

**City of Lake Forest Park - Planning Commission**  
**Approved Regular Meeting Minutes: January 10, 2023**  
**In-person and Zoom Hybrid Meeting**

**Planning Commissioners present:** Chair Maddy Larson, Ira Gross, David Kleweno Melissa Cranmer, Ashton Alvarez McCartney, Meredith LaBonte, Walter Hicks, Vice Chair Lois Lee

**Staff and others present:** Steve Bennett, Planning Director; Nick Holland, Senior Planner; Councilmember Lorri Bodi

**Members of the Public:** Cherie Finazzo, LeAnne Nelson

**Planning Commissioners absent:** n/a

**Call to order:** Chair Larson called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm.

**Land Acknowledgement:** Cmr. Gross read the land acknowledgement.

**Approval of Agenda**

Cmr. Gross made a motion to approve the agenda, Cmr. Cranmer seconded, and the motion to approve the agenda carried unanimously.

**Approval of Meeting Minutes**

Cmr. McCartney made a motion to approve the December 13, 2022, meeting minutes. Cmr. Gross seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

**Meeting Dates:**

The next regular meeting is scheduled for February 14, 2023. Discussion occurred regarding rescheduling the meeting. It was tentatively decided that the next meeting would be scheduled for February 7<sup>th</sup>.

**Citizen Comment**

Leanne Nelson said that she has worked for local government and would like to be a planning commissioner.

**Report from City Council Liaison**

Councilmember Bodi said the Council will consider the sign code and reasonable use exception code change recommendations during February. She said that she plans on continuing to function as Council liaison.

Chair Larson asked if a member of the Planning Commission should be at the meeting for the code recommendations and Councilmember Bodi responded and said that she would expect Planning Commission representation at the meeting. Chair Larson asked the other commissioners to consider attending that meeting.

Vice Chair Lee thanked Councilmember Bodi for her time.

**Old Business**

**• Comprehensive Plan Update-**

Chair Larson introduced the topics. Director Bennett provided some background information on the elements up for discussion.

1           •   **Review of 2015 Comprehensive Plan Transportation Element**

2  
3   Cmr. Cranmer asked about the transportation benefit district funds mentioned on page 86 in volume one of  
4   the comprehensive plan. Director Bennett provided his understanding of how the Council serves as the  
5   district board. Cmr. Hicks provided some input on the topic as well. Director Bennett proceeded to explain  
6   the purpose of the transportation element of the comprehensive plan. He said that there had been a lot of  
7   planning initiatives since 2015 on the topic of transportation. He said that the plan serves as a source for city  
8   policy and describes how the City Council prioritizes certain transportation projects so they can eventually  
9   qualify for funding by way of grants. Chair Larson provided her perspective on the purpose of the  
10   transportation element of the comprehensive plan. She said that some funds have been difficult to obtain  
11   because of the lack of formal policies surrounding certain transportation projects. Director Bennett said that  
12   public works staff is valuable in identifying the areas where transportation projects should be prioritized. He  
13   talked about how the comprehensive plan serves as the overarching policy document to support regulations  
14   and code changes.

15  
16   Director Bennett presented the multi-modal transportation portion of the transportation element and said  
17   that there haven't been any regulations adopted to implement the multi-modal policy and suggested that the  
18   policy could be removed from the plan if it no longer is of priority to the city. Cmr. Kleweno asked for clarity  
19   on the consultant's role for the comprehensive plan update. Director Bennett indicated that the consultant  
20   would perform a gap analysis to determine what needs to be amended on the comprehensive plan. Cmr.  
21   Kleweno asked about the purpose of the comprehensive plan. Director Bennett responded and provided an  
22   explanation of how the comprehensive plan is used to establish policies which in turn can lead to the  
23   adoption of new regulations. Chair Larson thanked Cmr. Kleweno for his questions and said that the  
24   community may have similar questions about the purpose of the comprehensive plan. Cmr. Cranmer said  
25   that she would like to see more state funding for improvements to state highways. Director Bennett  
26   explained how elements and plans such as the city's safe streets program help to get infrastructure installed,  
27   because their priority is listed within the plan. A discussion ensued regarding how the consultant for the  
28   comprehensive plan can assist in identifying priority updates to the plan. Chair Larson suggested highlighting  
29   the elements and policies that might bring questions for the consultant. Cmr. Gross asked if the consultant  
30   would attend planning commission meetings and Director Bennett responded and said that they would be  
31   attending.

