asked the Commission to provide nominations.

The nominations for the 2021 Vice-Chairperson are:

Roger Lee

Jennifer Oliver, Administrative Assistant asked for a vote by Show of Hands on each of the nominees individually.

Chair Roland declared, by majority vote of Commissioners, 5-0, Vice -Chair Roger Lee was elected as the Planning Commissioner Vice-Chairperson for 2021.

C. Annual Review of Planning Commission Rules of Procedure

The Planning Commission's (PC) Rules of Procedure were last amended on March 3, 2020. Annually, the Planning Commission reviews the Planning Commission Rules of Procedure as a content reminder and to consider any modifications.

Planning and Legal Dept. staff reviewed the latest adopted Rules of Procedure document and noted a minor addition that is recommended and that is attached and shown in strike-through (deletions) and underline (additions). This change on the last page includes amending the language in Section XIII to provide the Planning Commission the ability to suspend their Rules of Procedure in response to unusual circumstances or to suspend the rules of procedure in response to unusual topics calling for a different process.

An example of unusual circumstances includes the COVID-19 Pandemic and that in accordance with Governor Inslee's "Emergency Proclamation 20-28 and Healthy Washington - Roadmap to Recovery" plan, the City of Auburn is prohibited from holding in-person meetings at the present time. The location for public meetings will be virtual until the Governor of Washington State authorizes local governments to conduct in-person meetings and therefor the language in Section X, (Public Hearings), about person providing testimony to "**step up to the podium . . .**" to make their remarks and "**filling out the speaker sign in sheet . . .**" doesn't apply in this virtual format of public meetings.

The proposed changes/addition is:

XIII. AMENDMENT AND SUSPENDING THE RULES:

The Rules of Procedure may be amended at any regular meeting of the Commission by a majority vote of the entire membership. The proposed amendment should be presented in writing at a preceding regular meeting.

By a minimum five-member affirmative vote, the Commission may suspend the rules as authorized in Robert's Rules of Order, except when such suspension would conflict with state law or city ordinance.

If the Planning Commission has additional changes, these can be discussed, captured by staff, and then these changes can be presented in writing and provided at the next regular meeting as provided in Section XIII, Amendment.

Second Rules of Procedure Update:

Chair Roland brought to Assistant City Attorney, Doug Ruth's attention that there was an inconsistency in the Rules. A small change but it does need to be addressed. Mr. Ruth reminded the Commission that last year there was a rule amended to make a silent vote by all commissioners, a negative vote. This was based upon the idea if you didn't hear a vote, the Commission shouldn't be adopting or changing something in a policy or decision based on silence. The conservative approach would be to consider it a "no vote".

The change that is on page 8 of the Rules of Procedure, **10 B.** conflicts with another rule that specific to the Chair. That rule states:

"Any member, including the Chair, not voting or not voting in an audible voice shall be recorded as voting in the negative".

Mr. Ruth wasn't aware of the pre-existing language and it hadn't come to his attention. After reading through it, he commented that he wasn't sure why that pre-existing sentence exists. Mr. Ruth went on to explain that without seeing a purpose for that, Section IV. 1., he recommends that the Commission resolve the conflict between those two provisions by deleting **IV. 1.** The sentence that would be removed is,

"Unless stated otherwise, the Chair's vote shall be considered to be affirmative for the motion."

The Commission asked Assistant City Attorney Ruth to update the rules to reflect the circumstances of virtual meetings and to address possible technical difficulties such as a microphone failure. Could possibly a virtual hand in the chat space account for a vote if those technical difficulties take place. Mr. Ruth commented that he would address that change and bring proposed language back to the Commission at the next meeting.

The Commission asked in the 'Amendment and Suspending the Rules' section, is the 5 member a majority or super majority. Mr. Ruth commented that Robert's Rules of Order has 2/3rds and so it is a mirror of that. He also stated that there is no rule on that, but we could lower that just a simple majority. If the Commission has an emergency and there are only 4 members, the 2/3rds would work in that type of emergency situation. Mr. Ruth will update and bring forth to the

Commission at the next meeting.

V. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT REPORT

Planning Services Manager, Jeff Dixon updated the Commission on projects that they have inquired about at past meetings.

The project that is two blocks south of City Hall has been renamed "The Verge". Timing for the temporary occupancy permits is within the next week to two weeks. The temporary occupancy is not for people moving in, but to start prepping the building for showings and to start showings.

The Copper Gate Apartments is located at the North end of town, just South of 277th. This is the first phase of the Auburn Gateway Project. The target for the occupancy of first phase consisting of 500 dwelling units is August of this year.

The 2nd Sound Transit Parking Garage is still proceeding however, at a slower pace since the pandemic hit. City Staff had a conference call with Sound Transit staff recently and they stated that in July the Sound Transit Board will inform their staff on how they may proceed with the project and at what schedule or prioritization.

Kool's Café, in the City of Pacific, burned down. No word or no info is available from City of Pacific as far as what will go in there as far as a major project.

Planning Services Manager, Jeff Dixon mentioned that the Mini Storage facility that is located north of Kool's Café will be expanding their building to the north side.

The Commission inquired about the Devine Court project, the former Heritage Building site in downtown. Staff was not certain of the reason for the delay but suspected the owners are getting the financing together. The civil plans are approved as well as the building plans are approved.

Jeff Dixon, Planning Services Manager gave the Planning Commission information on a few topics that could be forth coming this year to the Commission: Recommendations on the Housing Action Plan; Zoning Code Changes for fencing and retaining walls; Formal regulations on determining legal lot status in the City; Approaching new regulations on Food Trucks; Zoning changes for the Auburn Airport, and the customary Annual Comprehensive Plan Amendments.

The next meeting is scheduled for March 2, however the only Agenda Topic right now for that meeting is the changes to the Rules of Procedure. The Commission agreed that if that was the only topic, they were okay with the meeting being cancelled for March and would meet in April.

Staff informed the Commission that if they were aware of any groups or individuals that were of interest in the Housing Action Plan, to please pass their information onto Jeff

Dixon, Planning Services Manager. The City's website for the Housing Action Plan is also available and interactive with citizens and asks for comments that can be made for staff to see.

A Commissioner mentioned that they had participated in a survey that touched on race and police action. Staff explained that it is likely related to another initiatives of the City which also involved public outreach. The City is voluntarily undertaking a program to look at Implicit Bias and Social Equity including training. There is a consultant that is assisting the City with understanding what is the current state of affairs in the City and what is the general population's experience of dealing with the City and if there's been anything of concern from a social equity perspective in terms of race or religion. The Commission asked if a survey like this one would be done for the Housing Action Plan and Staff commented that a formal survey is not planned at this time but the new website for the Housing Action Plan, <https://speakupauburn.org/hap> is available for public comments and information.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Planning Commission, Chair Roland adjourned the meeting at 8:49 p.m.