

DRAFT MINUTES
Stevenson Planning Commission Meeting
Monday, December 12, 2022
6:00 PM

In Person: Attendees at City Hall followed current CDC and State guidance regarding use of masks, social distancing, and attendance.

Planning Commission Chair Jeff Breckel called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

Attending: City Development Director Ben Shumaker; Planning Commission Chair Jeff Breckel, Commissioners Auguste Zettler, Charles Hales. A quorum was present.

Public attendees: Mary Repar, Mike Beck

A. PRELIMINARY MATTERS

1. Public Comment Expectations:

PC Chair Breckel asked **Community Development Director Ben Shumaker** to provide participants information on providing public comments. Commenters must raise their hand and be acknowledged by the Chair. Individual comments may be limited to 3 minutes. He explained the tools to use for remote participants: *6 to mute/unmute & *9 to raise hand.

2. Public Comment Period: (For items not located elsewhere on the agenda)

>Mary Repar and Mike Beck commented on snow removal procedures in Stevenson.

The Planning Commission agreed to have **Community Development Director Shumaker** send a letter to the City Council detailing their concerns about snow removal within the City. **Planning Commission Chair Breckel** suggested contacting the business community and the Stevenson Downtown Association regarding sidewalk snow removal in front of businesses.

>Mary Repar reported the upcoming Columbia Gorge Commission meeting would be addressing climate change issues. She asked what plans the city of Stevenson and/or the Planning Commission had regarding climate change.

Planning Commission Chair Breckel related only water resources had been considered. **Community Development Director Shumaker** advised the city monitors Gorge Commission actions that directly affect Stevenson, such as the urban area boundary policies. A brief discussion followed on the benefits of participation in future Commission meetings to stay informed of their policy work.

3. Minutes: October 10th and November 14th, 2022 Planning Commission Meeting Minutes

MOTION to approve the minutes from the October 10th, 2022 Planning Commission meetings was made by **Commissioner Hales**, seconded by **Commissioner Zettler**.

- Voting aye: **Commissioners Breckel, Zettler, Hales**.

The minutes from the Nov. 14th, 2022 Planning Commission were approved following a motion by **Commissioner Zettler**, seconded by **Commissioner Hales**.

B. New Business

None presented

C. Old Business

4. Annexation Policy Kickoff: Consider Scope and Conscientious Public Involvement Expectations for Annexation Policy Development

Planning Commission Chair Breckel noted he had reviewed past Planning Commission efforts on annexation and highlighted work done previously.

Community Development Director Shumaker pointed to page 12 of the meeting packet regarding how to best encourage public involvement in the current annexation discussions. He relayed the staff recommendation to have a policy in place by mid-2023.

> Mike Beck and Mary Repar shared comments regarding annexation.

All determined a cooperative, coordinated undertaking between the city and the county in developing a clear policy and framework for property owners wishing to pursue annexation was important. Addressing concerns about cost and extension of services/infrastructure was discussed, as well as what benefits property owners could gain through annexation.

Commissioner Zettler stressed the importance of presenting annexation as a voluntary rather than mandatory process. He suggested a checklist or set of criteria for property owners interested in annexation to use would be valuable.

Community Development Director Shumaker will compose a letter to Skamania County planning officials inviting them to a meeting with city officials to jointly discuss annexation.

PC Chair Breckel proposed a series of listening sessions be held, and suggested questions focusing on annexation be asked to initiate public response. It was agreed extensive public involvement for all city and county residents should be encouraged. Contacting those that recently indicated interest in the subject was seen as a good place to begin the public dialogue.

MOTION to establish an annexation sub-committee chaired by **Commissioner Hales** in order to further define the issue and recommend an appropriate public engagement strategy was made by **Commissioner Zettler**, seconded by **Commissioner Hales**.

- Voting aye: **Commissioners Breckel, Hales, Zettler**.

Community Development Director Shumaker added a brief update to the agenda on broadband work. The state Department of Commerce has contracts available to help develop specific projects that work to expand internet access. He will be working with Skamania County Community Development to outline possible projects in order to seek further funding.

5. Columbia Street Realignment Preference: Reviewing building massing and streetscape preferences (Carry-over from November).

Community Development Director Shumaker led the Commission in a discussion on the various options possible for the realignment and development of Columbia Street.

Three concepts were presented at a recent public meeting to gauge public interest and preferences. A feasibility study is underway to assess if adjacent development would justify the cost through increased tax revenue. The public input is helping Community Development learn what residents would like to see in the downtown area. It's also seen as a way to facilitate future Planning Commission discussions on urban designs that consider how buildings and streets interact.

Parking, building height, density, curb usage, landscape plantings and accessory design features were all considered. **Shumaker** reported soil testing may indicate needed site remediation, which could significantly affect the project's cost. Commissioners then asked for information on the status of negotiations with affected property owners and on potential funding sources for the project, noting specific design details could be decided later.

D. Discussion

6. Staff & Commission Reports:

Downtown Parking

Community Development Director Shumaker provided an update on the parking discussions taking place. Achieving balance between parking needs and increasing commercial development was noted to be an ongoing problem with no easy answers.

Reducing onsite space requirements, paying a fee to a city parking fund in lieu of providing on-site parking, and relaxing overnight street parking prohibitions are all under consideration. Parking time limitations on 2nd Street have been requested by some business owners. Shifting ADA parking sites to corners are possible ways to improve visibility.

The parking sub-committee will be reviewing these options.

HEALING SCARS program

He will be asking the City Council if they would support the HEALing SCARS program that would establish a fund to help property owners pay the cost of connecting to the sewer system. It would need to be set up as a loan program for individuals not qualifying as low-income or disabled.

Shoreline Access

The Planning Commission adopted a public involvement plan in November concerning the Shoreline Access Plan. The consultants are hoping to schedule a public workshop sometime in January 2023. Questions on partnering with the Port of Skamania County and funding capital facilities and or maintenance projects were addressed.

Transportation Grants

Shumaker pointed to the last page of the meeting packet that showed the number of successful transportation improvement grants awarded to the City by the Transportation Improvement Board. He highlighted the efforts of **Carolyn Sourek, Public Works Director** in Stevenson, in getting these grants.

- **Loop Street, Columbia Av to E C/L** (City of Stevenson): Rebuild, resurface, and add sidewalks. Total project cost \$487,998, with a TIB grant award of \$460,422.
- **2022 Seal Coat Award** – (City of Stevenson): Chip seal. Total project cost \$152,534, with a TIB grant award of \$144,907.
- **McEvoy Lane Overlay.** (City of Stevenson): Overlay. Total project cost \$78,049, with a TIB grant award of \$74,146.

7. Thoughts of the Month:

Steigerwald Project: story map

<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/aee7fb7fbd74407bf447101ae7d76c0>

E-Bike Perspectives:

<https://www.cnu.org/publicsquare/2022/11/09/e-bikes-are-technology-15-minute-city>

Shumaker briefly recapped discussions held and decisions arrived at during the meeting.

E. Adjournment

It was unanimously agreed to adjourn following a **MOTION** made by **Commissioner Zettler**, seconded by **Commissioner Hales**.

Minutes produced by Johanna Roe