

Portland Planning Commission

November 12, 2024 Retreat

Meeting Minutes

Planning Commissioners Present

Brian Ames, Michael Alexander, Wade Lange, Mary-Rain O'Meara, Nikesh Patel, Michael Pouncil, Steph Routh, Eli Spevak

Planning Commissioner Absent

Erica Thompson

Presenting Staff

Eric Engstrom, Patricia Diefenderfer, Julie Ocken, Magan Reed, Aster Moulton; Lauren King (CAO)

[Documents and Presentations for today's meeting](#)

Welcome, Announcements

Patricia Diefenderfer

We had our first retreat on March 8, 2023. And we've done quite a bit since then! A note that Sandra is out sick today, so we will do our best to facilitate the conversation, particularly around Best Practices.

Introductions of Magan Reed, BPS Communications manager, Aster Moulton, our new BPS communications liaison for the Planning group.

Today we want to finalize our Best Practices document (the name of this document has been in debate, which we can further discuss today), a living document we can memorialize basic ways we work together, how we interact with Council and other entities within the City, etc.

A few notes and updates about projects the Planning Commission has forward to City Council:

- Housing Adjustments Compliance – passed, effective 1/1/25.
- RQ Sign Code Update @ Council 11/13 – effective 3/1/25.
- Odor Code @ Council 11/13 – effective 3/1/25.
- TIF districts – passed at Council 10/30.
- Montgomery Park Area Plan @ Council 11/13 for its first reading with the LPA. Public Benefit Agreement is at Council on 11/21.
- PC term extensions @ Council 11/13 – thank you to commissioners Alexander, Lange, Pouncil, and Spevak for continuing your term through June 2025.

Chair O'Meara: On the Housing Compliance, what happened with height and FAR?

- Patricia: Council adopted the PC's recommendation including the unlimited adjustments to height. There was some conversation about FAR, but staff advised this wasn't the best idea and we have a project coming up (Central City code amendments), where we can calibrate heights and FAR in that project.

Commissioner Spevak: If I want to look up the equity part of the MPAP, where can I find that (the Public Benefits Agreement)?

- Patricia: We will likely publish this tomorrow. This piece of the project will be at Council the following week.

Commissioner Routh: I want to acknowledge we lost Bob Sallinger in the past couple weeks. An important part of our work is to listen to the community and those who may challenge our thoughts.

- *Commissioner Pouncil:* [November 14 will be a Metro proclamation](#) in his honor. Tributary Alliance will host an event in honor of Bob Sallinger on November 23 at 2 p.m. at Green Anchors Eco-Industrial Park, 8940 N Bradford St Portland OR 97203

Planning Commission Best Practices

Eric Engstrom, Patricia Diefenderfer, Julie Ocken, Magan Reed, Aster Moulton; Lauren King (CAO)

Review and discussion of [draft Best Practice document](#) (updated version attached).

Commissioner Spevak: Can we add: Commissioners should not discuss projects by group emails or group text, as this violates quorum rules.

Amendments and discussion to the updated draft document as shown in track changes.

Re: youth commissioner – see updated language in Best Practices document.

- *Commissioner Routh:* When would it not be possible to not have a youth commissioner? (see verbiage in the document)
 - Patricia: This could be a position we are looking for specific expertise for. In addition, we need to be aware of times when there are not youth candidates and/or have major changes going on when we don't have a candidate.
- *Commissioner Pouncil:* How do we do outreach for the youth position?
 - Social media, local colleges, website blog posts.

Commissioner Lange: If I am testifying on MPAP on the streetcar tomorrow, do I identify myself as a PC member?

- Patricia: You should state you are a member of the PC, but you are speaking on behalf of the streetcar board.

Section 14: Let's work on verbiage here to clarify. See the updated notes/changes in the Best Practices document.

Staff will work on these updates and share the revised document in track changes with PC members to confirm today's discussion.

Confirmation of the name of the document as Best Practices.

Significant Transportation Projects & the Advisory Role of the Planning Commission

Patricia Diefenderfer

[Presentation](#)

Housing Production Strategy is an example the Commission had an advising role on. Slide 9 highlights this work and the proposal of a suggested approach to the Commission's advising role.

For transportation projects and plans, slide 13 highlights the three potential ways the Commission may have influence on a transportation project. This is our attempt at a rubric for approaches and at what stage the PC may weigh in, particularly in a Locally Preferred Alternative option. The PC would have a public comment period, and that input could be forwarded to Council in a letter in terms of if the LPA is in alignment with the Comp Plan and/or other ways the project could be made more consistent.

The distinction here of "testimony" versus "public comment" is more of a legal one so the public knows what the PC's role is – land use or not.

This largely is helping to understand the end process.

Commissioner Spevak: Our value add is to listen to the public and note if the project(s) is on track to help and is on track with conformance to the Comp Plan.

The LPA juncture seems most appropriate for the Planning Commission to hold a listening session for community feedback.

Slide 14 – Staff Proposal:

- Major transportation projects that require the City Council to act on Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA).
- LPAs are adopted by resolution.
- Transportation projects that require an LPA are major or significant projects.
- PC will hold public comment session. If writing a letter to Council, it will speak to consistency with the Comp Plan.

Commissioners confirmed this approach.

2024 in Review and 2025 Look Ahead

Patricia Diefenderfer, Eric Engstrom

[Presentation](#)

Slide 9 highlights known projects planning staff is working on that we expect to come to the PC. We understand with a new Mayor and City Council we need to have some flexibility in direction they may take us.

Commissioner Routh: Could we have an update on some of the legislative work at the state level during upcoming Director's Report times?

Eric shared the updated City organizational chart (slide 12).

Open Discussion

We would like to convene the PC for the first meeting in 2025, which we expect to be February 11. You could conceivably do elections then, but we could keep the current slate of officers through June as we have extended terms. We can discuss this in the next couple of months and in the officer meeting prior to this first meeting in the calendar year.

Adjourn

Submitted by Julie Ocken