32  
33           •   **Review of 2015 Comprehensive Plan Economic Development Element**

34   Director Bennett provided some background on the Economic Development element and said that Town  
35   Center has been the focus of economic development efforts since the last comprehensive plan update. He  
36   said that the Town Center plan and code updates were done in part to promote economic development. He  
37   said that for there to be more of revenue generated in town center, more people need to live in the town  
38   center area. Director Bennett asked Cmr. Hicks if he has input on this element since he suggested the  
39   Commission discuss it at this meeting. Cmr. Hicks responded that there may be other areas where economic  
40   development could occur other than town center and suggested that amendments to the goals and policies  
41   could enhance economic development in other parts of the city. Chair Larson provided her perspective on  
42   this plan element. Cmr. Gross suggested talking to business owners about how economic development might  
43   evolve in the city. Cmr. Kleweno asked what the Commission's questions might be for the consultant, so  
44   that a thoughtful and productive discussion can occur. Director Bennett responded that the next item on the  
45   agenda, consultant scope discussion, could provide a good opportunity for input on that issue. He added that  
46   the public engagement process will also generate questions for the consultant to address.

47  
48           •   **Review of draft consultant scope of work for Comprehensive Plan Update**

49   Chair Larson asked Director Bennett what the objective was of the consultant scope discussion. Director  
50   Bennett responded and said that he wants to see if there is a consensus on what the consultant should be  
51   working on. Cmr. McCartney asked how the consultant would work with the Commission. Director Bennett

1 responded that they will prepare a strategy for public engagement, report on the outcomes of the public  
2 engagement, do a gap analysis on the current Comp Plan and then they will draft updates for each element  
3 which the Commission will review. Ultimately, the Commission will be able to review the final document as  
4 whole. Director Bennett also said that the format of the plan would also be discussed and could change if  
5 needed.

6  
7 Cmr. Gross asked how the progress of the consultant's work is tracked. Director Bennett responded that it  
8 would differ from code updates other projects that have percentage-based milestones. He suggested that the  
9 review would start with the land use element since it drives everything else. He suggested that each element's  
10 revisions would be touched on twice prior to compiling the new draft plan into one document. Chair Larson  
11 provided her perspective on how the consultant should provide updates on the progress. Director Bennett  
12 said that this process should be more predictable than some of the previous code updates the Commission  
13 has undertaken.

14  
15 Director Bennett talked about the other components that would make up the Request For Proposals (RFP)  
16 that would be published on order to hire a consultant. He said a selection committee would be appointed  
17 that would make a recommendation to the Mayor and Council regarding their top choice for the consultant  
18 to be hired. He said that we may benefit from some of the other cities updating their plans, because  
19 consultants can provide input based upon their experiences with other cities. He suggested that this comp  
20 plan update process could be fairly selective in what gets updated. There shouldn't be a need to do a  
21 wholesale update to the plan like the last one. Director Bennett said that the last RFP for the previous  
22 comprehensive plan update largely focused on economic development.

23  
24 Chair Larson walked through each bullet point on the draft consultant scope for discussion. Cmr. Cranmer  
25 suggested that a report card should be part of the scope. The purpose would be to track progress and an  
26 assessment of whether adopted vision and policies are being realized in actual improvements to the city.  
27 She said that it could help create a sense of transparency for the public. Vice Chair Lee said that the  
28 commission should define a community identity and vision for the community. Director Bennett agreed that  
29 the report card concept is one that could be incorporated into a consultant scope of work and RFP. Cmr.  
30 McCartney suggested conducting surveys to connect with the public. Cmr. Hicks said that the consultant's  
31 scope should include meetings with the public and Council and asked if there should be specific language to  
32 speak to the frequency of meetings like those mentioned. Director Bennett indicated he thought that the  
33 consultant should have the opportunity to create a strategy on how they would engage with the public. That  
34 engagement strategy would be subject to approval by the Commission and Council. Vice Chair Lee asked  
35 how budgeted funds would be spent. Director Bennett responded that a more robust timeline will be  
36 developed once a consultant is hired and explained how funds will be allocated for the purpose of paying the  
37 consultant. Chair Larson suggested language for the scope to reflect what the commission desires for  
38 meeting frequency with key stakeholders. Cmr. Cranmer pointed out that the commission met 29 times  
39 during the last update and she asked for clarity on that frequency. Director Bennett responded and said that  
40 this update shouldn't be as lengthy and intense as the last one. Vice Chair Lee suggested that the consultant  
41 be somewhat responsible for keeping the commission on schedule for the update.

