

Portland Planning and Sustainability Commission

June 28, 2022

5:00 p.m.

Meeting Minutes

PSC Commissioners Present: Jeff Bachrach, Johnell Bell, Jessica Gittemeier, Katie Larsell, Oriana Magnera, Valeria McWilliams, Steph Routh, Gabe Sheoships, Erica Thompson; 1 open position

PSC Commissioners Absent: Eli Spevak

City Staff Presenting: Patricia Diefenderfer, Sandra Wood

Documents and Presentations for today's meeting

Chair Routh called the meeting to order at 5:02 p.m.

Chair Routh: In keeping with the Oregon Public Meetings law, Statutory land use hearing requirements, and Title 33 of the Portland City Code, the Portland Planning and Sustainability Commission is holding this meeting virtually.

- All members of the PSC are attending remotely, and the City has made several avenues available for the public to watch the broadcast of this meeting.
- The PSC is taking these steps as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the need to limit in-person contact and promote social distancing. The pandemic is an emergency that threatens the public health, safety and welfare which requires us to meet remotely by electronic communications.
- Thank you all for your patience, humor, flexibility and understanding as we manage through this difficult situation to do the City's business.

Items of Interest from Commissioners

- *Chair Routh* noted we're in the midst of Heat Week, a commemoration of last year's heat dome. There are events through the week. Additionally, we are seeing the work of Verde and other organizations and the partnership with PCEF for getting heat pumps out to the community.
- *PSC members* confirmed the Title 11 Amendments recommendation letter.

Director's Report

Patricia Diefenderfer

- Nothing to report.

Consent Agenda

- Consideration of Minutes from the June 14, 2022 PSC meeting.

Commissioner Thompson moved to approve the Consent Agenda. *Commissioner McWilliams* seconded.

The consent agenda passed.

(Y9 – Bachrach, Bell, Gittemeier, Larsell, Magnera, McWilliams, Routh, Sheoships, Thompson)

PSC Hybrid Meetings

Work Session

Presentation

Sandra introduced the proposal for the PSC returning to a hybrid meeting set-up – a meeting that’s virtual and also in person. PSC officers have seen and liked the proposal, and we are sharing this with the full Commission today.

City Council has gone to this mode with some members in Council Chambers and some at home. The PDC Commission is also meeting hybrid. So different boards and commissions in the City are dipping a toe into the return-to-in-person mode.

The goals of this hybrid meeting format are to:

1. Allow participants to participate in a way they deem comfortable.
2. Ensure that in-person testifiers are testifying to a critical mass of Commissioners.
3. Build comradery and build relationships among the Commissioners and with staff.

Our original thinking was to have the first hybrid meeting be July 26. The 1900 Building Commission Room will be open then (the building opens July 18). However, we only have one 45-minute briefing that day, so we are now thinking to have our first hybrid meeting be the August 23 meeting.

We want to aim to have at least 5 commissioners meeting in person. Staff and the Director will be present in the room as well as staff who are presenting topics at the meeting.

Chair Routh noted the conversation about the dais. As we’re going back into the space, we could look at how we ensure the physical space is welcoming. Given that it’s a hybrid situation, and having watched a recent hybrid LCDC meeting, that experience was somewhat degraded for those in the room. Looking to our first meeting, we’d go with how we are currently configured and then learn to navigate the tech issues along the line.

Commissioner Larsell: At a church, you now see a bank of screens with the people online. So I know sometimes the City has some trouble with the technology, but I would encourage us to do this.

Commissioner Magnera: Thinking about simultaneous interpretation with a headset and mic for all may be a good way to accommodate this.

Commissioner Thompson: Do we want the first hybrid meeting to be the first hearing we have back in person and hybrid?

Patricia: We didn't want to inconvenience people to come downtown for a shorter meeting in late July. We still could have a test/trial evening that meeting if we want without the 5-person goal session.

We will have a better update for PSC the week of July 11 about having a more hybrid meeting on July 29 or if we will wait until the August 23 meeting.

