

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY SERVICES
LAND USE PLANNING DIVISION
MULTNOMAH COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

MINUTES OF June 1, 2020

- I. **Call to Order:** Chair John Ingle called the virtual meeting to order at 6:35 p.m. via WebEx.
- II. **Roll Call:** Present – John Ingle, Victoria Purvine, Stephanie Nystrom, Bill Kabeiseman, Kari Egger, Chris Foster and Tim Wood. Absent - Alicia Denney and Susan Silodor,
- III. **Approval of Minutes:** December 2, 2019
Motion for approval by Nystrom; seconded by Purvine. Motion passed unanimously.
- IV. **Opportunity to Comment on Non-Agenda Items:** None.
- V. **Introduction of Planning Director:** Adam Barber, Deputy Director introduced Carol Johnson as the new Multnomah County Planning Director and asked the Commissioners to introduce themselves. Johnson went on to provide some background and explain how impressed she is with her new team. Each Commissioner then went on to present a brief biography.
- VI. **Briefing – Transportation System Plan Update – Rural Transit Service:**
Allison Boyd, Senior Transportation Planner thanked the Commissioner’s for their time this evening and presented a PowerPoint “Planning for Rural Transit Opportunities” which came because of the passage of HB 2017 Keep Oregon Moving Act. Multnomah County receives \$50k per year to serve rural areas outside of the Tri-met Service area. This year’s funding will be used to develop the plan. She went on to explain several potential transit benefits for the rural communities. Service customized for the rural areas perhaps like “Dial-a-Ride” or connector shuttles and vanpool. Boyd continued to share the project time and explained that the public outreach component had to be delayed due to the pandemic. Staff are looking at options to conduct online outreach for feedback. This item should come back before the Planning Commission during the winter of 2021.

Commissioner Nystrom stated that doing a connector shuttle in our new reality may be a harder sell and suggested that on demand services would be more in line with the current needs of the community. She also asked if the program dollars could be used for delivering items such as groceries or medical supplies to the area residents. Boyd indicated that she would explore the restrictions on the use of the funding for a future discussion.

- VII. **Briefing – Annual Report; 2019 Land Use Planning Activities**
Adam Barber, Deputy Director shared a PowerPoint entitled “Multnomah County Planning Division 2019 Summary” and stated that Multnomah County is the smallest size county with the largest population puts great pressure on the rural areas of the County. Our office serves this area with eleven staff with a budget of just over two million dollars. He went on to identify the diversity of the areas served by the planning office and stated that 73% of lands in our jurisdiction are zoned forestry, 23% zoned farming and remaining as residential and rural centers.

Barber then defined the Urban Growth boundary and shared that it was designed to contain urban development and protect resource lands. Then he discussed the 2011 Urban and Rural Reserves

decision that identified lands suitable for accommodating urban development over the next 50 years establishing rural reserves, which are high value working farms and forests or have important natural features.

Next, he shared that there are roughly six hundred farms in Multnomah County on average of fifty acres made up of nursery stock, berries and Christmas trees. These farms generate more than sixty-eight million dollars in revenue. Multnomah County is fourth in the state for agricultural production and ninetieth in the entire country.

Barber then identified the three sections of the Land Use Planning Division, current planning with six staff to provide customer assistance at the counter and review development applications for the Planning Director; long range planning consisting of two staff to develop policy and legislation to foster state goals; and the compliance section currently staffed with only one full time employee. He shared a slide demonstrating the seven-year trend for development applications then went on discuss average permit processing times and compliance caseloads.

Barber concluded by discussing the proposed budget request for the replacement of the current permitting software used by the office to a more customer accessible digital permitting platform.

VIII. Director's Comments: Carol Johnson, Planning Director stated how grateful she is to have Adam as her guide to understand the issues and nauseas of Multnomah County. She feels that a lot of what the current planning team does is put out fires every day; meeting state imposed deadlines, navigating the State's one size fits all approach that doesn't take into account the complexities of this region. Because Oregon land use law is so centralized the county does not have the autonomy to craft unique regulations that better fit the needs of our rural communities, this leaves staff doing a lot of interpretation at the local level to determine what makes sense for us. These issues and the unique regulations for the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area make onboarding new staff challenging. She then explained that most of the work she has had to do since her arrival has been dealing with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, forging relationships with our city partners to develop a more streamlined online presence. As the State moves into Phase 1, staff will not change much of their current teleworking arrangements; we are exploring new software for handling payments more securely for customers; and looking at software for digital plan review. Johnson stated that she is eager to obtain input from the new staff regarding the systems that they have been using out in the industry. She shared that she will be developing a guide to the zoning code for new staff, and she is exploring reformatting the code into a single column layout that would be more customer friendly. She thanked the Commissioners' for serving and looked forward to seeing them again on July 6, 2020.

Meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

Recorded by Stuart Farmer