42  
43 Cmr. Kleweno asked what the overall objective is for the process. He suggested including an objective  
44 statement to define the purpose of the effort. Chair Larson suggested adding a gap analysis for each topic  
45 that the consultant might work on. Director Bennett summarized what he understood the suggested changes  
46 and additions to be. Chair Larson asked if there would be an opportunity for input on the other portions of  
47 the RFP and talked about each bullet point within the draft scope. She suggested some differing language for  
48 the fourth bullet point in the scope. Director Bennett indicated he appreciated the suggested changes and  
49 thought they would improve the RFP. Cmr. Kleweno asked if the commission should have some perimeters  
50 surrounding the vision statement. Director Bennett responded and provided a strategy on how the  
51 commission may establish a background for a vision.

Chair Larson asked about the housing needs assessment and how it is defined in the context of the update. Director Bennett said that and the focus had evolved since the original concept was discussed. He provided an update on the scope of the housing needs assessment, which will be part of the housing element update. Discussion continued related to the consultant scope of work. Director Bennett provided an explanation of those items mandated by the growth management act, like the update to the critical areas code. He spoke about the state requirement that codes reflect the adopted comprehensive plan. Director Bennett explained to Chair Larson that the comprehensive plan drives the content of regulations and codes, and that regulations and codes must be consistent with the policies, statements, and goals of adopted comprehensive plans and sub area plans. Discussion ensued about how to develop a public outreach plan and how other boards and committees can become involved in the comprehensive plan update. Cmr. McCartney asked if the commission should review the entire RFP. Director Bennett responded that the commission will get a chance to see the complete RFP but it is a product of the City Administration and he reiterated his appreciation of the Commission's suggestions on the scope.

#### **New Business**

- **2022 Planning Commission Annual Report**

Chair Larson opened the floor for discussion of the 2022 annual report. Chair Larson suggested adding to the October meeting section to reference the recommendation of the reasonable use exception code amendments to Council. She asked how to account for items that didn't get accomplished which were scheduled to be done in the year's work plan. Director Bennett and Cmr. Gross suggested adding a sentence at the end of the report to reflect how the commission didn't get to work plan items. Chair Larson suggested adding, "work on the SMP wasn't prioritized because Council was to finish the updates directly"; She also suggested adding, "work on the comp plan update was pushed to 2023".

- **2023 Planning Commission Work Plan**

Chair Larson opened the floor for discussion of this topic. She suggested using the term "housing needs assessment" instead of the language in the draft. Vice Chair Lee suggested spending 100% of Commission time working on the comprehensive plan update. All agreed. Chair Larson asked how the Commission is involved in public outreach and workshops. Director Bennett provided an explanation and Councilmember Bodi said that the Council would prefer that the Commission be a primary point of contact for the community.

Cmr. Alvarez McCartney noted that her last name is McCartney. Cmr. McCartney moved to approve the amended 2023 Planning Commission work plan and 2022 Planning Commission annual report; Vice Chair Lee seconded; and the motion passed unanimously.

#### **Reports and Announcements**

Director Bennett noted that a new city arborist had started work in December and her name is Hannah Swanson.

#### **Additional Citizen Comments:**

Leanne Nelson said that her questions were answered during the meeting.

Cherie Finazzo said that she is pleased to be here. She asked how the materials get published and Director Bennett responded that the meeting packet is available on the website.

Don Fiene said that he may have comments later.

#### **Agenda for Next Meeting:**

1 Comprehensive Plan updates. Director Bennett suggested reviewing the land use element for the next  
2 meeting. Chair Larson mentioned that she is interested in learning more about housing needs assessments.  
3 There was discussion about the content of the planning short course videos.  
4

5 **Adjournment:**

6 Cmr. Hicks made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Cmr. Gross seconded, and the motion carried  
7 unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 8:59 pm.  
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9 APPROVED:  
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11

*Madlyn Larson*

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13 Maddy Larson, Planning Commission Chair