CITY OF AUBURN WASHINGTON

PLANNING COMMISSION

January 7, 2020

MINUTES

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Judi Roland called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. in Auburn City Council Chambers located at 25 West Main Street, Auburn, WA 98001.

a.) ROLL CALL/ESTABLISHMENT OF QUORUM

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

Staff present: Planning Services Manager, Jeff Dixon; Economic Development Manager, Doug Lein; Assistant City Attorney, Doug Ruth; Administrative Assistant, Jennifer Oliver.

Members of the public present: Jonathan Smith

b.) PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. **November 6, 2019 – Regular Meeting Minutes**

Commissioner Khanal moved and Commissioner Lee seconded to approve the minutes from the November 6, 2019 meeting as written.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY. 6-0

III. OTHER BUSINESS

A. Presentation by City of Auburn Economic Development Division

Economic Development Manager, Doug Lein presented to the Commission An overview of the function and organization of this City division and their various responsibilities. He referred to a PowerPoint presentation.
The Economic Development Vision for Auburn is The City that Works. A vibrant, connected, healthy community for residents to love, visitors to enjoy, and businesses to thrive. Auburn is a robust, diverse employment base that provides good economic opportunities for residents and supports high-quality city service. Additionally, it's a strong educational system that prepares residents with skills that Auburn-based employers seek. The highlights of the Ten-year Economic Development Strategic Plan consist of launching and managing a business incubator, continues organization of 3NoNetworking events, Improvements to the Business Licensing Database; capture Auburn

based employers; continue to actively seek investors and developers for downtown projects; develop marketing packages for tourism destinations; coordinate efforts among ADA, BIA, Tourism, ED Office, Chamber of Commerce; and leverage Auburn's community of business leaders to reach peers and cultivate stronger relationships.

Opportunity Areas in Auburn consists of Legacy Mixed Use 8 Story complex, City Center Mixed Use 7 story complex, NW Valley Industrial Projects, hotel development, US General Services Administration and the old Valley 6 Drive In area to be developed by Inland Construction.

The Commission inquired about the construction happening at the location of the Legacy Mixed Use complex and why the cleanup of the site. Doug provided background information on the project site and explained that old tanks were buried on the site years ago. Over time, those underground fuel tanks could potentially leak. If the fuel is exposed into the dirt, it could expand out further. The dirt and the tanks need to be excavated to remove any contaminants that may have been exposed in the ground. Once that cleanup process is completed, the building will begin.

In response to a question asked by the Commission, a short discussion followed regarding the relocation of the employees at the GSA site and if they would be relocated within the City of Auburn. Mr. Lein responded that it was a little premature to say that this time. The process was very slow and that federal budgets and appropriations played a key role for the relocation to happen. Mr. Lein commented that once the site does become available, and gets on the real estate market, the City as a whole is anxious to see what take place with the location.

Economic Development Manager Lein provided Auburn's top 10 employers that consist of Aerospace, Gaming, Retail, Education, Health Care, Distribution, Technology, and Manufacturing:

- The Boeing Company
- Muckleshoot Tribal Enterprises
- The Outlet Collection
- Auburn School District
- Multi Care Auburn
- Green River College
- Emerald Downs Racetrack
- Safeway Distribution Center
- Zones, Inc.
- Skills, Inc.

At year end of 2018, Commercial business's in Auburn were at 315; Commercial value was over $72 million; 404 new business licenses were activated; real estate excise tax was over $3 million and sales tax revenue was over $18 million. Auburn was one of the fastest growing job creators in the state for 2018.

The Economic Development Division presented what marketing strategies that were in place within the City of Auburn.

- Workshops and forums such as Innovative Partnership Zone (IPZ) Business Forum Series include Career and Technical Education Forums to discuss competencies and skills in each of the programs offered in Auburn School District
- How to Grow Your Business Internationally is available for small businesses
- The Small Business Incubator offers space and access to computers and additional office supplies for small business's just getting started. Business Classes with instructors from Green River College are offered at the Incubator.
- BuylocalAuburn.com is an initiative funded by the City of Auburn to increase sales by promoting our local supply chain. It is free advertising and will make businesses easier for local residents, commercial companies and visitors to find. The city is promoting the website on multiple social media and news platforms.

The three main functions to Economic Development's Real Estate services are property management; conveyance of property or property rights, and leasing. As a municipality, the City owes it to its citizens to be good stewards of public assets. The assets/property or property rights we have as a City are: City cannot acquire property for the purpose of profit; it has to be a municipal purpose. The encumbrances that effect property are deed restrictions, first right of refusal, and easements.

