

**TUMWATER PLANNING COMMISSION**  
**MINUTES OF HYBRID MEETING**  
**September 13, 2022 Page 1**

**CONVENE:** 7:03 p.m.

**PRESENT:** Chair Elizabeth Robbins and Commissioners Grace Edwards, Terry Kirkpatrick, Meghan Sullivan, Michael Tobias, Kelly Van Holtz, and Anthony Varela.

Excused: Commissioner Brian Schumacher.

Staff: Planning Manager Brad Medrud and Economic Development Manager Austin Ramirez.

**CHANGES TO AGENDA:** There were no changes to the agenda.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES: AUGUST 9, 2022:**

**MOTION:** Commissioner Kirkpatrick moved, seconded by Commissioner Edwards, to approve the minutes of August 9, 2022 as published. A voice vote approved the motion unanimously.

**COMMISSIONER'S REPORTS:** Chair Robbins reported on the recent resignation of Nathan Peters, who accepted another work position with more responsibilities.

Commissioners provided self-introductions. Newly appointed Commissioner, Kelly Van Holtz, shared that although she is new to the Commission, she has been a resident of Tumwater for over 20 years. Until recently, she served on the Tumwater Parks and Recreation Commission.

**MANAGER'S REPORT:** Manager Medrud reported on the Tree Board field trip to visit several development projects in the City. Much of the discussion by the Board will support much of the work by the Commission on the tree protection ordinance.

At the second meeting in September, the Commission is scheduled to review an example of a development proposal process. The first meeting in October will be a joint meeting with the Tree Board. The City's consultant, The Watershed Group, is assisting staff on potential amendments to the Street Tree Plan and Tree Protection Ordinance.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** There were no public comments.

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:** Austin Ramirez, Economic Development Manager, provided a self-introduction as the City's newly hired Economic Development Manager. Manager Ramirez shared that he from Southern California and began his

## **TUMWATER PLANNING COMMISSION**

### **MINUTES OF HYBRID MEETING**

**September 13, 2022 Page 2**

career in economic development at the City of Claremont, California, located one hour east of Los Angeles. He eventually tired of traffic and the heat in California and moved to the Pacific Northwest where he joined Lane County based out Eugene Oregon, the county seat. Lane County encompasses the area from the Pacific Ocean to the Cascade Mountains. He was able to work in a variety of rural and urban settings and served as the county's Economic Development Manager. He and his wife selected the Tumwater area to raise their family and the position provided an opportunity to create a brand new position and become involved in the Tumwater Craft District and other unique City projects.

Prior to his arrival to the City, economic development was promoted within the City through various efforts and staffed with limited resources. The current Tumwater Economic Development Plan (EDP) highlights the need for the position and identified projects and responsibilities for the position.

Manager Medrud noted that the original EDP was adopted during the recession. When the plan was updated in 2019, the plan continued to identify the need for an economic development position.

Manager Ramirez said he has reviewed numerous economic development plans and was impressed with the City's EDP because it is a data-driven and evidence-based plan with priorities and decision-making identified. The 2019 update identified the need for equity and inclusivity before diversity, inclusivity, and equity were identified as a national effort and goal.

Manager Ramirez reviewed goals in the EDP:

- Business retention and expansion - Fostering an environment that facilitates economic equity in Tumwater
- Focused industry recruitment - Diversification of Tumwater industries to ensure a resilient city through proactive collaboration and communicating with partners and the business community
- Brownfields Program funding – Seek and leverage state and federal funding
- Coordinate legislative efforts
- Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) implementation
- Support brewery redevelopment - Tumwater has embarked on building its craft culture with high quality makers of all types of crafts to include food and beverage production

Manager Ramirez reviewed areas he is focusing on at this time:

- Business Retention and Expansion – Supporting existing businesses and assisting businesses in expanding and growing

## **TUMWATER PLANNING COMMISSION**

### **MINUTES OF HYBRID MEETING**

**September 13, 2022 Page 3**

- Focused Industry Recruitment
- Brownfields Program Funding – The federal Environmental Protection Agency is offering nearly \$1 billion this year for funding projects to assess and cleanup environmental contamination.
- Coordinate legislative efforts – The new position is responsible for coordination of all legislative efforts by the City. The City recently released a Request for Proposal for legislative advocacy services for the City.
- HCP Implementation – The HCP is important to the future of Tumwater, as well as for economic development potential in the City.
- Support Brewery Redevelopment – Redevelopment of the brewery property will take time and many resources. The redevelopment of the brewery property is important to the City in terms of its historical significance.

Commissioner Tobias mentioned recent economic development activity in the City of Olympia with the renovation of the multistory office building located on the isthmus fronting Capitol Lake. The building now houses retail on the first floor with residential units on the upper floors.

