

APPROVED

CITY OF BREMERTON

PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES OF IN-PERSON AND VIRTUAL MEETING October 17, 2022

CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Tift called the regular meeting of the Bremerton Planning Commission to order at 5:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Commissioners Present

Chair Tift
Vice Chair Rich
Commissioner Flemister
Commissioner Mosiman
Commissioner Pedersen
Commissioner Wofford

Staff Present

Andrea Spencer, Director, Department of Community Development
Garrett Jackson, Planning Manager, Department of Community Development
Katharine Shaffer, Senior Planner, Department of Community Development
Christina Raine, Project Assistant, Department of Community Development

Commissioners Excused

Commissioner Coviello

Quorum Confirmed

CHAIR CALL FOR MODIFICATIONS TO AGENDA

The agenda was accepted as presented.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

COMMISSIONER WOFFORD MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 19, 2022, AS PRESENTED. COMMISSIONER FLEMISTER SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

PUBLIC MEETING

Call to the Public (public comments on any item not on the agenda)

Chair Tift invited comments from citizens. There were none.

Workshop: Draft Community Survey Intended to Gather Public Input for 2024 Comprehensive Plan Update

Mr. Jackson advised that the purpose of the workshop is for the Commission to consider public comment and provide staff with direction on the draft survey, as well as any changes needed prior to making the survey available to the public. He briefly reviewed a revised schedule for the Comprehensive Plan Update, noting that the community survey will be available by the end of October, and staff will begin reaching out to community stakeholders in November, asking them for input regarding the

Economic Development Element. This will include Commissioner Flemister, who is a member of the Charleston Business District.

Mr. Jackson explained that information regarding the Comprehensive Plan Update can be found on the City's website at www.Bremerton2044.com, including important documents and dates. A variety of public outreach tools will be used:

- Stickers will announce the Comprehensive Plan Update and inform the public of the website and how they can submit comments.
- A brief video will be posted on the website, Bremerton Kitsap Access Television (BKAT), and other City social media accounts, letting the public know how they can participate.
- Department of Community Development staff will have a table at the Downtown Bremerton Halloween event to raise awareness with the public.
- Flyers will be posted at physical locations throughout the City (Department of Community Development Office, downtown library, Kitsap Regional Library, Sheridan Community Center, Olympic College Library and School District Office), informing the public of the topics that will be discussed that month.
- Around November 1st, the City will send a postcard to every property owner and site address, advising that the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) scoping will be updated and informing the public that they can propose Comprehensive Plan amendments until February 1, 2023. The postcard will also raise awareness about the survey.

Mr. Jackson introduced the City's new Senior Planner, Katharine Shaffer, who was instrumental in preparing the survey. He reviewed the Commissioners' responses to six questions that were asked in a Commissioner survey, noting that the intent is to ask more general questions in the public survey to give people the opportunity to respond with more specific issues:

1. **What is Bremerton's most attractive quality?** A number of possibilities were provided, including employment opportunities; strong sense of community; easy access to Seattle Metro Area; City parks, trails and other recreation; availability of different housing types and property sizes; enjoyment of the natural environment, including Shoreline, air quality and forests; and other. One Commissioner identified employment opportunities, strong sense of community, enjoyment of natural environment and cheaper housing to be Bremerton's most attractive qualities, and two Commissioners identified easy access to the Seattle Metro area as important.
2. **In the next 20 years, what is the most pressing issue for Bremerton?** Possibilities included cost of living/affordable housing/housing options; public safety and reduction in crime; improving public places; improving City infrastructure; environmental protection and climate change; and other. Two Commissioners responded that housing affordability/options were the most pressing issues and another responded that City infrastructure improvements were the most pressing. No Commissioners responded that public safety or reduction of crime was the most pressing issue. One Commissioner responded that parking options for shipyard employees and other merchant employees and revitalizing downtown with businesses and commerce were the most pressing issues.
3. **The 2016 Comprehensive Plan update included the vision statement: "Bremerton is a metropolitan city that provides for economic vitality and diverse lifestyles through a broad variety of jobs, housing and strategically located commercial and recreational opportunities." On a scale of 1 to 5, how would you rate the applicability of this vision statement today?** Two Commissioners identified that it was somewhat applicable, one Commissioner as mostly applicable, and the remaining Commissioners as applicable. Based on these responses, he questioned whether there should be an add on question, inviting those who believe the statement is only somewhat applicable or not applicable to explain why.
4. **If you could change one thing about Bremerton, what would it be?** One Commissioner provided the following response; 1) a more comprehensive and robust policy for the retention, protection and building of affordable housing; 2) recognize the importance of the Navy and federal workforce in driving Bremerton's economy and embrace that resource; 3) more parking downtown; 4) more recreational opportunities for families and kids; 5) create a culture that is beyond the Puget Sound Naval Station (PSNS) culture. Include PSNS, but recognize there is life without it; and 6) improve downtown economic vitality.

