MINUTES
KEIZER PLANNING COMMISSION
Wednesday, February 21, 2024
Keizer Civic Center

1. CALL TO ORDER CALL TO ORDER: Chair Matt Lawyer called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

ATTENDANCE:

Present:
Matt Lawyer, Chair
Sara Hutches, Vice Chair
Mo Avishan
Jeremy Grenz
Ron Bersin
Fernando Lopez
Robb Witters
Angelica Sarmiento Avendano

Absent:

Council Liaison Present:
Councilor Juran

Staff Present:
Shane Witham, Planning Director
Dina Horner, Assistant Planner
Joseph Lindsay, City Attorney
Shannon Johnson, City Attorney Emeritus
Dawn Wilson, Deputy City Recorder

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. January 2024 Commissioner Robb Witters moved for approval of the January 2024 Minutes as presented. Commissioner Sara Hutches seconded. Motion passed unanimously as follows: Lawyer, Bersin, Grenz, Avishan, Hutches, Witters, and Lopez in favor.

3. APPEARANCE OF INTERESTED CITIZENS Mark Shipman, land use attorney with Saalfield Griggs PC and Salem resident, is representing Sandy Kerr, her sister, and cousin, who collectively own 38 acres of real property in Keizer on Windsor Island Road, across from Willow Lake Road. He spoke on Agenda item 4a and item 3.8 on pages 22 - 24 in the draft Strategic Plan. The goal is for the City to move forward with revisiting the Willow Lake Settlement Agreement to create more developable land. His clients are in complete agreement with this action item. He and his client support the Strategic Plan in this manner.

His clients have owned this property in Keizer for decades and have seen development around their property. They have seen the City of Salem improve the Willow Lake Treatment Facility over the years to the extent that the special policy area is no longer appropriate in its current configuration. His clients' property is within the special policy area zone and outside of the zone. The effect substantially restrict their property for development. They agree that the Settlement Agreement needs to be revisited and the boundary of this special policy area needs to be amended back to Windsor Island Road.

Mr. Shipman believes that the special policy area is no longer accurate and needs to be revised. The Kerr family plans to meet with the City of Salem in March, and their goal is to file for a Comprehensive Plan Zone change and to amend the special policy area boundary in 2024. The goal is to provide for more residential family land in Keizer, which would require an amendment of the three-party Settlement Agreement. They ask for the Commissioners' help in moving forward.

City Attorney Emeritus Johnson stated that the Willow Lake Settlement Agreement is an agreement with the City of Salem to change the boundary. There's a decent portion inside the line that cannot be developed unless the agreement is revised and the boundary is changed.

Kathy Lincoln, Keizer, spoke on the draft Strategic Plan and agrees with most of the comments the Commissioners made last month and thinks the Strategic Plan is a little vague. She feels like it's more of a to-do list rather than a big plan. She asked what Keizer should look like in the next 5 or 10 years. She asked if we wanted a lively downtown or a cluster of fast food and chain stores by the interchange. She'd like to see downtown be alive, walkabout, and full of people. She believes there's a lot of land downtown, so she'd like to see that developed and the effort put into encouraging development on the underused and vacant spots on River Road and Cherry. She would like to see the downtown built up before expanding the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB). She stated that housing outside of the UGB is expensive.

Even with the new Bill, the City would still need to pay for infrastructure so the City should put the money into the downtown rather than expanding the UGB and to focus on the infrastructure and land within the city. She stated that Keizer's climate impact is missing from the Strategic Plan. She suggested encouraging new development for environental purposes by installing electrical vehicle stations and making streets and sidewalks safer. She wants to keep development within the current city boundaries, which would be beneficial financially, healthwise, and environmentally. The downtown area to her is River Road and the Cherry Avenue, as well as the River Road and McNary areas.

