



THURSDAY, OCTOBER 10, 2024
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING AT 12:00 PM
33568 E COLUMBIA AVE; SCAPPOOSE, OR 97056 & MICROSOFT TEAMS (HYBRID)

Disclaimer: These minutes are intended to summarize the conversations that took place in this meeting rather than provide a full transcript. Anyone wishing to view the full conversation can find a recording of this meeting on YouTube at: <https://youtu.be/QeJMvIc2xA8>

Attendees: Chair Christine Turner, Vice Chair Karl Fenstermaker, Committee Member Brian Rosenthal, Committee Member Paul Fidrych, Committee Member Sean Findon, Committee Member David Sideras, PCC OMIC Training Center Program Manager Natalee Phelps, Port of Columbia County Commissioner Nancy Ward, Associate Planner N.J. Johnson, City Manager Ben Burgener, Mayor Joe Backus

Committee Members Absent: George Hafeman, Judy Isaman

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 12:05 pm by Chair Christine Turner.

1.1 Meeting Agenda

Vice Chair Karl Fenstermaker made a motion to approve the October 10, 2024 agenda. Brian seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

1.2 Meeting Minutes

Vice Chair Karl Fenstermaker made a motion to approve the September 19, 2024 minutes. Brian seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

1.3 Public comment

No public comment.

2. NEW BUSINESS

2.1 Watch "Suburbia is Subsidized"

The group watched "Suburbia is Subsidized: Here's the Math" by Not Just Bikes, which can be viewed at https://youtu.be/7Nw6qyyrTel?si=cx_haYW4fN4JkGIT.

David: There's a lot of valuable lessons in this video and others he makes. Scappoose doesn't have a downtown and it will be Highway 30 unless we change course.

Chair Christine Turner: Ben, are we stuck with what our code says is allowed in certain zones or can we change the allowed uses?

Ben: Yes and no. Oregon land use law requires you to do your zoning, planning, and determine your allowed uses ahead of time. So if a developer wants to build and they



SCAPPOOSE
Oregon

meet your code, you have to approve that. However, if you plan what you want ahead of time, you can change your code to reflect that.

Paul: We've heard from staff before that if we downzone, we'd be liable to pay property owners of that zone damages for restricting the developability of their property and thus, impacting the value of their property. Highway 30 looks like a strip mall mess. Some cities have prohibited drive-thrus on their primary corridor because they have too many and another would create traffic issues for example. NJ, do we have anything like that?

NJ: Not like that per se but we do have the Downtown Overlay, which covers stretches of the highway and E Columbia Avenue. It facilitates development in the way you'd want to see it occur in your downtown core. That's another way you can think about is to think about upzoning areas rather than downzoning them. When you upzone, you provide additional opportunities for the development you want to see and can even add incentives to make it more appealing for a developer.

David: That's exactly what I was going to propose. One of the things that made Portland so successful was they don't just have one downtown but they have multiple areas that are served by nearby housing, restaurants, and shops.

Chair Christine Turner: How do we market that Scappoose is open for business?

David: You don't even necessarily need to do that because if you make your zoning and regulations work for you, it's going to happen.

Brian: We can't downzone because of the liability that's been mentioned but if we bring new land into the City through the 50-Year Plan, we can create a subclass of zoning that has all the criteria the way we want it to be. We already have increased density through the Downtown Overlay code, which everyone should read. The biggest thing to be careful of there, though, is parking. Lack of sufficient and convenient parking killed small downtowns in the '70s and '80s.

Paul: I agree with a lot of that. I will say that Robotaxis are on the horizon so parking won't be the issue it was back then or today. I'd really like us to dream for a bit because we often get so caught up in land use, zoning, what we can't do, cost, etc. so let's just dream about what we'd want to see first and then we'll navigate how to get there. Some of these areas I want to dream about are the Columbia Commerce Center, north of Chapman Landing, the Old Portland Road area, and the gravel pits. What else can people think of?

David: I'd suggest the area behind the food carts.

Chair Christine Turner: I'd add the area around OMIC.

Brian: Behind the food carts is a very interesting idea.

Sean: Mine would be the waterfront. The big property right by the highway is great for the people that already live in Scappoose but this could bring new people to our town



SCAPPOOSE
Oregon

and connect them with the community because of the outdoor adventure element to it.

Vice Chair Karl Fenstermaker: One thing the data I have hasn't covered so far is who we want our economic attractions to be for. Are they for the people that already live here or are they for bringing new people and dollars in?

