

DRAFT Minutes
Stevenson Planning Commission Meeting
Monday, January 22, 2024
6:00 PM

Planning Commission Chair Breckel called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m. A quorum was present.

MEMBERS PRESENT

PC Chair Jeff Breckel; Commissioners Anne Keesee, Auguste Zettler and Charlie Hales.

STAFF PRESENT

Community Development Director Ben Shumaker, Planning & Public Works Assistant Tiffany Andersen

GUESTS PRESENT

Marina French and Chuck McDowell, DCG Watershed

PUBLIC PRESENT

Lucy Lauser attended remotely

A. Preliminary Matters

1. Public Comment Expectations

Shumaker explained use of tools for remote participants: *6 to mute/unmute & *9 to raise hand. Commenters must raise their hand and be acknowledged by the Chair. Individual comments may be limited to 3 minutes. Disruptive individuals may be required to leave the meeting. Persistent disruptions may result in the meeting being recessed and continued at a later date.

2. Public Comment Period

(For items not located elsewhere on the agenda)
No comments were received

3. December 11th, 2023 Minutes

The Planning Commission meeting minutes from December 11th, 2023 were approved unanimously following a motion by **Commissioner Hales**, seconded by **Commissioner Zettler**.

4. Annual Elections

Establishing a Planning Commission Chair and Vice-Chair

Nominations:

Commissioner Hales nominated Jeff Breckel for the Planning Commission Chair, and Auguste Zettler for the Vice-Chair position.

MOTION by Commissioner August Zettler to approve Jeff Breckel remaining as Chair was seconded by **Commissioner Keesee**.

MOTION by Commissioner Keesee to approve Auguste Zettler remaining as Vice-Chair was seconded by **Commissioner Hales**.

Voting aye (on both motions): **Planning Commissioners Breckel, Hales, Keesee, Zettler**

B. New Business

5. Parks Plan Review

The Planning Commission was provided with a report from DCG-Watershed on the current parks planning effort. Marina French and Chuck McDowell, representatives from DCG Watershed explained

the coalition consisted of the City of Stevenson, Skamania County Port District, Skamania County, and the Stevenson-Carson School District. They provided PowerPoint slides of several sites, and detailed the methods used for inviting community input and opinions. They noted they were guided by City outreach processes to maximize participation.

An inventory of existing parks, recreational areas, and open spaces was conducted, followed by interviews with key stakeholders. Public workshops and surveys were also used to gain information. A presentation was also given to the Stevenson City Council at the January 18th, 2024, Council meeting. The final plan is expected to be ready for adoption by the end of February 2024. Adoption of the plan will provide for additional grant funding opportunities through the state Recreation and Conservation Office for the City and the other agencies involved.

Commissioner Hales expressed appreciation for the work. He requested more emphasis be placed on developing sites that offer play opportunities for children and youth.

PC Chair Breckel stated concerns over maintenance needs and the importance of coordinating long term maintenance of open space and recreational areas owned by different agencies.

Community Development Director Shumaker pointed out that in addition to the public agencies, several private entities (Museum, Skamania Lodge) are also exploring maintenance partnerships.

C. Old Business

6. Shoreline Permit Request:

(SHOR2023-01 Rock Cove Hospitality)

Community Development Director Shumaker noted this was not a public hearing, and no new info or testimony would be given. At the December 2023 Planning Commission meeting Commissioners approved the permit subject to conditions and findings of fact. Once change, condition of public access, adds findings of fact. One change, the condition of public access, adds findings of fact. The changes were reflected as highlighted text.

a. Appearance of Fairness Disclosures

Shumaker explained and administered the Appearance of Fairness Doctrine due quasi judicial nature of the Planning Commission decision. The Appearance of Fairness Doctrine is a rule of law requiring government decision-makers to conduct non-court hearings and proceedings in a way that is fair, impartial, and unbiased in both appearance and fact. Any conflicts of interest must be disclosed to ensure fairness and impartiality. Disclosures include any financial interest in the final outcome, any outside (ex-parte) communications made with any party of interest or anything else that could be

construed as a conflict or affecting any decision making. Decision makers can be challenged by applicants regarding any perceived conflicts of interest.

None of the Planning Commissioners present disclosed any ex-parte communications concerning the application, and none reported any financial conflicts or other matters that would impede a fair and impartial decision. There were no challenges by the applicant or the public.

b. Presentation by Staff

Community Development Director Shumaker explained the updated draft findings in support of the December 2024 Planning Commission decision, including findings related to.

