



PLANNING COMMISSION & CITY COUNCIL JOINT MEETING APROVED MINUTES

Wednesday, December 13, 2023, at 4:00 PM

Members Present: Mayor Rick Scholl
Council President Jessica Chilton
Councilor Russ Hubbard
Councilor Brandon Sundeen
Councilor Mark Gundersen

Chair Dan Cary
Vice Chair Jennifer Shoemaker
Commissioner Ginny Carlson
Commissioner Charles Castner
Commissioner David Rosengard (Zoom)

Members Absent: Commissioner Russ Low

Staff Present: City Administrator John Walsh
City Planner Jacob Graichen
Associate Planner Jenny Dimsho
Deputy City Recorder Lisa Scholl
Community Development Admin Assistant Christina Sullivan

This meeting was held in the Council Chambers.

At 4:00 p.m., Mayor Rick Scholl opened the Joint Planning Commission and City Council Meeting. The purpose, rules, and goals of this meeting were explained. The mayor is the presiding officer, the group must have respect for others' time, and no decisions are to be made at these meetings.

DISCUSSION OF PSILOCYBIN PROHIBITION

City Planner Jacob Graichen explained there was a two-year moratorium on the facilitation of psilocybin. He said that moratorium ends at the end of 2024. He mentioned this is the time of year the Planning Department is more able to work on code amendments, and they wanted to use this meeting to discuss the level of concern and their ideas on how to manage this. He said they had done some research in to what other cities have done to implement these guidelines.

Associate Planner Jenny Dimsho shared a presentation on psilocybin facilities in Oregon. She explained Oregon passed a ballot measure that directs the Oregon Health Authority to license and regulate the manufacturing, transportation, delivery, sale, and purchase of psilocybin products and the provision of psilocybin services.

She explained the different licenses including manufacturers, service centers, and facilitators.

She shared some of the experiences other communities have had who have already implemented psilocybin service centers. She said some of the centers were in Portland and only about five were open currently. The others were still in the process of getting approval.

She mentioned that most of the customers who utilize these facilities have been reported as out of state customers. She said the cost of the sessions can range from \$1,000 to \$3,000 and that they are not

covered by healthcare. She also said there is a long waitlist for being able to utilize these services and that the service centers she researched offer a long list of tourism activities and places to stay while you wait. She said it seemed to be advertised as medical tourism. She also said they look like medical offices and sometimes share space with other medical facilities.

There was a small discussion on how these service centers were regulated.

There was a small discussion on the education required to be a psilocybin facilitator.

She discussed some of the next steps that would need to take place to help implement development code around these service centers. She said there could be rules that are adopted, or they could use existing rules.

There was a discussion on what zoning districts they see these centers allowed in or where they do not want to see them.

Vice Chair Jennifer Shoemaker said she considered this alternative medicine but was concerned about the number of them opening in our community.

Council President Jessica Chilton said she wanted to be sure we listen to the people in our community and create guidelines that fit those needs.

Commissioner Ginny Carlson said this is a new form of medicine for those who are beyond the reach of pharmaceuticals, and she felt that even though we may not understand it if it can help someone, she is glad it is available to them.

There was a small discussion about how psilocybin is administered.

Councilor Mark Gunderson expressed concern that there were not more qualifications needed to be a facilitator.

Dimsho shared different options to use the zoning to help keep the locations in specific areas.

Mayor Rick Scholl said he had not heard many individuals discussing the psilocybin service or the measure so he did not see the service centers as being something that would be in high demand to move to this community.

There was a discussion on where service centers and manufacturers of the psilocybin could be located and what an appropriate number of restrictions for them would be.

DISCUSSION OF VACANT STOREFRONTS

Vice Chair Shoemaker opened the discussion by sharing that the Planning Commission has a Proactive Items list and they felt like they had been choosing items to work on that were more on their personal agenda versus what the Community would like to see.

She said there was a consistent group of citizens coming and asking the Planning Commission to address the vacant storefronts. She shared some research done on other communities and how they handle vacant buildings.

There was a small discussion about the different storefronts in St. Helens that were vacant.

There was a discussion on ways to incentivize business owners to keep their storefronts from being vacant.

Councilor Russ Hubbard said the financial burden maintaining a business in specific districts can be overwhelming for some. It can also be a discouragement to new developers coming in who do not receive the grandfathered in rules for the building they might be looking at.

Commissioner David Rosengard said maybe it would be beneficial to investigate other cities, like Astoria, who have a lot of older buildings with storefronts in them and what they have implemented to keep those storefronts open.

There was a discussion about restoration grants or how the City could control the taxation to incentivize the business to stay open. They also discussed the affordability of maintaining occupancy through the code.

Councilor Chilton suggested starting a registry to track the vacant storefronts and then there would be exact documentation on where they are located, who owns them, and what they are being used for.

There was a discussion about involving the Mainstreet program for information to help shape an idea for how to move forward.

There was a small discussion on how to demolish old buildings and the rules that are already in place.

There was a discussion on the current locally designated landmarks list and how there were so many buildings missing that should be on the list. There was a discussion about updating the list to get some of these buildings on it.

Mayor Scholl said the Planning Commission and City Council could get together and educate the community on the significance of historic preservation and why adding their historic building to the list would be valuable.

OTHER BUSINESS

Vice Chair Shoemaker mentioned in the meeting the night before that the Planning Commission was asked about pausing their stipends because of the City's budget crisis. She said everyone in the group was on board with saving the City any money they can if it saves an employee from having to furlough or having to be paid off. She said they wanted to encourage other Commissions to do the same.

Commissioner Carlson said in the spirit of teamwork everyone should feel the pinch if one group must.

Mayor Scholl said the Budget Committee had not been formed yet, and once they were, they would look at all the items in the budget and determine the best route to move forward.

There was a small discussion about ideas that could be discussed at the next joint meeting. There was consensus that vacant storefronts should be on the agenda to continue the discussion from this meeting.

Councilor Hubbard said he would like to see the City Council move forward in asking the Planning Commission more questions before decisions are made and to utilize the Planning Commission ahead of time more often, instead of decisions being made by the Planning Commission and then coming to the City Council. Chair Cary said this was the point of the City Council Liaison coming to the meetings.

Mayor Scholl discussed a little more about the ex parte contact with liaisons and that we need to do some more education on it across the board in all meetings and commissions.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 5:42 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Christina Sullivan

Community Development Administrative Assistant

/s/ Rick Scholl

Rick Scholl, Mayor

/s/ Dan Cary

Dan Cary, Chair