

## **2022 Planning Commissioner Interviews**

Brad Medrud, Planning Manager, and Elizabeth Robbins, Planning Commission Chair, conducted one-hour interviews with each of the Commissioners the week of September 19, 2022.

### **Tuesday, September 20, 2022**

- Elizabeth Robbins, 1:00 p.m.
- Terry Kirkpatrick, 2:00 p.m.
- Brian Shoemaker, 3:00 p.m.

### **Wednesday, September 21, 2022**

- Michael Tobias, 6:00 p.m.
- Kelly Von Holtz, 7:00 p.m.

### **Thursday, September 22, 2022**

- Meghan Sullivan, 10:00 p.m.

### **Friday, September 23, 2022**

- Grace Edwards, 5:00 p.m.
- Anthony Varela, 6:00 p.m.

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## **Common Questions for All Commissioners:**

### *“How are things going?”*

- All the Commissioners noted that things were going well
- Newer Planning Commissioners (Anthony, Brian, Grace, and Kelly) noted that they were in the process of working on understanding the basics of what is expected, which is going well

### *“How much time do you spend preparing for meetings?”*

- Most Commissioners responded to the question, with a range preparation time from one to two hours per meeting
- All the Commissioners found the preparation time to be appropriate

### *What do you need from staff?*

- Aside from suggestions about how to improve staff reports outlined below, materials for meeting are good
- At the beginning of staff reports, provide a bulleted, short summary of all the meetings to date and the issues discussed and/or resolved as a table (date-meeting type-issues) with page references to the sections of the staff report
- Packets can be too big

*“What is Tumwater?”*

- Different answers from all the Commissioners
  - It is a home base to easily get to other places: Seattle to the north, Portland to the south, Ocean and Peninsula to the west
  - Special local places
    - Where do you take visitors?
      - ✓ The falls
    - Locally owned businesses
  - Stability, but not static
    - Something taken for granted
  - Change from the Brewery town to the brewery and something more
    - Craft district and redevelopment
  - As time passes and the City grows, the brewery is no longer the dominate aspect
  - People may leave, such as military families, but they will rent their houses with intention of coming back
  - The shape of the City is like a butterfly with overlapping east and west sections
  - A City, community, vibrant great place to live
  - First home after being in the military

*“Have you been harassed or pressured, either on line or in person, because you are on the Planning Commission?”*

- All responded no. Brad and Elizabeth asked that all Commissioners let City staff know if they have issues in the future.

*“What are you excited about?”*

- Tumwater School District
- Homeowner associations
- Opportunities ahead

*“What are you worried about?”*

- Tumwater School District and equity
- Fewer volunteers than in the past

*What are your strengths?*

- Good at meeting preparation

- Learning and networking

*What do you need to work on?"*

- Need help on the background to planning discussions
- Need help running meetings so that they are procedurally correct

#### Comprehensive Plan Update Background

- Staff told all the Commissioners about the proposed Update process and when the Planning Commission will discuss overall scope, schedule, and public engagement.
- Suggestion of a field trip in the spring of 2023 was well received
  - Former WSDOT HQ – Past, present, and future planning (and other examples)
  - Capitol Boulevard
- Look to coordinate with Thurston County, Olympia, and Lacey on a public interest campaign focused on a single message along the lines of “Why you should care...” versus “State law says we have to...”
- Important to hear from people outside the process about the Comprehensive Plan update
- How do we make the City home for future residents?

#### Other Comments

- Have Citywide maps available at meetings
- Introductory packets:
  - A lot of information
  - Good materials
  - Use Training Program to supplement these
- For Capital Facilities Plan update, bring back lunchtime outreach meetings and start the process earlier
- Do we plan for people or structures, or both?
- Explore support for local banks investing in smaller/medium commercial and residential projects that do not fit the larger banks
- Learning to ask more question, which will take time
- Look for outside training opportunities
  - Commerce Planning Short Courses
  - How to use the Planning Commission to make places
- Support for in person meetings to allow more communication, but recognized that the remote meetings allowed Commissioners to attend a meeting that would not be possible in person because of other life commitments

- Provide a one page summary of actions by the City Council and other Boards and Commissions to the Planning Commission on a monthly basis
- Different ways of seeing the City: by car, walking, bicycling
- A number of the Commissioners are volunteers or participate in nonprofits in the community
- Look for ways to support helping people stay in housing, including mental health and drug addiction support
- Look for community celebration opportunities
- Explore ways we want to be looking at materials being reviewed
  - Such as how the issue addresses the broader values we have: sustainability, accessibility, equity, strategic priorities of the Council, Comprehensive Plan Goals and Policies
  - Use the values as a screen for actions
  - Ask the question “Is this issue/subject matter forwarding sustainability, accessibility, equity”
  - Look to develop opportunities for the Commission to use generative communications: set up “look up” opportunities for the Planning Commission to have those