PSC Evaluation report Implementation and Next Steps

Work Session

Presentation

Donnie offered that this is a framework that we'll work with PSC members and Commissioner Rubio to work on together. Today we are thinking about the possibilities, capacity of PSC members, and help us shape who else should be at the table.

Patricia shared the document that is our initial thinking about how we can create working groups to tackle some of the recommendations of the evaluation report. One of the things we got feedback from PSC officers about was that some of the recommendations were a bit difficult to understand. So staff has reworked some of these to clarify and confirm recommendations – now 7 from an original 8 in words that help us understand them better to help us implement them. The framework we have is to group the recommendations by themes, which could be our proposed working groups:

- Group 1 – Planning Commission Purview and Makeup
- Group 2 – Culture and Engagement
- Group 3 – Sustainability Commission

Patricia walked through the potential actions and themes for each group of work.

We envision that there will be staff who will be part of each of the working groups to help with coordination, logistics, and supporting the groups. Something we want to be mindful of is not having a quorum of PSC members on any group. Work groups don't make recommendations or decisions on behalf of the PSC. But as we do start in on the work, we would want to identify a lead commissioner for each group who would share out information to the full PSC (probably during Items of Interest at least initially).

We've noticed how some projects on the PSC's tentative schedule are shifting around, so there is a lighter PSC agenda this summer. We could use these times that would be at full Commission meetings to engage in the working groups instead.

Chair Routh: Do these working groups sound right to us? Anything to change or modify?

Commissioner Larsell: The vote in November will be about the Charter Commission, which will change our form of government quite a bit. How will this influence our work and these work groups?

Chair Routh: We had discussed this at the Officer Meeting. We know things could shift – but Planning Commission is a requirement, so it will continue to be a body that works under the lens of Title 33.

Donnie: Additionally, as we build out what the future sustainability commission is, that won't be in a short time frame, so that largely will be informed by the vote in November and what happens after that. There is lots of conversation about who needs to be at the table to shape the sustainability commission, so this is really just getting the process going for a to-be-determined outcome. The planning commission does still need to exist and evolve.

Chair Routh: We are being responsive to an implementation report, which sets us up to be adaptive to where the City is going, even not knowing what that looks like yet.

Commissioner Thompson: As I'm looking at the recommendations and how they're grouped, I'm curious about #2 (ensuring the PSC has clarity about the land use policy agenda and priorities of the Commissioner-in-Charge and City Council). With some of the work going on in Group 1, I wonder if that part moves up and Group 2 focuses on community engagement and the commission itself. I realize there's plenty of overlap, but this one seems a bit blurry to me. There might be lots of cross-over there.

- Patricia: There could be a good amount of cross-over there. #1 is about the future state, and #2 is about now and looking to the future. But we certainly can move recommendation 2 into Group 1, that seems fine.

Commissioner Magnera: How will the groups interact with each other to ensure we're not taking steps in one place if we need to take them first in the other group?

- Patricia: Each group would have staff, and Julie would take notes for each group. We would distill and note take-aways. When there is need to report out, the lead of the group could do a report to the full PSC for feedback and/or input.
- Donnie: Some working groups might have external partners (e.g. other bureaus, Commissioner Rubio's staff) as well. We know there will be overlap. The list of potential actions is just a snapshot and can be evaluated as we start in on the work. This conversation is happening at the bureau director level as well. Ideally the groups will be full of different voices so we can have conversations about how best to do this.

Commissioner Magnera: Is there intent about actions/items/questions that may be helped by public comment?

- Patricia: The working groups are a starting point. It's expected that the conversations will widen out as they progress, so more stakeholders will come into the conversation.

Commissioner Bachrach: There are two different paths for Group 3. But the questions about the Planning Commission are really ideas that have come to the front over the past few years. Is there a timeline? I would urge a deadline and a final product (i.e. the new planning commission). There might not be a need to amend the code even. These are festering issues for the PSC, but they aren't radical new notions. I don't want us to be spinning spending hours on this.

