

**TUMWATER PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES OF MEETING
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CONVENE: 7:04 p.m.

PRESENT: Chair Elizabeth Robbins and Commissioners Terry Kirkpatrick, Brandon Staff, Michael Tobias, Anthony Varela, and Kelly Von Holtz.

Excused: Commissioners Grace Edwards and Brian Schumacher.

Staff: City Administrator Lisa Parks, Community Development Director Michael Matlock, Planning Manager Brad Medrud, Economic Development Manager Austin Ramirez, and Land Use and Housing Planner Erika Smith-Erickson.

CHANGES TO THE AGENDA: Election of officers for 2024 was added to the agenda.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

**TUMWATER
PLANNING
COMMISSION
MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 12, 2023:**

MOTION: Commissioner Tobias moved, seconded by Commissioner Kirkpatrick, to approve the minutes of September 12, 2023 as published. A voice vote approved the motion unanimously.

INTRODUCTION OF BRANDON STAFF AS NEW PLANNING COMMISSIONER: Chair Robbins welcomed Brandon Staff as a new member of the Planning Commission. Members provided self-introduction and shared information on their respective personal and professional background.

ELECTION OF 2024 CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR: Chair Robbins invited nominations for Chair.

NOMINATION: Commissioner Kirkpatrick nominated Commissioner Robbins to serve as the Chair for 2024. Commissioner Tobias seconded the nomination.

No other nominations were offered.

ACTION: By unanimous consent, Commissioner Robbins was elected to serve as 2024 Chair.

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Chair Robbins invited nominations for Vice Chair for 2024.

NOMINATION: **Chair Robbins nominated Anthony Varela to serve as the 2024 Vice Chair.**

Commissioner Varela respectfully declined as he would be unable to provide the time and support required for the position.

NOMINATION: **Commissioner Kirkpatrick nominated Commissioner Tobias to serve as 2024 Vice Chair. Commissioner Von Holtz seconded the nomination.**

Commissioner Tobias accepted the nomination.

No other nominations were offered.

ACTION: **By unanimous consent, Commissioner Tobias was elected to serve as 2024 Vice Chair.**

CITY
ADMINISTRATOR'S
MEETING WITH THE
PLANNING
COMMISSION:

City Administrator Parks provided information on her professional background and education. Her education, training, and background focuses on land use and environmental planning. She graduated with a degree in Urban and Regional Planning from Eastern Washington University in June 1990. The state's Growth Management Act (GMA) was passed and implemented in April 1990. She joined Douglas County as a Planner working on the county's growth management planning. She processed permit applications, shoreline permits, subdivision, and conditional use permits. She worked with the county for approximately 7-1/2 years leaving as a Senior Planner. She then joined the City of Leavenworth as the Community Development Director. Her position focused on critical areas, natural resources, and City planning and development issues. She left the City of Leavenworth and opened a consulting business in land use and environmental planning working primarily with cities and counties providing planning services. As a consultant, she also worked for public utility districts and port districts. In 2011, she accepted a position as the Executive Director of the Port of Douglas County. The port is a small port district primarily focused on economic development. During fall 2019, she moved to Olympia and joined a consulting firm until March 2020 when she accepted a position with a local environmental planning firm. Because of her preference to work for the public sector, she accepted a position with the Port of Olympia in July 2021 serving as the Director of Environmental and Planning Programs and worked on capital investment planning strategies. She participated in some joint projects with the City of Tumwater and provided some assistance on the Habitat Conservation

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Plan representing the Port of Olympia. She was recently appointed to serve as the City Administrator for Tumwater. Working for cities provides her with the ability to have the most impact on people's lives in terms of the delivery of public services, infrastructure, and creating a great quality of life. She is thrilled to be part of the Tumwater team.

Commissioner Kirkpatrick encouraged City Administrator Parks to continue the Tumwater University program. City Administrator Parks said she is aware of the program. Today, the challenge is helping people understand ways to participate in civic processes. She plans to re-energize the program to promote the program within the community to attract participation.

**COMMISSIONER'S
REPORTS:**

There were no reports.

**MANAGER'S
REPORT:**

Manager Medrud reported the next meeting includes a discussion on the 2024 Work Program.

To date, the City has received 54 responses from the public survey, which will be shared at the next meeting.

Staff continues to work on the Washington Wildland-Urban Interface Code with the State Building Code Council to review some of the issues created by the new codes.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

There were no public comments.

**2025
COMPREHENSIVE
PLAN PERIODIC
UPDATE –
ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT:**

Manager Ramirez reported the current Economic Development Plan contains nine goals accompanied by several sub-goals. Rather than a major overhaul of the plan, the periodic update will refocus and refresh the plan. The last update of the plan was in 2019. Many assumptions and data in the plan will need to be reviewed. Additionally, the community's attitude towards economic development has evolved and shifted since 2019 prompting more engagement with stakeholders, the community, and the business sector to ensure the plan is relevant. Each goal has accompanying priorities. Because of existing staff resources and workload, the focus will be on issues of most importance for economic development.