- The permit holder demonstrated where and why an ADA compliant pathway could not be provided. An in-lieu payment will be made as mitigation.
- A state Department of Ecology concern over a mitigation sequence was resolved by reducing the number of cabins by one.
- The state Department of Fish & Wildlife concern over exiting rep-rap along the shore was addressed by providing documentation of the historical industrial use of the site and the unknown timeline of the placement of the material prior to permits being required.

c. Commission Deliberation

A short discussion of the changes presented took place. Commissioners observed the rip-rap issue had no actions required by the Department of Fish & Wildlife.

Shumaker shared information on the stormwater plan for the site, noting it addressed run off from the parking area.

d. Decision

MOTION to adopt finding justifying previous approval of the permit as drafted was made by **Commissioner Hales**, seconded by **Commissioner Keesee**.

Voting aye: **Planning Commissioners Breckel, Hales, Keesee**.

Voting nay: **Commission Zettler**.

Following the vote **Shumaker** advised the permit holder is already negotiating the amount of a payment in lieu of public access and their proportionate share of the project cost.

7. Planning Commission Work Plan: Scheduling 2024 Work based on City Council's Strategic Plan.

A number of items were considered for the Planning Commission to work on over the next year. **Community Development Director Shumaker** suggested the City's current strategic plan may be amended due to two new Council members being seated.

The focus currently is on organizational health & sustainability, infrastructure maintenance, and improved land use and development planning. He noted a potential item could come before the Planning Commission for a small text amendments to the zoning code, including potential changes to street side yard setbacks in keeping with recent changes to the front yard.

An extensive discussion took place regarding possible work on area wide rezoning to allow greater housing development. **Shumaker** stated the current city stance has been property owners can apply for and initiate a site-specific rezone, without the rezoning necessarily being considered spot zoning.

Commissioners recalled past attempts to address the issue. A number of residents and property owners expressed resistance to increasing density. Concerns about retaining the 'small town' characteristics of a neighborhood were frequently cited.

Commissioner Zettler remarked there is underutilized space that current zoning allows for higher density, but it's not currently being used. Affordable housing is still not available. He also pointed out that an Accessory Dwelling Unit is permitted on any property.

Shumaker suggested the Planning Commission could review areas where property owners are expressing interest in increasing density rather than taking on major sections of the city. It was determined to form a sub-committee to explore the topic further. **Commissioners Breckel and Zettler** will serve on the sub- committee.

Several maps provided by Shumaker showed areas that had been previously considered for rezoning. Commissioners requested the maps be kept showing past progression by the Planning Commission.

PC Chair Breckel provided information on the sewer committee's recent work and recommendations to the City Council regarding new connections. Homeowners should be required to connect, but not be responsible for paying for installing extensions to mainlines. Incentives to hook up were discussed, and city staff is looking into what state laws allow. Questions remain regarding how to pay for mainline extensions.

8. Subcommittee Reports

Updates from Subcommittee leads were provided.

Downtown Parking: Commission Keese reported nothing new, more information is expected to be available in February.

Annexation Policy: Commissioner Hales stated the subcommittee on annexation had been waiting on the sewer committee's recommendations to incorporate into the policy.

D. Discussion

PC Chair Breckel related **Commission Ray** chose not to be re-appointed to the Planning Commission. **Breckel** expressed appreciation for **Commissioner Ray's** service on the committee and

asked if there was a way to acknowledge it. **Planning and Public Works Assistant Tiffany Andersen** shared information on a Legacy Tree program, and explained a plaque would be installed to commemorate **Commissioner Ray** for his work.

9. Thought of the Month:

None

10. Staff & Commission Reports

The following updates were provided by staff.

Septic/Sewer Discussion: See previous discussion.

Trees: Public Works is developing a program for volunteers to donate and maintain street trees.

Commission Vacancy: A notice of vacancy has been published. Interview will follow, and City Council will make an appointment.

Shumaker advised progress on broadband expansion is dependent on finding an internet provider. The City has met all pre-conditions for federal funding.

E. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:03 p.m. following a motion by **Commissioner Zettler**, seconded by **Commissioner Keesee**. The motion was unanimously approved.

Minutes recorded by Johanna Roe.