

MINUTES

Lacey Planning Commission Meeting
Tuesday, June 4, 2019 – 7:00 p.m.
Lacey City Hall Council Chambers, 420 College Street SE

Meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Paul Enns.

Planning Commission members present: Paul Enns, Sharon Kophs, David Wasson, Daphne Retzlaff, Mark Mininger, Shaunesy Behrens, Peg Evans-Brown, and David Lousteau. Staff present: Ryan Andrews, Jessica Brandt, Rick Walk, and Leah Bender.

Paul Enns noted a quorum present.

David Wasson made a motion, seconded by Sharon Kophs, to approve the agenda for tonight's meeting. All were in favor, the motion carried. David Lousteau made a motion, seconded by Sharon Kophs, to approve the May 21, 2019, minutes. All were in favor, the motion carried.

1. Public Comments:

- Muhammad Chaudhry asked if he can talk about housing and shelter.
- Lisa Gillatti said she is concerned about everything Planning Commission is discussing and was saddened by all the negative comments made at the public hearing and in the newspaper.

2. **Commission Members Reports:** Sharon Kophs reported on her attendance at the Mayor's Gala.

3. **Director's Report:** Rick Walk reported that the Lacey MakerSpace will have an open house on June 29.

4. Old Business:

Emergency Housing Facilities LMC 16.64:

- Rick Walk went over the process and noted that public comments were shared with Planning Commissioners.
- There was a discussion regarding how the process of amending the ordinance was initiated. Rick noted that it came out of conversations regarding affordable housing and the recommendations within the Housing Strategy.
- Staff noted that Planning Commission's role is to make a recommendation to Council to approve as is or as amended. Council will then consider all the comments and Planning Commission's recommendation, conduct additional public outreach if necessary, and make a decision. It was noted that approximately 90 percent of the public comment received is against amending the ordinance.
- Rick discussed the mitigation site and noted that it is a separate issue, is located in Thurston County, and will not be affected by the Emergency Housing Facility ordinance. Rick also noted that a decision has not yet been made on the mitigation site and that discussions will continue. Rick also pointed out that there are limits on what cities and counties can do to deal with homelessness.
- Ryan Andrews noted that Planning Commission has been working on the draft since the beginning of the year. He pointed out that the City does not have the resources to house or shelter homeless people and that the regulations stem from the action items within the Affordable Housing Strategy as prioritized by the City Council.
- Ryan provided information on the issue of indirect costs that will result from amending the ordinance. Staff reached out to MRSC, AWC, and other agencies and no data was available. A study done in Colorado of municipalities showed that enforcement of laws against the homeless create greater impacts on law enforcement, jails, hospitals, etc. Ryan noted that the City of

Bellingham has a facility hosted by the faith community. The impact to city staff associated with that facility is one hour of staff time per week associated with a coordination meeting between Bellingham Police Department and the operators of the facility.

- Ryan went over an analysis of comments and testimony and noted that the majority of comments are outside the scope of the Planning Commission.
- There was a discussion regarding the distance required between a facility and a school or daycare. Staff noted that the requirement was removed at the request of faith leaders because most churches are located near schools and are providing services for homeless already without consequences. If the restrictions were in place, churches located near schools and daycares would not be allowed to host facilities.
- Staff noted that at this time the Lacey Police Department has no data regarding interactions with homeless people because, prior to June 1, that was not categorized on reports.
- Resident screening and requiring ID for admittance to a facility was discussed. It was suggested that admittance be restricted to Thurston County area residents only so as not to attract homeless from other areas. Staff noted that most likely that would not be feasible nor would it be something the city would be allowed to do. There was a consensus to leave the section of the ordinance as is and require ID or fingerprinting by Lacey Police Department if ID is not available.
- The code of conduct section was discussed. There was a consensus to leave the code as is, and to not remove the alcohol restriction.
- There was a discussion regarding “units of government” as an eligible host for a facility. Concerns were raised about the possibility of the Federal Government becoming involved and problems that could arise from that. It was noted that it would no longer be “no cost” if the city were to host a facility. Staff will amend the language to define “units of government” and discuss further at a later worksession.
- Removal of the section regarding results reporting was discussed. Consensus was that staff will reword the section to request that host agencies obtain statistics that may aid in addressing some of the root causes of homelessness.
- Removal of the section regarding limiting the number of facilities was discussed. It was suggested that an annual review be done to determine how the program is working. Staff will provide information on what other cities are doing as far as different sized camps, high barrier versus low barrier, etc.
- David Lousteau noted that since the original ordinance was approved, only one encampment has been hosted in Lacey. He asked staff which amendments they feel will encourage more facilities. Staff responded that faith leaders have reported that hosting a facility is a financial burden for churches and that they may pair with non-profit organizations to combine resources. David noted he does not feel ready to make a recommendation to Council at this time.
- Peg Evans-Brown noted that homelessness is a public health crisis and feels it is important that the city have something in place to be prepared.
- Paul Enns said he is not ready to make a recommendation to Council but also feels it is important to have some type of policy in place.
- Daphne Retzlaff expressed a need for a plan to educate people on the different types of homeless people so the public will understand why the city is moving forward with the ordinance. She said she is not prepared to make a recommendation to Council at this time.
- Mark Miner expressed concerns about the long term and what comes after as this would be a temporary solution. He also feels it is important to listen to public comments.
- Rick Walk noted that the scope of the ordinance has a lot of parallel issues and that Planning Commission could make a recommendation to Council with a side note of items Council should be aware of.
- Sharon Kophs noted that although this meeting is not a public hearing, comments will be taken from the public present tonight.

- Barbara Chambers presented written comments to Ryan and asked that they be included in the official record. She went over several points and expressed concerns regarding “units of government.”
- Leslie McClure read out loud an article regarding a program in Marysville where social workers are working alongside law enforcement when they interact with homeless people.
- Lisa Gillatti expressed concerns regarding “units of government” and noted that in the event of a disaster that displaces residents, they would not be allowed in the encampments. She went over different reasons why people do not have an ID – house fire, had to leave an abusive home, etc.
- David Vahey discussed drug addiction problems and how that affects people from all walks of life. He expressed concerns about the number of sites allowed in the city.
- Annette Hansen expressed concerns over the lack of resources available to homeless people. Sharon referred her to the Housing Strategy that is available to review on the city website.
- Robin Jones suggested that since the city keeps allowing the development of warehouses in the Hawks Prairie area, and those buildings end up sitting empty, perhaps they could be used to house homeless people.
- Terry Johnson said he appreciates the Planning Commission for volunteering their time with the city but feels that staff are trying to railroad the citizens and are trying to push the ordinance forward. He said he does not appreciate some of the negative body language he perceived from staff and wanted to remind staff that taxpayers pay their salary.
- A motion was made and seconded to continue the discussion of the Emergency Housing Facilities ordinance at a later worksession. All were in favor, the motion carried.

5. **New Business:**

ICSC RECon Report: Time did not allow for presentation of this report.

6. **Communications and Announcements:** None.

7. **Next meeting:** June 18, 2019.

8. **Adjournment:** 9:10 p.m.