

TUMWATER GENERAL GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF VIRTUAL MEETING

January 11, 2023, 2022 Page 1

CONVENE: 2:00 p.m.

PRESENT: Chair Michael Althaus and Councilmembers Joan Cathey and Leatta Dahlhoff.

Staff: City Attorney Karen Kirkpatrick and Planning Manager Brad Medrud.

GENERAL GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE MEETING TIME: The committee discussed the committee's monthly meeting time and date. The committee supported changing the meeting time to 8 a.m. in alignment with meeting times of other Council committees.

MOTION: **Councilmember Dahlhoff moved, seconded by Councilmember Cathey, to approve a change in the committee's monthly meeting to begin at 8:00 a.m. effective February 2023. A voice vote approved the motion unanimously.**

ORDINANCE NO. O2022-014 – RENTAL HOUSING REGISTRATION: Manager Medrud presented the proposal rental housing registration ordinance in support of actions identified by the Council in 2018. Staff is reviewing measures to assist renters in accessing housing and to remain housed. The Council adopted the Housing Action Plan in 2021 and prioritized three actions in 2022 to address tenant protections one of which included establishing a rental housing registration program.

The ordinance the City Council adopted last year for tenant protections becomes effective on April 8, 2023, affording time to establish the rental housing registration program. Staff and Communications staff have been meeting regularly to prepare to outreach to all property owners/landowners in the City to inform them of the new requirements. Staff is developing rental information packets and a webpage for rollout in early March.

The proposed rental housing registration enables the City to develop a current and active list of property owners with rental properties in the City. Staff reviewed other similar programs implemented by the cities of Auburn, Tacoma, Aberdeen, Lacey, and Tukwila. The programs for the cities of Auburn and Tacoma were the most developed of all programs.

The proposal will initially apply to rental properties of five or more units (at one location) because of the ease of identifying rental properties in the City versus single-family rental homes. The proposal could be expanded in the future to require licensing of all rental properties, and well as serving as the basis for future regular inspections of rental units, if the Council desires.

The proposal requires the property owner to obtain a City business license to operate that will serve as a mechanism for communications with tenants

TUMWATER GENERAL GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF VIRTUAL MEETING

January 11, 2023, 2022 Page 2

and landlords about any rental regulations or educational information to share. Business licenses in the City cost \$50 annually with annual renewal of \$20. Long-term rental properties are exempt from business and occupation tax.

Staff requests the committee refer the proposal to the Council worksession on January 24, 2023 for discussion. Staff proposes including the proposal for Council consideration at its February 7, 2023 meeting.

MOTION:

Councilmember Dahlhoff moved, seconded by Councilmember Cathey, to refer Ordinance No. O2022-014, Rental Housing Registration, to the City Council worksession on January 24, 2023 for further review and discussion. A voice vote approved the motion unanimously.

DISPUTE RESOLUTION CENTER – TUMWATER TENANT – LANDLORD DISPUTE RESOLUTION SERVICES:

Manager Medrud said the proposal represents the third tenant protection action item directed by the Council.

Another important component of efforts to strengthen tenant protections is a program to provide tenants and landlords with the ability to resolve conflicts easily. Utilizing the Dispute Resolution Center of Thurston County to support those efforts is the proposed action, as it would provide and alternative to the parties to using the court system and provides an equal process for both tenants and landlords to resolve differences.

The proposal represents a scope of service for inclusion in a proposed contract. If approved by the committee, the next step is drafting a contract. The proposal contract would be for the provision of mediation services exclusively for access by residents of Tumwater. In support of the program, the City would contribute funding to the Dispute Resolution Center to provide those services as stipulated in the contract.

The scope of the services would cover intake and mediation for housing-related cases that do not qualify for the Early Resolution Pilot Program. Cost of the service would be based on a sliding scale.

Councilmember Dahlhoff cited an incident communicated to the City from a community member about disputing a rent increase of a home located within a manufactured home park for people aged 55 years or above. She asked how services by the Dispute Resolution Center would address those types of situations.

Manager Medrud replied that the Dispute Resolution Center requires both parties to participate willingly in the process. The City has no method to compel one party to participate if unwilling to participate; however, the contract could include an expanded scope to include options to help both

TUMWATER GENERAL GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF VIRTUAL MEETING

January 11, 2023, 2022 Page 3

parties resolve differences beyond the scope, such as paying rent late or other issues.

Manager Medrud reported contribution of City funds would be \$50,000 from ARPA funds to help subsidize costs for the first year of the program. Some staffing by the City could be possible to track the program to ensure the program's effectiveness. If additional staff resources are necessary, staff would identify those needs at the end of the contract. Other sources of funding, given the uncertainty of and nature of future federal and state funding, is uncertain for future years.

