

# Portland Planning Commission

June 27, 2023

## Commissioners Present

Wade Lange (arrived 5:30 p.m.), Mary-Rain O'Meara, Nikeshe Patel, Michael Pouncil, Steph Routh, Eli Spevak (left at 5:35 p.m.)

## Commissioners Absent

Michael Alexander, Erica Thompson

## City Staff

Patricia Diefenderfer, Sandra Wood, Harmonie Dashiell

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

*Chair O'Meara* called the meeting to order at 5:05 p.m. and provided an overview of the agenda.

## Consent Agenda

- Consideration of minutes from the June 13, 2023 Planning Commission meeting.

*Commissioner Routh* moved to adopt the Consent Agenda. *Commissioner Patel* seconded.

Y5 (O'Meara, Patel, Pouncil, Routh, Spevak)

The Consent Agenda was adopted.

## Commission Bylaws

Decision: Sandra Wood

## [Document](#)

We have had several discussions about the Bylaws in the past few meetings. We sent a document last week with the changes discussed to prepare commissioners for tonight's adoption.

Sandra walked through the noted change in the document.

One clarifying amendment staff would like to note is in the Officers section regarding having possibly having a presiding officer that is not a Chair or Vice Chair. We've added the heading "Presiding Officer" to clarify this role and section. We will renumber the rest of the section accordingly.

The two things we didn't add to the Bylaws, which will go into the operating practices, is the idea of open public comment for items the Commission is not recommending and the youth commissioner position.

*Chair O'Meara* moved to adopt the Planning Commission Bylaws with the noted changes. *Commissioner Patel* seconded.

Y5 (O'Meara, Patel, Pouncil, Routh, Spevak)

#### Items of Interest from Commissioners

*Commissioner Spevak* will provide an update about his work with DRAC at the next meeting.

#### Director's Report

Patricia Diefenderfer

- The Parking Compliance Amendment Project you heard and forwarded to Council passed on June 7; the code is effective on June 30. Congratulations on this first legislative action the Planning Commission has done.
- We will be bringing the Residential Infill Project (RIP) Part 1 Report to you soon as part of our continuing trainings likely at the early September meeting.
- No meeting on July 11 – enjoy some time off. Our next meeting will be on July 25 to continue with staff trainings.
- Doodle Poll that Julie sent on Monday re: happy hour social. Please enter your availability so we can get this scheduled for us.
- Reminder to those who haven't yet sent in their bio as requested in Julie's email with our Communications Team to do so by the end of the month. We want to highlight your great work and what you each are bringing to the work of the Commission.
- One of the BPS staff who's working with TriMet is helping with the Cool Bus Shelter Design Competition. The competition culminates at the Depave Block Party on SE 7<sup>th</sup> and Sandy Blvd on July 28. They are looking for a Planning Commission member to help judge. Waiting for the bus can be hot. Often sited along busy expanses of concrete and asphalt, bus shelters have the potential to provide much needed cooling and shade. We're inviting folks to submit designs that transform Portland's existing bus shelters into urban heat refuges. Julie will send more details in via email tomorrow to see who would be interested, and we're looking for a representative to be confirmed by next Wednesday, July 5.

Training: Equity

Briefing: Harmonee Dashiell

### Presentation

Harmonee is the interim equity manager at BPS and has been with BPS about 5 years and with PP&R prior.

From the 2035 Comprehensive Plan, equity is front-and-center: The equity framework and the three integrated strategies — Healthy Connected City and Economic Prosperity and Affordability, in particular — provide the foundation for the Comprehensive Plan’s goals and policies, capital project lists and maps.

This sets the stage of the work and equity focus in our work. The rest of the Comp Plan is built up based on the equity framework.

BPS’s strategic plan also includes a statement of equity at the beginning (slide 4). Equity is the overarching lens. This highlights the focus in our work on vulnerable communities too.

City core values also highlight the importance of equity, with the first two being anti-racism and equity. Part of staff’s annual performance reviews are based on their work and integration of anti-racism and equity in their work.

When we put this into action and process, we have other guidelines. The Comp Plan Chapter 2 is about engagement. The way we get to equitable outcomes is about how we involve community to make sure decisions we’re proposing are equitable. The BPS team is “Equity and Engagement” precisely to ensure we have the information to center equity in our decision.

Harmonee walked through the legislative process, noting where the community and outreach team is most involved – particularly at the front end of a planning process.