Chair Lawyer agreed that there is a housing disparity and stated that the money has been spent on trying to keep people working locally so they spend the money where they are living. Ms. Lincoln clarified that she is advocating for an infill first. She advocates building up the City first with the current land by reducing parking spots and increasing the heights of buildings to make a difference. Chair Lawyer said that in the past, the Planning Commission has mostly only discussed expansion of the UGB for employment, specifically for family-waged jobs to try to keep people from having to drive out of the city. By offering high paying jobs in Keizer, it could have the benefit of commuting to a future UGB expansion to go to jobs and not necessarily have to rely on cars and to have money spent in the city they live in.

4. STRATEGIC PLAN ~ Feedback from Planning Commission

Chair Lawyer opened the discussion on the Strategic Plan. Planning Director Witham invited feedback on the goals. Commissioner Avishan asked how the Strategic Plan action items could be discussed when the Mission, Vision, and Values were not agreed upon at last night's City Council meeting. Chair Lawyer clarified that the discussion would be around the goals. He said the charge of this Commission is to discuss how the goals of the Planning Commission are in alignment with the Strategic Plan or determine if anything was missing.

City Attorney Emeritus Johnson stated that the Council wanted more input so the process was extended to receive more comment.

Commissioner Lopez said that he thought the review is based upon deadlines and to make notes as to what he understands and provide input. Chair Lawyer understands from the February Minutes for the Commission is to talk about specific actions.

Commissioner Avishan said that the goals have to support a Mission and Vision and that the action items have to directly support the Mission and Vision once they are completely clear. He asked what excellence is in the Mission, and asked what life is. Under the Vision, according to the plan, this describes the vision over the next five years and asks if it is for the city itself or for the City of Keizer organization. He thinks the Strategic Plan addresses both and should not, and he asked what the city should look like.

Councilor Bersin thinks the Mission and Vision shouldn't have to be done by the City Council and that the Planning Commission could have an impact on them. He is opposed to picking out a private business in this panning stage.

Planning Director Witham has some action items that may have a nexus between the Planning Commission and the Strategic Plan. He reminded the Commissioners that the Planning Commission is a recommending body.

Chair Lawyer stated that if the action items are completely different from the Mission and Vision that the City Council could reconsider the Mssion and Vision.

Mr. Witham shared the action items that could be considered in the Planning Commission's wheelhouse. The action items could include the sidewalk gap and repair program, minimally; update the Transportation System Plan for safety and mobility; complete the River-Cherry Overlay District; a plan to live in the Parks; the economic analysis; all of Section 4 with regards to engagement and how to make implementations; all of the community growth items, which would include Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) goals, such as those wanting to be connected to municipal water; advocating for zoning and housing; and some development and redevelopment. Mr Witham doesn't see any big Planning Commission roles on Goal 6.

Chair Lawyer confirmed that the Planning Commission would have a role with 3.6. He also agreed that 3.8 could be a direct involvement of the Planning Commission, especially if the Willow Lake Settlement Agreement is updated and the area gets smaller and possible re-zoning, the Planning Commision could be making Quasi-judicial recommendations to City Council. He expressed how important it is for all committees work on the community engagement piece. There would be a lot of Planning Commission engagement under Goal 5.

Commissioner Grenz suggested that goal 2.1 should identify and prioritize the area and include funding options.

Chair Laywer strongly suggests that the Planning Commission engage with the public on any UGB discussions by outreaching with the boundaries or within growth areas by sending notices and invite property owners to comment at a Planning Commission meeting. It was noted that this should specifically be stated in the Strategic Plan.

Councilor Juran suggested coming up with a proposed UGB boundary based upon an analysis before discussions begin. Chair Lawyer suggested changing Goal 5.4 to be 5.1 or combine them, and the Commission agreed. Mr. Witham stated that there are nuances within each of the sub-goals # 5, so he suggested adding additional bullets for each subsection that define them.

Chair Lawyer recommends that the specific action items identified in this conversation under Sections 2, 3, 4 and 5 is where the Planning Commissioner feel strongly about to move to the next step in the Strategic Plan Process while recognizing that there are some nuances.

