

Planning and Zoning Commission Work Session Minutes
July 9, 2020
Conference Room 1A & 1B - 1st Floor City Hall

I. Call to Order

- Commissioners Present - Burns, Geuea Jones, Loe, MacMann, Rushing, Russell, Stanton, Toohy
- Commissioners Absent - Carroll
- Staff Present – Bacon, Cantin, Kelley, McManus, Palmer, and Zenner

II. Introductions

Mr. Zenner acknowledged the presence of the Commission's newest member (Sharon Geuea Jones) and asked that she introduce herself to the rest of the Commissioners. Following her introduction each Commissioner introduced themselves. Mr. Zenner noted that Commissioner Carroll was absent along with Director Teddy and Senior Planner Smith.

III. Approval of Agenda

- Meeting Agenda adopted as presented unanimously.

IV. Approval of Minutes

- 6/18 Meeting Minutes. Mr. MacMann requested additional information be added to the minutes to better capture the discussion and the comments made by the Commissioners on the intent of public input and the surveys and concerns about public health and economic issues. He said there needed to be more substance to reflect an extreme concern about the impacts of COVID 19 and how public input about these impacts should be integrated in the plan. The minutes were tabled to the July 23 meeting to allow for revisions.

V. New Business

- **Comprehensive Plan Status Report**

Mr. Zenner introduced the topic by indicating that tonight's meeting was to discuss the Comprehensive Plan Status Report public input tools. He noted that staff had produced draft surveys intended for review by the public, Boards and Commissions, and other stakeholders.

Mr. Kelley said he would like to start with the Commission's review of the report card draft surveys, and then review the two memos that would accompany the surveys if time allowed. He said staff had revised the surveys to reflect Commissioner's comments at the previous meeting to better capture the priorities of the public in terms of the action items and what aspects of the Comprehensive Plan still needed to be implemented.

Mr. Kelley began with Survey B. He said this version reflects the input that the surveys need to have all the information in the survey so participants would not have to jump back and

forth between different web tabs and different reference documents. He said the downside of Survey B was that the survey length was longer. He noted staff struggled with how small and challenging to read the entire report card graphic was when embedded in the survey; however, was unable to incorporate a “pop-out” for the graphic into the survey. Commissioners agreed it did not read well.

There was generally discussion on options to provide more readability and include the report card in more readable ways. Staff would use this direction to try and find a balance between including the information and having it more legible.

Mr. Kelley discussed a concern relating to respondent “survey fatigue” with Survey B (due to its length) and asked Commissioner’s for guidance on how to hone down the questions which were being asked. Ms. Bacon noted there were action items in the report card that hadn’t been updated since 2015 and appreciated Commissioners send any updates they believed necessary when reviewing the surveys. She also noted that staff intends on updating the report cards and Implementation Table prior to sending the final Status Report to the Council.

It was discussed that there was a desire to focus the surveys on the public’s prioritization of the Plan’s goals and objectives. There was discussion on whether this should be at the policy or action level. There were concerns expressed that providing too much background information would be overwhelming or make for biased answers due to the structure/framing of the questions. There were also concerns expressed that the surveys may be asking too much. It was suggested that there needed to be a better defined objective for the feedback so that the surveys were designed for their intended purpose.

There was discussion on how to better educate the public on the comprehensive plan and the planning process before the surveys were taken. Staff would produce a “two-pager” overview document that discussed the comprehensive plan, the Status Report, and how public input would be used. Staff mentioned a video of this content was also discussed with the Communications Department.

Staff noted that some demographic questions had been incorporated into Survey B which asked about membership with a board, commission or other stakeholder group as a means of helping with the data analysis. Commissioners recommended a question about which Ward someone lived in also be asked to help with geographic dispersion. Staff stated they would include a map for this purpose. Staff also indicated response to this question would provide helpful information about where the responses are coming from and if additional effort was needed to get responses from areas not responding by reaching out to neighborhoods groups or Council representatives.

Commissioner's asked if they could be provided information on the public input that was received in 2013. Additionally, Commissioners suggested setting targets for public input that would be included in the Status Report and then for the next full plan update in a few years. They also discussed the need to explain what the role of the Comprehensive Plan is as well. It was discussed that the Comp Plan includes policies relating to land use but had overarching policies which may link other city plans and policies. Ms. Bacon said she wanted to make sure what was presented didn't over ask and under deliver and that public priorities were followed up upon with action.

Commissioners and staff had discussion on how the surveys needed to produce both qualitative and quantitative data. In relationship to that objective, Survey A didn't set the stage well enough for that. A suggestion was to revise option B as it had more information, but design it to be at the policy level not the action level.

Commissioners discussed the need for ownership with respect to what had not been accomplished in the Plan since 2013. There was discussion on how to provide what had and had not been done. Commissioners and staff noted that priorities need to be defined and the existing goals and objectives need to be a calibration with a focus on what can be delivered given the current realities of revenue, staffing, and community changes. It was further discussed that the report card needs to be updated to include past and present tense on what has been accomplished and what still needs to be accomplished.

Commissioners and staff discussed the push-pull effect and structural tensions of using the surveys as both a teaching tool and a feedback tool. There needs to be a defined answer to what we are trying to accomplish with the surveys. Simple is better. There was discussion on the need to determine what are we trying to collect information on is it what's been accomplished, or opinions on priorities moving forward? Staff noted that the surveys may be trying to achieve too much and giving the information and then asking the questions is problematic. Commissioners recommended that staff think critically about the survey design.

There was discussion on major achievements since the 2013 adoption of Columbia Imagined. The UDC was a large implementation item in and of itself, and to implement individual action items. There was discussion of the topics the Commission had been tasked with as well those that had taken some focus away from action item implementation. The discussion of medical marijuana, short term rentals and others came up. The Commission discussed competing responsibilities and priorities for their and the staff's work products. Success, failure and why certain actions had not been implemented should be desired in the Status Report and discussed with the public and stakeholders.

Commissioners and staff noted there needed to be minimal and clear instructions on what the survey was, the information it was gathering, and how the responses would be used.

Simple language was important. Some of the question used language brought forward directly from the plan, out of context, and included words or expressions not clear to the average person who was expected to take the survey.

Commissioners and staff discussed how to educate the public on the role of the Comprehensive Plan as a component of the proposed survey process. This education would assist the public and stakeholders in becoming better informed and ready for the full update in 2022 or so.

There was discussion on subsequent surveys to get at elements not covered in the current surveying efforts, or if survey weaknesses are identified when analyzing the responses and results. Staff indicated a need to incorporate open-ended questions as well to capture data which is relevant but not always asked. There was also discussion on strategies to evaluate survey responses in quantitative and qualitative ways so that such analysis identifies survey strengths and weaknesses.

There was discussion that the staff and Commission should also do a better job of promoting successes and work program objectives being met. This was a time to be critical but also report on success too. And if something has been delayed, why. This was a chance for the Council to really dive down on wins and losses and to set future work programs to meet the objectives of the plan and the priorities of the public.

There was general consensus to use the design idea of Survey B, but that it needed to be overhauled to be simpler, easier to read, and to have a better survey design and intent. Commissioners would continue the discussion at the July 23 work session meeting with revised surveys. They also needed to review the draft memos which would go with the surveys.

Mr. Zenner said they desired to be deliberate. They would revise the schedule to make sure the public input process was done correctly. Staff would keep working and bring back the work products. He said the Commission could also expect to have the short term rental topic come back at an upcoming work sessions.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

- Meeting adjourned approximately 7:02 pm