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5. **If you had \$100 to spend on the topics below, how would you spend it?** The options were housing, transportation, parks, environment, police and other. The Commissioners' collective responses were housing (25%), transportation (22), environment (15%), parks (13%), police (13%) and other (13%). Other included parking options and improved infrastructure.
6. **Throughout the 2024 Comprehensive Plan Update, the City of Bremerton will conduct many public meetings to engage the community. What is your preferred method of participating in this process?** The options included Zoom, in-person meetings, Zoom/in-person hybrid, and via surveys. No one was in favor of solely Zoom, but the remaining options were all options chosen by the Commissioners. Staff plans on casting a wide net to reach all types of people and communication styles.

Chair Tift invited public comment (in-person and via Zoom), but there were none.

Commissioner Flemister asked if it would be possible to add the Marvin Williams Recreation Center to the list of physical locations where flyers will be posted, and **Mr. Garrett** answered affirmatively. He noted that Commissioners could add other locations by notifying staff.

Commissioner Wofford said he likes the questions, but he would like to be able to pick more than one answer. There needs to be a way to express more than one concern. **Director Spencer** asked if he is suggesting respondents be asked to rank their top three choices. **Commissioner Wofford** said he believes that approach would end up identifying two or three primary concerns.

Vice Chair Rich commented that Question 2 is excellent, but she voiced concern that it could be interpreted in a couple of different ways. For example, "This is the most pressing issue now and it will continue to be for the next 20 years." or "This is going to be the most pressing issue over the next 20 years." She suggested they reconsider the use of the word, "is" in order to drill down what they are hoping to learn. **Commissioner Mosiman** agreed and suggested that the intent is to learn what will be the most pressing issue over the next 20 years.

Commissioner Mosiman referred to Question 3 regarding the applicability of the 2016 Vision Statement and explained that the purpose of a vision statement is to tell the reader where the City wants to go. He explained that the Comprehensive Plan doesn't address the current state of affairs. It is designed to provide direction for the future. He suggested it should be reworded to identify what the City wants to achieve over the next 20 years rather than making a statement about the present. **Director Spencer** emphasized that Question 3 replicates the vision statement in the current Comprehensive Plan. However, she understands his point about making sure the new statement is visionary.

Vice Chair Rich said she is concerned about asking respondents to rate the applicability of the current vision statement (Question 3), as respondents may tend to answer based on how they think Bremerton is doing currently. She suggested that the question should be reworded if the intent is to get at whether people share the vision outlined in the statement going forward.

Chair Tift commented that he found it difficult to respond to Question 5 using the acceptable format, etc. He noted that Survey Monkey has limitations, and he anticipates the "other" category will be used by a lot of respondents. He also voiced concern that some of the questions could be construed as focusing on downtown, but the City is a lot bigger and more complex than just the downtown. For example, accessibility to Seattle from East Bremerton also involves getting to the downtown ferry terminal.

Director Spencer thanked the Commissioners for taking the survey and helping staff understand their perceptions relative to the questions. This will enable them to fix the survey accordingly before it is published for the public.

Commissioner Flemister asked how the survey would be disseminated to the public. **Mr. Jackson** answered that it would be an online survey, which will help staff compile the data received. Staff will continue its efforts to direct the public to the website www.Bremerton2044.com, which will provide a very visible link to the survey. **Director Spencer** added that the postcard that will be mailed to all property owners and residents will call attention to the survey, as well. The hope is that people who don't have internet access will contact Mr. Jackson, as his contact information would be included on the postcard. As public meetings go forward, staff can make computers available for the public to use to participate in the survey. **Chair**

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Tift asked how long the survey would be available and Mr. Jackson answered that the survey would be available until February 1, 2023, which is the deadline for submitting Comprehensive Plan amendments. Director Spencer emphasized that the intent of this survey is to ask broad questions to get preliminary feedback to steer the update in the right direction. As the Commission starts to debate specific topic areas, additional surveys may be needed to collect more specific responses. She advised that staff would share results of the survey with the Commissioners each month.

Commissioner Flemister asked if there will be an age requirement for survey participants. Mr. Jackson answered that the demographic information, if people choose to fill it out, will collect information on age and other topics, but there will be no exclusionary age set.

BUSINESS MEETING

Chair Report

Chair Tift reminded the Commissioners that they typically elect new officers in November for the upcoming year. He reviewed that the bylaws allow Commissioners to occupy a position for a maximum of two consecutive years.

Chair Tift commented that it is nice to be meeting in-person once again. He thanked Department of Community Development staff, BKAT and others who made the meeting possible.

Director Report

Director Spencer explained that the Commission Bylaws require that they elect the next year's officers in November, and both Chair Tift and Vice Chair Tift are both available to be reappointed. In anticipation of the upcoming election, she asked if either were interested to serve a second term. Both indicated a willingness to serve another year. Director Spencer advised that, at the next meeting, the Commission will have an opportunity to review the bylaws, as well as any staff proposed amendments. However, they won't actually vote on amendments until the first meeting in January. Chair Tift asked staff to provide information prior to the next meeting regarding the terms of each of the Commissioners.

Director Spencer announced that the City Council adopted all of the Zoning Code amendments related to housing that were recommended by the Commission. The City Council will take action on the 2022 Comprehensive Plan amendments at their November 2nd meeting.

Old Business

There was no old business.

New Business

There was no new business.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:11 p.m.

Respectively Submitted by:



Andrea L. Spencer, AICP
Executive Secretary



Rick Tift, Chair
Planning Commission

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