Next steps for the update by spring 2024 include updating data and assumptions, the market profile of Tumwater, adding some new initiatives, and including information on the City's efforts in the development of the Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP). Implementation of the HCP will involve acquisition of mitigation land throughout the City to ensure development in the City can continue by offsetting

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impacts to gopher habitat.

Many existing goals and initiatives are no longer relevant, and some goals have been completed. Throughout the update process, feedback will be solicited on what should be included in the Economic Development Plan. The City's focus and recent work on diversity, equity, and inclusion as well as environmental justice will be included in the plan. The City was able to secure some grants to support economic development initiatives. The City is also embarking on diversity, equity, and environmental justice within the organization.

During fall and winter 2024, staff will continue receiving feedback on each draft of the plan. The Commission will receive ongoing briefings on the status of the update and draft plans. Staff is also working closely with Thurston Economic Development Council (EDC) to host business roundtables and focus groups throughout the update process. During phase 3 in fall 2024 through June 2025, staff will pursue additional engagement, conduct more worksessions, and produce more drafts of the plan with the effort culminating in the adoption of an updated Economic Development Plan.

Commissioner Staff inquired as to whether there has been any coordination with the master plan under development by *Experience Olympia and Beyond*. Manager Ramirez advised that he is a member of the committee responsible for providing support for development of the master plan. *Experience Olympia and Beyond* is leading a regional effort to create a 10-year destination master plan describing the community as a destination and the types of amenities available or lacking in the region. At the last committee meeting, the discussion focused on Tumwater's Craft District. The committee will be engaged throughout the plan update.

Commissioner Tobias mentioned the market explosion of microbreweries over a decade ago and market forces for different types of alcohol over time. Today, the City is benefitting from the Craft District and Heritage Distilling Company. He asked whether the plan accounts for shifts in the market over time, particularly the beverage sector as many distilling companies have site-specific equipment to produce the product that may not be easy to shift or pivot as the market changes. He asked whether the plan would account for saturation in the distillery market similar to how the microbrewery market was saturated over the last ten years. Manager Ramirez explained that the issue speaks to the challenge, as the City is not the developer, the investor, or the consumer. The City is the facilitator of an environment where investment can occur and where new businesses can locate and expand. The plan does not address physical space or equipment other than

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different sectors. Many alcohol beverage sectors are reaching a saturation point today.

Commissioner Staff spoke to the craft brewing industry as it sparked the movement of the craft distilling industry because distilled spirits do not spoil. Beer can spoil. The next iteration he is exploring is non-alcoholic beverages, such as non-alcoholic beers and whiskey. The business infrastructure would be similar but utilized in different ways. There are many possibilities because it tends to bring people together to enjoy the community. Craft cocktail production is the next iteration in the alcohol beverage market. Additionally, the region drives the products through the production of grapes, hops, and other agriculture products supporting the production of alcohol and non-alcoholic products.

Manager Ramirez said he believes the City is situated to better weather changes in consumer demand and the types of small distilling and manufacturing.

Chair Robbins commented that the plan should include different sectors and basic information for each sector in terms of number of jobs, business revenue produced, and tax revenue received by the City to enable the City to identify trends within each sector. Manager Ramirez said the information will be included in the update. One area is the state workforce as many of the offices are consolidating with many employees no longer potential consumers in Tumwater during the business day as they are longer working in the City. A sector of focus is creative maker entrepreneurs. The EDC is leading an innovation accelerator pilot program. Many of those businesses are invisible because many do not operate in a stand-alone building despite being a strong sector in the region and in the City.

Chair Robbins suggested other information should include suppliers, manufacturers, or makers in the area or products available locally to support local businesses, as well as the type of market created by local manufacturers or makers. Manager Ramirez advised that the regional economic entity is the EDC. The EDC obtains data crossing all city limits in the region. EDC shares the data with the City. Many of the suppliers are located in Thurston County and often provide mutual support.

ORDINANCE NO.
O2023-002, FINAL
DOCKET FOR 2023
COMPREHENSIVE
PLAN

Planner Smith-Erickson reported the proposed docket of 2023 Comprehensive Plan Amendments includes the Old Highway 99 Corridor Plan. Old Highway 99 is a major transportation corridor connecting Tumwater with communities to the south. Commercial and residential use levels have increased substantially in recent years

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AMENDMENTS:

extending peak commute hours and lengthening vehicle wait times. In 2016, the City of Tumwater updated the Transportation Element in the Comprehensive Plan. The process determined that two lanes are required in both directions on Old Highway 99 from 79th Avenue to 88th Avenue. The proposal includes the replacement of traffic lights with roundabouts. Citizen feedback on the plan identified five main improvements of bicycle lanes, sidewalks, reduced traffic congestion, intersection safety, and street lighting.