If the committee agrees with the proposed scope of services, staff will draft a contract and schedule the contract for approval by the Council during the first quarter 2023.

CONSENSUS:

The General Government Committee supported staff moving forward to draft a contract with the Dispute Resolution Center of Thurston County for Tumwater Tenant – Landlord Dispute Resolution Services based on the scope as presented by staff.

2023 LONG RANGE PLANNING WORK PROGRAM:

Manager Medrud referred to the joint meeting of the Planning Commission and the City Council in December on the proposed 2023 Long Range Work Program. The Council approves the work program each year in January. During the worksession, the General Government Committee was asked to review the work program and offer any suggestions, changes, or comments. If the committee accepts the proposed work program as presented, staff recommends the committee refer the work program to the City Council for consideration on the January 17, 2022 consent calendar.

Councilmember Cathey asked whether the list is prioritized. Manager Medrud explained that the list is neither prioritized nor ranked. The work program is structured on the department's ability to complete the work. He reviewed and identified the items on the proposed work program:

- Comprehensive Plan Amendment Docket:
 - 2023-2025 Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update (continued from 2022) b. 2023
 - Comprehensive Plan Amendments (City-initiated amendments)
- Development Regulation Amendment Docket
- Tumwater Housing Action Plan Amendments – Rental Registration (continued from 2022)
- Urban Forestry Management Plan Amendments – Landscaping, Street Tree Standards, and Tree and Vegetation Preservation (continued from 2022 and forecasted for completion in 2023)

TUMWATER GENERAL GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF VIRTUAL MEETING

January 11, 2023, 2022 Page 4

- Other Amendments: 2023 Housekeeping (New), Development Regulation Periodic Update (New), and Thurston County Code Title 22 – Tumwater Urban Growth Area Zoning (continued from 2022)
- Other Planning Projects:
 - Bush Prairie Habitat Conservation Plan (continued from 2022 working in coordination with the Department of Fish and Wildlife and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service)
 - Equity Toolbox (continued from 2022)
 - Hazard Mitigation Plan Update (continued from 2022)
 - Managing MFTE Program (continued from 2022)
 - Permit Review Support, FEMA Flood Studies, Public Inquiries, and other items
 - General Management and Coordination

Manager Medrud addressed questions about the difference between the Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) and the Hazard Mitigation Plan. The HCP addresses development mitigation for the protection of threatened species within the City while the Hazard Mitigation Plan as directed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), covers all potential natural disasters that could occur in the City or in the county. Climate mitigation is considered in both plans in terms of potential climate impacts that speak to the specific purpose of each plan.

Manager Medrud explained that the projects listed below the line are other projects that cannot be supported because of the lack of capacity or time but have been identified as projects to work on in the future. Following the joint meeting in December, no comments were submitted by the Council or the Commission on particular items to add or delete.

In response to questions as to potential impacts of code enforcement amendments to the existing workload of code enforcement staff, Manager Medrud said the amendments have been included on the work program for several years. Based on the changes implemented by the City in code enforcement in 2017, staff is considering additional support necessary to address nuisance violations.

Councilmember Dahlhoff reported on the update on code enforcement the Public Health and Safety Committee recently received. With the retirement of one code enforcement officer, a new officer is scheduled to start next week. In 2022, the City experienced 54 code violations. Approximately 19% of the violations were for overgrown vegetation, 23% were violations for trash, 19% were related to abandoned vehicles or vehicles parked in the right-of-way, 9% of the violations were individuals living in their vehicle, and 5% were for graffiti.

TUMWATER GENERAL GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF VIRTUAL MEETING

January 11, 2023, 2022 Page 5

Councilmember Cathey inquired about the appropriateness for a Councilmember to provide feedback or suggestions on changes to rules for tree preservation.

Manager Medrud replied that the discussion on the tree preservation ordinance is scheduled with the committee in March. At that time, it is likely input from the community has been identified, as well as the larger issues and ways to address those issues. At that time, staff proposes to brief the committee on the proposed direction of the update and any identified issues. Staff welcomes input from Councilmembers to share with the Planning Commission and the Tree Board during their respective discussions.

MOTION: Councilmember Dahlhoff moved, seconded by Chair Althausen, to forward the 2023 Long Range Planning Work Program for consent at the January 17, 2023 City Council meeting. A voice vote approved the motion unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT: With there being no further business, Chair Althausen adjourned the meeting at 3:00 p.m.

Prepared by Valerie L. Gow, Recording Secretary/President
Puget Sound Meeting Services, psmsoly@earthlink.net