Comp Plan Chapter 2 has 7 goals (slide 10) regarding community involvement. It sets the tone for what our outreach should look like and what goals should be. Equitable engagement talks about everyone being community together. Harmonee touched on examples of how staff is working with community to achieve these goals in projects.

The Community Involvement Committee advises teams on their engagement with the public in land use and transportation planning projects and programs. This is a resource for planning teams to get input on what their outreach could look like given the individual projects.

The work of the Equity and Engagement Team assists with many things in the bureau (slide 12). They are a team that staff should be comfortable coming in to ask questions at all levels of their equity and outreach journeys.

BPS is a pioneer with our equity work and often standards get adopted by other bureaus throughout the City.

An overview of the Equity Toolkit is shared on slide 13. The toolkit is a set of guiding questions and activities to support planning and decision making across projects, programs, and policy work.

## Discussion

*Chair O'Meara:* What is the intersection between equity and engagement and how you navigate a community situation when another bureau is also doing the work?

- We “make friends” with other bureau staff, which has increased over the years. We’ve made relationships and have continued, which makes this work increasingly more cohesive and easier. There are now intentional meetings of outreach staff and equity managers across bureaus.

*Patricia:* You see that a lot of long-range planning projects are interdisciplinary, so the practice among planners is to reach out to other bureaus’ staff who are subject matter experts to coordinate projects.

*Commissioner Pouncil:* I’m excited you’re working with Civic Life as well. My question is how you measure your success and know what you’re doing it working?

- Every year we do an E&E team report. Some of it is the story about who we heard from (e.g. communities we haven’t heard from in the past) and how we’ve opened those doors and push engagement more. A success story recently was a team that went to a community event, and they were able to talk with many more people than what they had been able to reach in specific project open house events.

*Commissioner Routh:* This was a lot of information – thank you! Feeling the fatigue for the community is real. I’m curious what BPS’s role is in terms of partnership with organizations, contracts versus RFPs, supporting new, emerging organizations to build out a more resilient ecosystem.

- There are different routes we can take as you note. A team would come to the E&E team and ask us about the best route; we’d look at timeline, who, what the project is looking to accomplish. We bring our Finance Team in as well to ensure we’re doing things correctly under rules. In the last year, we’ve come together much more to open the conversations more and understand each other’s parameters so we can better collaborate.

*Commissioner Routh:* On the wealth indicator / at risk, it referred to income. Do we also track wealth in terms of assets (e.g. home ownership)?

- There is some, but we are cautious about how and what questions we ask due to public records laws and wanting to keep the public safe. Our Tech Services teams are looking at how we can get reliable information in a safe space. But sometime the data just isn’t there in a reliable way.

*Commissioner Routh:* Staff performance evaluations – I’m curious that, since we’re a body, how we get measured on the work we’re doing. Zoning has been a tool of racism and exclusion, particularly in an economic sense. How do we know we’re furthering anti-racism?

- Part of why we run trainings like this with you and staff helps build accountability. I would hope in the process of doing that, it also builds a safe space to asking the hard questions or asking for further explanation about how equity is infused in projects. Hopefully by the time work comes to the Planning Commission the work has been done and staff can share that in their presentations. We also know there are different interpretations, so being able to provide the background about why certain decisions were made is also important and can be a topic of conversation.

Patricia: It hasn’t yet been done to my knowledge. You now see that staff does a lot of work upfront to investigate and understand. Hopefully you are seeing that it’s so embedded in our work that you are comfortable with how we have done the work. It’s certainly a continuing conversation we can have with the Commission, perhaps at a future retreat.

Harmonee: All the Equity Managers in the City are working to develop a new Racial Equity Workplan, where we have some of the bigger goals. We list out how this plays out, and it could be something that we add a note about how the Planning Commission does its work.

*Chair O’Meara:* One thing that came to me was a request about what resources you have that you may be able to share with the Planning Commission. And we as commissioners probably have resources we can also share among ourselves, and I’d certainly welcome additional trainings in the future.

- The bureau has an anti-racism reading group, and we certainly can share writings from that. There is also a requirement for BPS staff every year that they are required to attend as well as a number of optional trainings that may be more project- or team-specific.

Adjourn

*Chair O’Meara* adjourned the meeting at 6:33 p.m.

Submitted by Julie Ocken