The Old Highway 99 Plan was added to the Work Plan in January 2023 by the Council. The Planning Commission recommended additional review of the proposal on January 24, 2023. On February 8, 2023, the General Government Committee reviewed the preliminary docket of Comprehensive Plan Amendments and forwarded the docket to the Council for review. The City Council conducted a work session in February to consider the recommendation from the Planning Commission.

Commissioner Tobias asked whether the City has collaborated with the City of Tenino as Old Highway 99 also extends to the City of Tenino. Manager Medrud advised that the proposed improvements are located within the Tumwater City limits.

Commissioner Kirkpatrick noted that the plan overlooks the section of Old Highway 99 between Tumwater Boulevard and 79th Avenue, which lacks sidewalks. He questioned the proposal to include sidewalks south of 79th Avenue when access for pedestrians is lacking from Tumwater Boulevard to 79th Avenue. Manager Medrud said he would follow up on the question with Transportation and Engineering staff.

Commissioner Kirkpatrick commented that a major biking event in western Washington is the Seattle to Portland Bike Ride. The route is along the west side of Interstate 5. The most appropriate location for bicycle lanes from north to south should be on the west side of Interstate 5 rather than east of Interstate 5. He recently visited Denver, Colorado and observed the predominance of bicycle lanes whether needed or not affecting parking on downtown streets because of bike lanes. He questioned the feasibility of including urban bicycle lanes within the plan and whether staff has considered the environment today and current needs as opposed to needs ten years ago.

Manager Medrud recommended inviting Assistant Transportation and Engineering Director Mary Heather Ames to brief the Commission on both the Transportation Plan and the Old Highway 99 Plan.

Commissioner Tobias said the Old Highway 99 project area is adjacent

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to the Olympia Regional Airport. He asked whether the City has contacted the Port of Olympia to coordinate the project. Manager Medrud advised that staff have been in discussions with Port because of the project location and the roundabout at 79th Avenue, which will require close coordination with the Port.

Chair Robbins asked whether some portions of the corridor have been reconstructed. Manager Medrud said the northern area at Tumwater Boulevard was reconstructed to include reconfiguration and the addition of a lane. Chair Robbins asked whether the investment was intended to satisfy growth and demand over the next 20 years. Manager Medrud explained that the improvements were intended to cover both current needs and future needs. The larger vision of the plan is to address current and future growth. Additionally, the county is considering an option to expand the City's urban growth area to the south along Old Highway 99. Planning today will need to account for that possibility.

Chair Robbins asked whether the regional transportation plan addresses Old Highway 99 as the corridor also connects cities to the south. Manager Medrud said Thurston Regional Planning Council is responsible for maintaining the regional plan. The regional plan informs the planning work completed by staff for the corridor. The GMA also requires the City to coordinate with adjacent jurisdictions to ensure any proposals do not conflict.

Manager Medrud encouraged members to contact him with any additional questions or concerns. He will follow up with Assistant Director Ames to coordinate a briefing.

Planner Smith-Erickson reported the second amendment is the 2024-2029 Capital Facilities Plan (CFP) Update. The update addresses GMA requirements to update the City's six-year with new data and analysis and confirm implementation actions. The update reflects changes that have occurred in the City since the last update of the CFP as part of the 2021 Comprehensive Plan Amendments. The CFP is an element of the Comprehensive Plan and contains a list of capital projects with estimated costs and proposed methods for financing. The Commission previously received an update from Transportation and Engineering and Water Resources staff on project updates.

Planner Smith-Erickson invited questions. The Commission offered no comments or questions.

ORDINANCE NO.
02023-012, FINAL
DOCKET FOR 2023

Planner Smith-Erickson reported on the annual update of the City's Development Code. Since the last briefing on the proposed ordinance, underground utility requirements were updated. Transportation and

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**ANNUAL
HOUSEKEEPING
AMENDMENTS:**

Engineering staff requested an amendment to Tumwater Municipal Code 17.12.200 – General Design Standards – Underground utilities, clarifying the requirement that new and existing electrical power, telephone, cable television, fiber optics and other transmission lines shall be installed underground.

Commissioner Tobias said the proposed language speaks to frontage improvements requirements for existing utilities over 200 linear feet. He asked how a linear foot is measured. Manager Medrud said the measurement is across the frontage of a project site. The requirement applies if the improvement exceeds 200 feet.

Planner Smith-Erickson requested consideration of scheduling a public hearing on the proposed ordinance.

MOTION:

Commissioner Tobias moved, seconded by Commissioner Von Holtz, to schedule a public hearing for Ordinance No. O2023-012, Final Docket for 2023 Annual Housekeeping Amendments on November 28, 2023. A voice vote approved the motion unanimously.

**NEXT MEETING
DATE:**

The next meeting is scheduled on November 28, 2023.

ADJOURNMENT:

Commissioner Tobias moved, seconded by Commissioner Von Holtz, to adjourn the meeting at 8:11 p.m. A voice vote approved the motion unanimously.

Prepared by Valerie L. Gow, Recording Secretary/President
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