Manager Medrud agreed that the project was a successful conversion from office to residential use as a single-use building. The developer demolished some of the surrounding buildings and replaced them with new buildings. The brewery buildings in Tumwater offer a different kind of challenge as the buildings were built for a specific use with many of the buildings renovated or added on over time. The brewery buildings would be difficult to convert to another use. It is likely the brewery buildings would need to be demolished except the warehouse buildings in Tumwater Valley.

Commissioner Van Holtz asked about any remaining grants that might be available through the Department of Commerce. Manager Ramirez reported he meets with the Department of Commerce representatives regularly concerning some unfunded work within the Craft District and within the Capitol Boulevard Corridor Plan. Additionally, the City anticipates the Washington Department of Transportation placing its property located off Capitol Boulevard on the market early next year.

Commissioner Kirkpatrick advised that he was involved in the 2019 update of the EDP. City administration also indicated the plan goals would be accomplished within the next four years. He urged Manager Ramirez to consider the plan with a “grain of salt” and consider one of the first priorities as reviewing the plan and reconvening the Planning Commission to work on the goals rather than delaying actions until the

**TUMWATER PLANNING COMMISSION**  
**MINUTES OF HYBRID MEETING**  
**September 13, 2022 Page 4**

next update. In particular, for most categories of economic development, the plan lists more negative aspects than positive aspects of development. There seemed to be a prevalence of the City not wanting economic development when the plan was initially developed. He encouraged Manager Ramirez to review the plan because the City Council was comprised of different members when the plan was first developed. Since then, the City has a new Mayor and new Councilmembers and it is likely the aspect of the plan's focus could be different. He urged Manager Ramirez not to hesitate in recommending changes to the plan because the EDP serves as a plan that has not, for the most part, been implemented. He added that when he first arrived to Tumwater, many residents spoke to the need for a pharmacy. Over the years, a Walgreens was developed and the City has since lost all other private pharmacies in the City. He urged caution in what the City may wish for because it can often lead to unintended consequences.

*Commissioner Varela joined the meeting via zoom at 7:29 p.m. He noted that he has been participating by telephone but was unable to speak and subsequently transferred to the zoom platform.*

**DISCUSSION/  
ACTION:**

**ORDINANCE NO.  
O2022-003, FINAL  
DOCKET FOR 2022  
COMPREHENSIVE  
PLAN  
AMENDMENTS:**

Manager Medrud advised that the Commission reviewed and discussed the final docket of the 2022 Comprehensive Plan Amendments during a briefing and a worksession. The final docket includes one private map amendment and associated rezone and three City-sponsored text amendments the City Council forwarded to review and discuss. Following the initial reviews, staff recommends that additional work is required for the three text amendments that could be part of the overall major Comprehensive Plan Update process. He recommended the Commission's recommendation include language requesting the deferral of the three text amendments to the larger update process of the Comprehensive Plan next year. Additionally, the docket includes a City-sponsored map amendment and associated rezone for consideration.

Manager Medrud invited questions on any of the proposed amendments. Staff recommends the Commission schedule a public hearing on September 27, 2022 to receive public testimony on the final docket.

Commissioner Tobias asked about any feedback staff received on the language for the text amendments on neighborhood character. Manager Medrud said staff recommends deferring the text amendment on neighborhood character to the update of the Comprehensive Plan next year because it provides an opportunity to examine the terms and how they are framed within the context of the entire plan to ensure clarity of the intent. Staff believes a review of the language is important and

**TUMWATER PLANNING COMMISSION**  
**MINUTES OF HYBRID MEETING**  
**September 13, 2022 Page 5**

recommends including any updates as part of the overall Comprehensive Plan update. The intent is creating a new document with some existing elements carried over from the current plan. The Commission is scheduled to review the scope of the Comprehensive Plan Update during its second meeting in October. Staff is beginning to meet with other City staff to discuss the update process, as well as with administration and the Mayor.

**MOTION:** **Commissioner Tobias moved, seconded by Commissioner Varela, to schedule a public hearing on September 27, 2022 on Ordinance No. O2022-003 Final Docket for 2022 Comprehensive Plan Amendments.**

Manager Medrud responded to questions on whether the three text amendments on Neighborhood Character, Thurston Climate Mitigation Plan to update greenhouse gas emission (GHG) targets in the Conservation Element to address HB 2311 4, and Essential Public Facilities Amendments would be addressed. Staff plans to include a description of the discussion of the proposed amendments in the staff report for the public hearing. However, staff recommends excluding the amendments from the final docket ordinance and including them within the major update of the Comprehensive Plan scheduled next year.

**MOTION:** **A voice vote approved the motion unanimously.**

**NEXT MEETING DATE:** The next meeting is on Tuesday, September 27, 2022.

Commissioner Tobias requested receiving a copy of the current Commission meeting schedule.

**ADJOURNMENT:** **Commissioner Sullivan moved, seconded by Commissioner Edwards, to adjourn the meeting at 8:41 p.m. A voice vote approved the motion unanimously.**