- Donnie: Yes, we see this. The challenge we'll have to thread is once we stand up the new planning commission, we have to be sure there is a place to catch the sustainability work. So these buckets are overlapping, but we are thinking there will be a planning commission first.
- Patricia: There are several more administrative actions that staff can be taking to improve the functions of the Commission in the meantime, which we'll be doing simultaneously with these

conversations to bring more clarity to the work of this iteration of the PSC. We do need to be thinking about deadlines as well.

- Donnie: One of the unknowns is the appropriate amount of time we can ask you as volunteers to invest in this work.

Commissioner Sheoships: Would we potentially meet in the work groups during regularly scheduled commission time?

- Patricia: We thought that, to the extent we have a lighter summer agenda for PSC meetings, we could use times you have on your calendars for the work group times. But we do also need to be aware when we do have projects coming to the full commission to have full meetings for those projects.

Chair Routh: This is a great moment to look at our work and have a reset with some meetings where we don't have a huge number of large priorities/projects coming to us.

Initial thoughts on Commissioners' interest in work groups:

- **Group 1** – Bachrach (need more of an understanding of deadline and structure), Gittemeier, Larsell (workplan/budget), Routh, Thompson
- **Group 2** – Bell, Larsell (onboarding/training), McWilliams, Routh, Thompson
- **Group 3** – Bell, Gittemeier, Magnera, McWilliams, Sheoships, Spevak

There could be benefit to PSC officers being distributed across the work groups.

Commissioner Bachrach: I think it's very important for Commissioner Rubio to demonstrate her commitment by having her staff on each work group so we are under her direction and so she is involved and has the commitment. To launch something like this without better clarity risks not being an efficient use of all of our time. I'd like to understand her commitment at this level. I think it's a shame a consultant did all this background work and now is out of the process. This is often the type of change you'd bring in an outside consultant to assist with.

- Patricia: We will take these comments back to Commissioner Rubio. I appreciate not wanting to commit without knowing a deadline. Staff wants to support as much as possible so the work is done in a discrete time period. We can't sunset the PSC until we have a sustainability commission, which will take longer – but we can have the code amendment written and ready to go so the work of the group could theoretically be done in a discrete time.

Commissioner Bachrach: Lots of the concerns in the consultant's report aren't big structural changes – they are more about clarifying structures and responsibilities. That's its own task, and I am not sure where that fits in this work. I'm confused about what the tasks for Group 1 are compared to this.

- Donnie: Out of all the recommendations, the direction from Commissioner Rubio is she wants to see the purview of this group be about planning and land use and have the sustainability conversations elsewhere. So this is transactional. Then we do this, but where does the conversation about climate and sustainability go? That's another piece.

Patricia: The sustainability coordinator position will be upcoming, likely to be hired not until late 2022 / early 2023. So there are a number of months before that position begins in earnest.

Commissioner Magnera: Is there anything else that could support this work and process in the upcoming budget?

- Donnie: There is a very modest EMS association.

We have a bucket of administrative work we're evaluating. The potential actions list is started from previous discussions – so it's not starting at a very initial point. There are concrete ideas and content behind some of this, which we can put time and effort into before the work groups start.

Commissioner Thompson: Do we know what Commissioner Rubio's involvement is for this process? I think this is what Jeff was getting about a bit.

- Donnie: Rico will be participating in the working groups, and they are hiring a new person who could assist if they are liaison to BPS. The prime objective is to define planning commission and define the new commission.
- Patricia: The timing is also contingent on PSC members' availability and ability to meet. The work we've done to identify who's interested in each group is helpful; we can send emails to each group to get a conversation going there.

Chair Routh: If people can think about your availability over the next few months, I am happy to check in with commissioners to talk about our sensitivities and thoughts.

Adjourn

Chair Routh adjourned the meeting at 6:43 p.m.

Submitted by Julie Ocken