

# **City of Redmond Planning Commission**

**October 9, 2013 Meeting Summary**  
**Redmond City Hall – Council Chambers**  
**15670 NE 85<sup>th</sup> Street, Redmond, Washington**

## **Planning Commissioners in Attendance:**

Franz Wiechers-Gregory, Chair, Phil Miller, Eric Murray, Sheri Sanders

## **Planning Commissioners Excused:**

Scott Biethan, Vibhas Chandorkar, Vice Chair, Robert O'Hara

## **Staff in Attendance:**

Lori Peckol, Policy Planning Manager; Kim Dietz, Senior Planner; Jeri Rowe-Curtis, Chief Communications Officer; Cathy Beam, Principal Planner; Steven Fischer, Principal Planner

### **1. Call to Order:**

Chair Wiechers-Gregory called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

### **2. Approval of the Agenda:**

The agenda was approved without changes.

### **3. Items from the audience:**

Oral testimony was provided by Katherine Low, a representative from Sustainable Redmond. Ms. Low expressed appreciation for the Commission's efforts related to community engagement, and reinforced Sustainable Redmond's continued interest in the topic and willingness to provide process improvement ideas as helpful.

### **4. Study Session, Community Engagement for Planning and Development Projects.**

The study session followed-up on administrative updates for public notice of development activity and related Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Code amendments. The Commission was joined by staff from Long Range (Lori Peckol; Kim Dietz), Development Review (Steven Fischer; Cathy Beam) and Communications (Jeri Rowe-Curtis). The study session began with a staff presentation covering community engagement related to planning and development, and how these techniques connect to the City's overall community engagement strategy. The Commission commented and asked clarifying questions throughout the presentation.

Ms Peckol introduced the topic, addressing the types of decisions and public engagement typical for urban planning, and the questions Redmond considers when designing outreach strategies for planning and development processes. Ms Dietz then addressed how the City currently engages the community for neighborhood and legislative planning processes, and recent improvements to those approaches.

Ms Beam and Mr Fischer then described the history of development-related notification, current

zoning code requirements, as well as recent and proposed future improvements. The topic then broadened with Ms Rowe-Curtis speaking to Citywide community engagement strategies, challenges and opportunities, and how the City might leverage emerging communication trends and tools. Ms Peckol concluded the presentation, and the Commission then commented and responded to discussion questions posed in advance. Key questions and comments from the Commission were as follows:

- Suggest formalizing the City's approach for planning outreach, including for each outreach opportunity addressing questions related to context, purpose, customers, tools, desired outcomes, how input will be considered and applied, and how that will be demonstrated.
- We need to know who we *aren't* reaching so we can target future process improvements accordingly
- May need to do more to go to where people are already in order to connect; providing engagement opportunities during some day time hours may be beneficial
- Even if we do improve methods for connecting with younger populations, are they as inclined to engage in civic issues as older populations? Perhaps yes, because young people are 'joiners'. At the same time, not hearing from younger people may indicate that they are satisfied with how things are going.
- There are different types of engagement, such as alerts, issue verification, and deeper dialog, as well as required versus discretionary engagement. It seems that past issues surrounding engagement have been with the alerts not reaching people for sensitive development projects.
- How do we measure success?
- Overall, the 500' distance for mailing development-related notification does not need to change, because for many of these projects the City reviews for code compliance and has limited discretion and regardless of the distance, there may always be someone just beyond the boundary who does not receive notification and would have liked to. The Commission has asked staff to consider what approach or system the City might establish to provide for expanded notice for major or particularly sensitive projects. In addition, mailed notification needs to work in conjunction with other outreach tools.
- Would help if the City could better demonstrate how it is considering and applying the information it does receive from the public.
- The Commission appreciates the efforts of staff on the community engagement topic, believes we're heading in the right direction and recognizes it is an ongoing challenge.
- The Commission appreciates staff's offer to return to the Commission in a few months to report on progress from the newly-formed Citywide community engagement team and further updates on improving notice signs. In the meantime, Commissioners encourage staff to apply conversation from the evening's discussion to upcoming legislative items on the Commission's work plan.

## **6. Reports/Scheduling/Topics for Next Meeting**

Mr. Sullivan's report included the following:

- Recent action from City Council on a legislative topic previously reviewed by Planning Commission
- Summary of extended agenda including Southeast Redmond Neighborhood Plan Update Final Open House on October 16

## **7. Adjourn**

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 9:30 p.m.

### **Summary prepared by:**

Pete Sullivan, Senior Planner / Planning Commission Staff Liaison