

City of Redmond Planning Commission

March 13, 2013 Meeting Summary
Redmond Planning Commission Annual Retreat
Matt's Rotisserie & Oyster Lounge
Redmond Town Center
16551 NE 74th Street
Redmond, Washington

1. Meeting Attendance:

Planning Commissioners in Attendance:

Franz Wiechers-Gregory, Chair; Vibhas Chandorkar, Vice Chair; Scott Biethan, Phil Miller, Eric Murray, Robert O'Hara and Sheri Sanders

Planning Commissioners Excused:

None

Staff in Attendance:

Lori Peckol, Policy Planning Manager; Sarah Stiteler, Planning Commission staff liaison; Pete Sullivan, Senior Planner

2. Call to Order:

Chair Wiechers-Gregory called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

3. Approval of the Agenda:

The agenda was approved without changes.

4. Items from the audience:

None

5. Discussion: Work Program/Goals for upcoming year

Chair Wiechers-Gregory posed the question of how the Planning Commission gets items before them for review. He cited the language in the Planning Commission's Authority and Duties, RMC 4.43.020 with emphasis on the last phrase in italics:

The Commission may make recommendations to the City Council based on its findings and conclusions and on those of its committees. It shall recommend updates to the elements of the Redmond Comprehensive Plan and Redmond Zoning Code for adoption or modification, advise the Council regarding special area concerns and functional plans, investigate and make recommendations on matters suggested by the Council, the Mayor, Redmond citizens, *or upon its own initiative.*

Pete Sullivan, Senior Planner, described the annual docketing process. Lori Peckol, Policy Planning Manager, described ways in which the Planning Commission can identify items through the docketing process that the Commission wishes to consider for further study, citing

the example of the Manufacturing Park/Business Park study brought about by the Planning Commission several years ago.

Commissioners asked if there are other ways to have more flexibility in the process of bringing topics forward without having to do it a year in advance – as is the case with the annual docket. Some issues come up that might be significant but will lose their currency if they have to wait to be docketed for review. In need-based or rare situations can the Planning Commission identify an issue to go before them more readily than going through the docketing process?

Ms. Peckol described that anything that involves a Comprehensive Plan amendment must go through a docketing process per Growth Management Act (GMA) requirements; Commissioners can identify the issue at any time during the year however the City can only add it to the Comprehensive Plan docket once a year. If it is an amendment to the Redmond Zoning Code that is proposed, the timing for Planning Commission review is not constrained by the GMA. It may be more of a work planning issue, depending on staff scheduling and availability, or other outside influences as to when certain issues are taken up. If it is neither a policy driven (Comprehensive Plan) nor Zoning Code amendment, and identified by the Commission as an area of interest or concern, staff will work with the Planning Commission to bring these issues forward for further discussion and review in a timely manner as best as staff is able to given staff availability.

Informational briefings are an example of items having greater flexibility. During the discussion, Commissioners expressed interest in receiving a presentation from representatives from neighboring jurisdictions on issues of mutual interest, such as activities occurring near Redmond's border, every year or 2. Another example is staff's response on Commission's interest in hearing more about updates to notice boards and mailings.

Mr. Sullivan completed his review of the work plan items scheduled for the next year.

Commissioner Miller expressed concern about how quickly the Planning Commission is expected to review the Transportation Master Plan (TMP). He stated that he wants to be sure that the public has ample opportunity for review and comment on the document. Mr. Miller stated further that having only one public hearing three weeks after the TMP is out is too soon, and perhaps an additional public hearing is in order.

Commissioner Murray said that within the overall two month review process, the Planning Commission should focus on the new, "update" aspect of the TMP and not lose focus by challenging key concepts that are not up for review.

Commissioners agreed that an additional public hearing should be included in the review and consideration of the TMP. The second hearing should be scheduled toward the end of the review process to give time to the public to review, digest, comment, reconsider and then provide additional comments, if desired.

6. Legal/Procedural Matters:

Sarah Stiteler stated that staff met with the City Attorney and discussed a number of procedural items, and discussed what he had recommended on the following:

Wording of motions: Motions should be worded in such a way that the Planning Commission can vote in the affirmative. When the motion is worded in the affirmative, it is a decision; if it is a failed motion, it just means that the motion has failed and does not indicate Planning Commission direction on the issue. Commissioners requested that staff put proposed motion language together and give to the Chair to get rid of any confusion. The proposed language should either allow for approval or denial of an item before the Commission.

Public Testimony: The Planning Commission discussed the issue of allowing the public to speak under Items From the Audience when a public hearing is scheduled for a particular item. The current practice of the Commission is to request that persons speak during the public hearing. The City Attorney stated that this practice was acceptable, but that this should be clearly stated within the Planning Commission's administrative rules. Commissioners discussed the need for providing many ways for the public to engage with the Commission; conversely, they discussed the need for time during meetings to discuss and resolve issues. Commissioners decided that the current procedure of requesting speakers to address the Commission during the scheduled public hearing on an issue and not during Items From the Audience would be the continued practice. Further, that written testimony was acceptable any time up to the date of the public hearing and possibly after, if the period for written testimony was kept open by the Chair. The City Attorney also had advised that if comments are received after the hearing is closed for written comment, they do not have to be part of the record.

Rules/Changes: The Planning Commission administrative rules will need to be revised to reflect:

1. The Commission will require testimony on an issue with a scheduled public hearing to occur at the public hearing and not under Items From the Audience.
2. The Commission needs to state in its rules within the Redmond Municipal Code that it will default to Robert's Rules in the event a decision process is not otherwise identified.

The Commissioners also discussed electronic versus paper distribution of packet materials and decided to keep with the current method for each Commissioner.

7. Commissioner Discussion – Reflections and views on success

Chair Wiechers-Gregory invited Planning Commissioners to reflect on both past experience and ideas for the future.

Sheri Sanders stated that being new to the Planning Commission, she felt that it was OK to ask questions and that members of the City Council have indicated that they also appreciate having both the questions and their answers on the record. She believes that the Commission also carefully and thoughtfully deliberates issues to try to understand them thoroughly and commented that it is OK for Commissioners to share differences of opinion.

Scott Biethan said that he appreciates the diverse viewpoints that Commissioners bring to the table and concurred that it is OK to share differences of opinion.

Eric Murray said he believes that this Commission's process of coming to resolution and making recommendations is very strong and appreciates Commissioners who are content

“experts”. He believes that the Planning Commission Chair has done a good job of keeping a good work pace and not getting bogged down in minutiae.

Phil Miller stated that he likes working on this Commission which is not afraid to disagree and feels that the Planning Commission has an important responsibility to the public to completely air any issue that comes before them.

Bob O’Hara said that he thinks this Commission is good and works well together. He would like more context on issues by providing information on what other jurisdictions are doing.

Vibhas Chandorkar said that over the years he has come to really appreciate the efforts of all staff. He has been gratified to see that other commissioners participate based on their care and concern for the City but that the challenge is always to review issues in a dispassionate way.

Franz Wiechers-Gregory said that he thinks that the Planning Commission performs a really important job of airing issues. He stated that this Planning Commission is comfortable with lively discussion and works well together. He is proud of this Commission and is thankful for the staff.

8. Election of Chair, Vice-Chair

Franz Wiechers-Gregory was nominated for Chair. The motion passed unanimously. Vibhas Chandorkar was nominated for Vice-Chair and the motion passed unanimously as well.

9. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

Summary prepared by Sarah Stiteler, Planning Commission Staff Liaison