Chair Christine Turner: I've always seen the purpose of our committee to serve the people of Scappoose. It's not that we don't have the consumer base to support these businesses but everyone is so used to going to St. Helens, Hillsboro, and Portland to run bigger errands and recreate.

Brian: I also think that if we make something really cool for our people and our community that it will attract people from elsewhere naturally too.

Paul: I agree. Once you create a better community to live, play, shop, and do business in, that will also naturally attract businesses and families.

Chair Christine Turner: This comes down to whether or not we have a failing plan or a plan to fail. If we don't have a plan with standards and rules to shape what we want to see, it'll look like what we have.

Ben: If we can dream a vision, we can figure out a way to get there. We'd have to start by improving walkability, and having a collection of services and restaurants in the area. Places that have all those things like Hood River have a spot that's really cool for their residents but it also brings in a massive amount of people from outside the community who spend time there.

Vice Chair Karl Fenstermaker: How directly does our downtown vision have to be related to outdoor recreation or whatever we define our theme as?

Brian: I don't think we'll have that connection to outdoor recreation because we won't have bike paths in our downtown.

Ben: But you already have so many bike trails around the area like Crown Z or Veterans Park.

Paul: We have the river, bike trails, and amazing views. Great views can lead to emotional connection. Think about an amphitheater overlooking the views of Mt. Hood. That would be so cool. This would lead to economic growth.

Brian: I think we should look at this more from a 5-year lens than a 30-year lens. There are a few things that if they happened, it would change everything about the area like food carts or a brewery.

Paul: Why haven't we been discussing the vision of our downtown and economic future as part of the 50-Year Plan?

NJ: The 50-Year Plan has many economic planning elements to it such as the Economic



Opportunities Analysis, updating commercial zoning codes, and rezoning some properties to commercial. In terms of a look at our downtown, staff brought that idea to this committee and the unanimous takeaway was that we need to look at our downtown more strategically and thoroughly than the 50-Year Plan project timeline allowed for. Once the 50-Year Plan is adopted, there are several grants we can get from the State to help us with planning for the downtown we want.

Paul: What about the City purchasing a property to make it into what we want rather than waiting and hoping we get the right development?

Ben: I've looked into that. That's certainly been used very successfully by other communities and could be done here. It also opens up certain financing options that aren't available to private developers.

2.2 Discuss Economic Development Strategic Plan

Vice Chair Karl Fenstermaker: I've put together some resources and information. I plan on sharing it all in draft form at our next meeting. A big part of this document is where our downtown is.

David: One of the tools we could use is SDC reductions or waivers for certain types of development in the downtown. We could also reduce what we require the developer to install like streetlights, fire hydrants, curbs, etc.

Paul: I have a problem with that.

Brian: I have a problem with that too because if you choose certain types of development, you're picking winners and losers. The other thing is that if you provide a property with incentives like that, you're going to increase the sale price of these properties since they're easier to develop. So you're really just passing around costs instead of reducing them overall while the City gets less in terms of infrastructure.

NJ: The other thing is that if you look at our SDC rates compared to other agencies near Portland, we're pretty low. SDCs are based on the cost of doing upgrades to our infrastructure that we need to do at some point or another; they're not just arbitrary numbers.

David: I'd throw property tax abatement out there where you don't pay property taxes for X amount of years if you develop your property and it meets certain conditions.

Brian: I have the same issue with that because if property tax abatements are given to property owners who develop their land, the sale price is going to increase because the next owner isn't going to have to pay property taxes on that.

Ben: I'm a fan of property tax abatements if they're well structured. A lot of people hesitate implementing them because you think you're losing out on all this tax revenue but the reality is that it's not revenue the City was operating on before. The issue becomes



SCAPPOOSE
Oregon

when there's an increased demand in services. One way to get around that problem is having administration fees or service charges in order to carry out those services in a cost effective way.

3. ANNOUNCEMENTS AND NEXT MEETINGS

Vice Chair Karl Fenstermaker: I move to shift the November and December meetings one week sooner than originally scheduled.

Brian: I second.

The motion passed unanimously.

- Next meetings
 - November 14, 2024 at 12:00 pm (*new date*)
 - December 12, 2024 at 12:00 pm (*new date*)
 - January 16, 2025 at 12:00 pm

Brian: I wanted to do something to address the shortage of daycare in Scappoose so I'm working with Grace Lutheran Church to add space for 30 students. We've been working with the City, who have been very helpful and given us a reasonable path forward.

4. Meeting adjourned at 1:31 pm.