



TUALATIN CITY COUNCIL

OFFICIAL WORK SESSION MEETING MINUTES

FOR MARCH 24, 2025

PRESENT: Mayor Frank Bubenik, Council President Valerie Pratt, Councilor Bridget Brooks, Councilor Christen Sacco

ABSENT: Councilor Maria Reyes, Councilor Cyndy Hillier, Councilor Octavio Gonzalez

Mayor Bubenik called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

1. Land Use Notifications.

Interim Community Development Director Steve Koper and Senior Planner Erin Engman presented information on land use notifications. Planner Engman explained that land use notices are important because they allow community members to contribute local insight, which supports more balanced decisions and helps the public understand the development process and how it shapes their community. She shared state requirements for notification, including mailing notices to property owners within 100 feet of a project site, using the most recent tax assessment roll, and including specific information such as the length of the comment period, the decision-making process, approval criteria, and how to obtain application materials. Planner Engman contrasted these with Tualatin Development Code (TDC) requirements, which are more extensive. She stated Tualatin requires notices be sent to property owners within 1,000 feet of the project site and to all properties within the same platted residential subdivision.

Planner Engman detailed the methods Tualatin uses to provide notice, including physical posting at the project site, first-class mailings, email notifications to government agencies and Community Involvement Organizations (CIOs), updates on the city website, and newspaper postings for public hearings. She presented possible enhancements, such as mailing notices to both property owners and occupants at an address, using larger and more visible signs at project sites, and creating a web-based subscription list to keep interested parties informed.

Director Koper provided examples of recent notices sent for the LAM Research and Norwood projects and shared cost comparisons between current practices and enhanced options. He noted that enhanced mailings would double the city's annual mailing budget. Benefits of this approach include reaching tenants in addition to property owners and increasing awareness among a broader audience. Drawbacks include difficulty identifying individual tenants, duplication of notices, recipients ignoring generic mail, higher costs, and increased staff time potentially delaying notice timelines.

Director Koper discussed the city's current signage practice and presented an enhanced signage option that could include a sign up to 32 square feet in size—larger, sturdier, and more noticeable. He stated benefits include greater visibility and inclusivity of perspectives from those who pass by the site. However, he also noted challenges, such as difficulty reading signs from a moving vehicle and relying on applicants to post them correctly.

Director Koper spoke to a website subscription system that would allow anyone to stay informed regardless of where they live and would reduce costs compared to mailing. However, he acknowledged that it requires people to already be aware of the system and actively check their emails, which may be blocked by spam filters or firewalls.

Director Koper asked whether the Council was interested in pursuing any of the proposed enhancements.

Councilor Sacco asked how many applications the city processes annually that require noticing. Director Koper stated there are approximately 20 such applications per year and that enhanced mailings would double the current budget.

Mayor Bubenik asked how many times a given application must be noticed. Director Koper explained that typically it is once, but if a hearing date is changed, the city must reissue the notice.

Councilor Sacco asked if staff could identify key groups that may fall outside the required noticing radius and still ensure they are informed. She also suggested using social media to increase public awareness. Director Koper responded that Tualatin already has one of the broadest noticing ranges in the region. He added that while he is not aware of other cities reviewing each notice on a case-by-case basis, incorporating subjective standards could be problematic. City Attorney Kevin McConnell agreed and advised against subjective standards to avoid any appearance of bias.

Councilor Brooks asked how notices are sent to apartment buildings. Director Koper explained that tenants are not currently included in the city's mailings.

Councilor Brooks asked whether the city's main website could provide a direct link to public notices. Director Koper stated that the upcoming website redesign will allow notices to appear in a newsfeed on the homepage.

Councilor Brooks also asked why land use notices matter and how the public benefits. Director Koper stated that land use decisions can significantly impact people's neighborhoods, and notices allow them to weigh in on developments that affect their quality of life.

Council President Pratt expressed support for increasing notice visibility.

Mayor Bubenik stated that CIOs should direct their communities to the city's website to stay informed and recommended that notices also be shared via the city's social media platforms.

Mayor Bubenik asked whether the LAM Research development was unique in its impact on apartments. Director Koper replied that most development occurs in industrial zones and rarely affects residential buildings.

Mayor Bubenik observed consensus among the Council in favor of including apartment occupants in noticing efforts.

Mayor Bubenik stated that while enhanced signage can be an eyesore, he supports continuing with the current signage model so long as signs are properly placed.

Councilor Brooks asked what enhanced signage might look like. Planner Engman replied that staff had not yet explored specific designs.

Council President Pratt stated she would like the signs to be larger and more noticeable, a sentiment echoed by Councilor Sacco.

Director Koper addressed the idea of posting notices on social media, noting that public noticing is not typically done this way because social media is intended for interactive content. City Attorney McConnell added that comments made on social media do not count as formal testimony in land use cases, which must be submitted in person or through official channels.

2. Proclamation Requests.

The Council considered the proclamation for Vietnamese American Remembrance Day. The Council approved the request.

The Council considered the proclamation for Parkinson’s Awareness Month. The Council approved the request.

3. Council Meeting Agenda Review, Communications & Roundtable.

Councilor Sacco stated she attended the Chamber of Commerce Excellence in Business Awards, and the IDEA Committee meeting.

Councilor Brooks stated she attended the National League of Cities Congressional Cities Conference, the Arts Advisory Committee meeting, and the Policy Advisory Board meeting.

Council President Pratt stated she attended the Chamber of Commerce Excellence in Business Awards, the Communities that Care Key Leaders meeting, the National League of Cities Congressional Cities Conference, the ribbon cutting and Floor and Décor, and the C4 Metro meeting.

Mayor Bubenik stated he attended the Chamber of Commerce Excellence in Business Awards, the Rotary meeting, the National League of Cities Congressional Cities Conference, the public meetings law training, and the Meet the Mayors event hosted by the Metro Mayors Consortium.

Adjournment

Mayor Bubenik adjourned the meeting at 6:49 p.m.

Sherilyn Lombos, City Manager

_____ / Nicole Morris, Recording Secretary

_____ / Frank Bubenik, Mayor