A short video was presented to the Commission regarding Tourism in Auburn. He explained that there are variety video/ads for people to watch and see the different types of activities that makes Auburn attractive. The Commission inquired if there were any videos highlighting the Green River for fishing or kayaking. Doug confirmed that there was a video shot that will be produced and marketed this spring that includes local folks fishing on the Green River. The goals for Tourism is to improve and enhance visitor experience, strengthen tourism partnerships, and develop tourism assets. The benefits of tourism for the City of Auburn is that it injects dollars from outside Auburn into our local economy. It cultivates civic pride. There is a community benefit to Auburn residents and it ensures economic vitality of Auburn businesses.

Mr. Lein concluded his presentation with information on the Business Improvement Area (BIA). He explained to the Planning Commission that under Auburn City Code Section 2.98 the Business Improvement Area is a special self-taxing district consisting of roughly 239 businesses located within a specified geographic boundary. The purpose of the BIA is to aid in general economic development and neighborhood revitalization within the BIA boundary, and to facilitate the cooperation of merchants, businesses, and residential property owners for the benefit of trade, economic vitality and livability. There are several purposes the BIA funds can be used for:

- Acquisition, construction or maintenance of parking facilities
- Decoration of any place within the BIA boundary
- Sponsorship or promotion of public events
- Furnishing of music is any public place within the BIA boundary
- Professional Management, planning and promotion for the neighborhood
- Providing maintenance and security for common, public spaces
- Providing transportation services for the benefit of the neighborhood

Mr. Lein called attention to website resources that provides a hyperlink to the various documents that were described throughout the Economic Development Division's presentation.

In a response to a question from the Commission, Mr. Lein explained that the City's airport is a critical component not only to tourism but also to support of City of Auburn businesses. It is expected that the airport runway expansion project will bring in 6 new development sites as well as a 71,000-foot commercial hanger located at the southeast corner of the runway. Once the runway expansion is concluded, the runway will consist of 3,900 feet. The longer runway can accommodate bigger aircraft, fueling stations and opportunity for business owners to fly in if they own businesses locally in Auburn. The helicopter company, Classic Helicopter Corporation is doing exceptionally well. They offer flight training and school, tours over different location points in the state and charters. The Commission inquired on how the airport translates into an economic or financial advantage for Auburn and is it a job multiplier. Mr. Lein explained that although the airport is still up and coming, there is potential to see corporations establish business locations in Auburn that would benefit from having proximity to the airport. Those corporations have the potential to bring in more jobs to the city. Mr. Lein also answered questions asked by the Commission regarding marketing of the airport and if Auburn did market it like they do other businesses around the city. Mr. Lein commented that the airport is included in the Economic Development marketing. Staff attended 2 aviation trade shows to market the airport to companies that may need access to the runway. They will be attending additional aviation tradeshows in the future. Another tourist's attraction that Auburn has begun is the Auburn Adventure Film Festival that is to be held February 21-23 at the Auburn Avenue Theater. The

Commission inquired on what type of films with Mr. Lein offering that they were adventure films such as mountain climbing, bike riding and so on. Mr. Lein said the turnout was very good last year and hopes to have more attend and participate this year.

The Planning Commission asked if any of the new complexes being built in the downtown were senior housing. Planning Services Manager Jeff Dixon and Mr. Lein confirmed that one of the complexes is 55 and over with the other complex having no age limit. The Commission also inquired about the empty spaces in the downtown area and if any businesses have shown interest. Mr. Lein responded that when the economy crisis took place years ago, many companies closed up. With that being said, it takes time to recover from that. Rent prices have also gone up which makes it hard at times to fill the spaces. Auburn has a 2 ½ % vacancy factor in the industrial areas. That is good, but also bad if a corporation were to come and want to lease space and we have nothing to offer. The Economic Development Team will be attending 4 high-end leasing events this year to help promote opportunities in the downtown area for existing spaces and for the new spaces that will appear after The Legacy mixed use complex and the Town Center mixed-use complex are completed.
The Planning Commission questioned if there was a way to track the spending of Residents living in the downtown area. Are they going to local restaurants or shopping in the downtown shops? Mr. Lein commented that while there is no way to track the spending, the conversations he has had with many of the downtown business owners revealed that there is residents that live within walking distance that frequent the restaurants and shops downtown.

With no further comments or questions from the Planning Commission, Economic Development Manager, Doug Lein concluded his presentation to the Commission.

B. **Review of Planning Commission Rules of Procedures**
The Planning Commission's 'Rules of Procedure' were last amended on March 5, 2019. Staff, as well as, Assistant Attorney City Attorney, Doug Ruth, reviewed the latest adopted Rules of Procedure document and notes corrections/clarifications that are shown in strike-through and underline. The goal at the meeting today was to begin the review of the Rules of Procedure and to determine if the Planning Commission would also recommend any changes or additions to the documents. Mr. Dixon reviewed the minor changes that were distributed with the Commission packets. Mr. Ruth handed out to the Commission a memo with additional changes and then he described the changes. He indicated his changes were similar to those made as recent changes to the city council's rules of procedure. After discussion with staff, Mr. Ruth and the Commission, it was determined that at the next

regular meeting in February, changes will be comprehensively presented in writing for review.