Commisioner Avishan asked that all items should include "As measured by xxxxx."

Commissioner Witters suggested on Goal 5.5 that instead of exploring interest regarding the opportunities for potential community growth, it would be better to define the interest and location for growth to determine where the citizens of Keizer would like to see growth. He believes explore the interest in community growth is ambiguous. Councilor Bersin wants to see the UGB added to interest growth goal. Councilor Witters said that there is an interpretation of growth and we need to define growth. Chair Lawyer suggested rewording the goal to say, "conduct public engagement and/or polling with residents to explore interests regarding opportunities for expansion of the UGB," and there was a consensus.

Mr. Witham believes that it's important to ask the public if they want a UGB and how they want the growth to be explanded. Commissioner Grenz suggested community engagement as to how the City should grow and include options.

Commissioner Lopez said that the more he listens to the discussion today, he likes how the Strategic Plan is written. He stated that when each action item is at hand, he knows that the details will be pinned down with discussion and public engatement.

Mr. Avishan believes that each action item should be clear and list the objection.

Commissioner Hutsches stated that she believes the Commission is getting too far in the weeds and discussions can happen in the nurture for each action item.

Chair Lawyer agreed that some layer of specificity would be helpful. Mr Witham asked the Commissioners if they want to have more input in the action items that he listed would be a direct nexus with the Planning Comnission. He invited comments, suggestions, and any missing items to be provided in writing and submit them to Deputy City Recorder Wilson.

Chair Lawyer summarized the action items having a direct nexus to the Planning Commission as follows: Under transportation as 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3 would generally be Planning Commission and/or potentially the Traffic Safety, Bikeways and Pedestrian Committee as participants. Section 3.6, the Planning Commission would definitely have a voice in the urban renewal. Section 3.1 on the economic analysis would be a practical role for the Planning Commission. The Planning Commission would have a Quasi-judicial process on Section 3.8. Most everything under Section 5 would include a lot of Planning Commission engagement.

The Commission didn't feel that there were any additional goals they wanted to engage on.

City Attorney Lindsay asked if any of the goals missed the mark. He invited the Commissioners to use their experience as Commissoners to make suggestions as to how they would like to make improvements over the next five years. He also asked the Commission how they would like to be more active. Next month's Agenda addresses this question.

Chair Lawyer said that by consensus, the action items were identified as a Commission.

a. Draft Strategic Plan Review

5. NEW-OLD BUSINESS/STAFF REPORT

Mr. Witham reported that the City received a new conditional use permit, variance, and two new subdivisions. The Apartment Complex on Verda has received some Certificates of Occupancies. The City received the first permit requests in Keizer Station, near Chick-fil-A.

Mr. Witham stated that City Attorney Emeritus Shannon Johnson has been a long-time attorney for the City. He expressed his appreciation for Mr. Johnson's leadership and has learned a lot from him. Mr. Witham also appreciates his Legal Assistant, Tammie Harms.

Chair Lawyer and Commissioners expressed appreciation for Mr. Johnson's work and welcomed Mr Lindsay.

Commissioner Bersin would like to start a process to expand the Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU) and garages to be the same square footage of 750 square feet because they don't look astatically pleasing when the 750 square foot ADU is on top of the detached garage or out-building at only 600 square feet. Mr. Johnson said that a discussion could happen tonight and suggested that a discussion item could be added to the Agenda next month if there are no objections. The Commission agreed to discuss this at the next meeting.

6. COUNCIL LIAISON REPORT

Councilor Juran reported on the City Council meeting where they recognized Mr. Johnson and swore-in the emotional support police dog, Koda.

Youth Liaison Avendano reported on McNary High School's upcoming orchestra, band concert, choir concert, and Spring sports.

7. COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE: Mo Avishan to Report to Council on March 4, 2024

8. NEXT MEETING: March 13, 2024

9. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned: 8:19 p.m.

Minutes approved: 03/13/2024

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