The Commission voiced some concern about having disruptive people attending the meetings. Assistant City Attorney, Doug Ruth advised the Commission that disruptive behavior is cause for adjourning the meeting. There was discussion about using expletive language by persons testifying. Mr. Ruth cautioned that expletives are not always disruptive and he would collect some research on cases where there has been specific issue with the language used by citizens and how it was handled. He will report at the next scheduled Planning Commission Meeting in February.

Election of Planning Commission Officers for year 2020
Commissioner Moutzouris motioned and Commissioner Khanal seconded for Chair Roland and Vice Chair Lee continue as Chair and Vice Chair for 2020.

Motioned Passed (6-0)

IV. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT REPORT

Planning Services Manager, Jeff Dixon reported that at the November 6, 2019 Planning Commission Meeting the Commission raised a number of questions regarding CPA19-0002-Comprehensive Plan Amendment Public Hearing for Policy/Text Amendment #5 on the City of Auburn Capital Facilities Plan 2020-2025. The questions were in response to a presentation by Assistant Public Works Director/City Engineer on the variety of Public Works Projects that a part of the Capital Facilities Plan. A memo was distributed with the Commission's packet providing answers to those questions raised. The questions and answers are as follows:

Utilities
The Planning Commission recalled that in a past presentation by the City's Water Division, there was mention about the City utility customers having the ability to go on-line and view via a city webpage their daily water usage. Is this still planned?

> "*In the year 2016, the city instituted remote wireless water meter reading system, known as Automated Meter Infrastructure (AMI). Rather than a site visit by a staff to read the water meter, this system relays a signal of the water meter readings to the city utility department for billing purposes. For business customers sanitary sewer billing is also a function of the water usage. Currently utility customers can go on-line and view their bill and their monthly water usage, and compare this usage to last year's monthly usage and to pay their bill on-line. In the future, it is planned as a later phase of the City program, to provide the capabilities for City utility customers to go on-line and view via a City webpage and view their daily water usage.*"

"This capability is not functional yet. It was important for the City to ensure the accurate functioning of the remote wireless water meter reading system prior to building on its capabilities and providing enhanced services. This later phase of functioning is still planned, but is dependent on funding which is anticipated for the year 2021."

Airport-related question

The Planning Commission asked about how many separate businesses operate out of the airport and how many persons are employed at the airport.

"According to the Tim Mensonides, COA Airport Manager, there are approximately 41 persons employed by businesses operating at the airport and with City staff, the number is 44. Also, he indicates that currently there are five businesses located at the airport; with the likelihood that two more businesses will be added next year in 2020."

Vice Chair Lee stated that his questions about the airport were sufficiently addressed with the presentation by Economic Development Manager, Doug Lein.

Referring to the continued hearing on the Annual Comprehensive Plan Amendments, the Commission expressed appreciation that Staff attended the regular meeting that discussed the Capital Facilities Plan . They expressed the desire to have staff in attendance next year to discuss the Capital Facilities Plan and also request to have additional time/meetings to review the Comp Plan Binder provided.

Mr. Dixon also introduced the topic of the Legal Department and specifically, the City Clerk's office requesting to provide training on the Open Public Meetings Act and the Public Records Act to the Commission. It is a requirement by the City's insurance provider to obtain this training. Planning Services Manager Jeff Dixon requested to schedule the training with the Commission at their next regular meeting on February 4th, 2020. The Commission asked how long they should expect the training to be, with Assistant Attorney General Doug Ruth confirming that it would be about 20-30 minutes. After discussion, it was agreed that the training would take place next month.

On another topic, Staff would like to coordinate another joint meeting this spring between City Council and Planning Commission. The purpose of the meeting is to have the Commissioners meet newly elected council members, to address any topics concerning the City, and to touch base on agenda items that both Planning Commission and City Council will both address. The joint meeting is proposed to be held during the Council's Study Session Meeting on either April 13, 2020 or

June 8, 2020 at 5:30 p.m. After a brief discussion on availability, it was determined that the meeting on June 8, 2020 would work the best.

Commissioner Stephens raised a question regarding the manufactured homes community that are being removed/evicted off A Street SE near the old Kool's Cafe. Although this is the City of Pacific's jurisdiction, the concern is the amount of traffic coming in and out of that site. Staff would reach out to the City of Pacific to see if any development is planned for that area.

V. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Planning Commission, Chair Roland adjourned the meeting at 8:55 p.m.