

**CITY OF CORVALLIS**  
**OSU-RELATED PLAN REVIEW TASK FORCE MINUTES**  
**July 9, 2015**

**Present**

*Planning Commissioners:*

Jennifer Gervais, Chair

Paul Woods

Jasmin Woodside

*City Councilors:*

Barbara Bull

Frank Hann

Roen Hogg

**Staff**

Kevin Young, Planning Division Manager

Terry Nix, Recorder

**Visitors**

Dave Bella

Jeff Hess

David Dodson

Charles Vars

**Excused Absence**

Ron Sessions

**I. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

The OSU-Related Plan Review Task Force (TF) was called to order by Chair Jennifer Gervais at 6:00 p.m., in the Madison Avenue meeting room. Introductions were made.

**II. PUBLIC INPUT OPPORTUNITY**

**Jeff Hess** said he previously submitted written comments. He thought the recommendation could be strengthened with findings related to the City's dependency on OSU, as well as the argument that we have a finite housing base and, in order to have a diverse economy, we need housing for employees of industries that want to come to Corvallis. He referred to the statement that off-campus housing is the only student housing that pays taxes; while this is correct, he believes there is a net loss to the City in that, as former Councilor Sorte has explained on the record, residential property taxes do not fully pay for the services required by residents, therefore, property taxes paid by businesses are what fund the City. He said we should make sure housing is not consumed by one mono-business, especially one that doesn't pay business taxes and that consumes a lot of housing which actually costs the taxpayers.

Jennifer Gervais referred to Mr. Hess's written testimony in which he stated that in response to OSU's recent growth spurts, the City has developed significant amounts of wetlands and threatened species habitat. She asked if there are documents to back that up. Mr. Hess said he was primarily referring to the Sather Annexation, where the Army Corps of Engineers had to issue wetland fill permits and the process took close to a year because of wetlands there.

Mr. Hess said this process is frustrating, where the City lists findings and policies and OSU pushes back without just having an honest conversation. He thinks the idea of having student housing on campus is so significant that putting together an argument is challenging because one would have to quantify the cost of increased commute time, traffic mitigation costs, greenhouse gas emissions, etc. On-campus housing at OSU is the only

way to guarantee students can walk or bike to campus. From an environmental perspective, it is such a significantly better option that it's frustrating to have to find a way to encourage OSU to pursue that, but he does encourage that. He discussed the amount of student debt being accumulated due to housing costs, and he said it is shortsighted of OSU to set enrollment without considering the implications of student debt.

Councilor Bull said the transportation component of the Comprehensive Plan update is intended to look at future growth and land use scenarios; that update process is beginning and she hopes that Mr. Hess will participate.

Commissioner Woods asked what was meant by "finite housing base." Mr. Hess said the City has goals of being a compact city and not going beyond the defined urban growth boundary. Along with zoning, that provides for a finite number of housing units. Seeing a significant plot of land that was set aside for single-family housing converted into student housing is a big hit from the perspective of trying to attract other business into the economy. A free housing option on campus would speak directly to student debt as well as the housing issue, and that is the model he would like to see OSU pursue.

### **III. DISCUSSION OF PUBLIC COMMENT**

Chair Gervais initiated discussion about how to proceed.

Councilor Hann said there was some conversation at City Council that the TF is working on a fairly technical look at the Comprehensive Plan. He noted the TF's work is based in part on comments from the Collaboration project and community concerns, but there was some feeling that perhaps the entire picture isn't clear unless we also address where the recommendations came from. He would also advocate including some information related to Chapter 3.36. Because of time elements, he suggested that some of that work could be done in smaller groups.

Commissioners Woods said the process thus far has been to identify OSU-related Comprehensive Plan findings and policies, and update them. He agrees it would be helpful to have a narrative, but that seems like a shift in direction.

Councilor Bull said she would like to make the information a bit more accessible, especially in terms of explaining the issues and the progress made on those issues.

Councilor Hann said, in his mind, this process was started to communicate more effectively to OSU what the City wants as they update their master plan. If this group can do a more complete job and send a recommendation forward with some background information and clear direction to OSU, he thinks time will be saved.

Councilor Hogg asked about the possibility of expanding the scope of the consultant that Council has already agreed to hire to develop The Vision and Action Plan, so all of the work is consistent. Manager Young said it may be difficult to expand that scope at this point. He stated that it has been his understanding that the goal of this exercise has been to facilitate the community's conversation about OSU-related issues, to evaluate current Comprehensive Plan findings and policies, and to recommend adjustments. His expectation is that the group would forward a recommendation to the City Council, which would then likely direct staff to prepare the analysis that would be associated with a Comprehensive Plan amendment. As far as identifying some of the issues behind the

recommendations, he suggested that going back through some of the Collaboration work would be a good place to start.

Chair Gervais said this process is in response to a need to do something right now because OSU is working on their master plan. It isn't meant to replace the Comprehensive Plan update which has to follow the visioning, and she thinks it's important to separate those two processes.

Councilor Bull said she understood Councilor York was asking for a staff analysis. Manager Young said it hasn't been his role to provide a lot of direction through this process; we want this to be the community's conversation about OSU, understanding there will be a subsequent process when the concepts will likely be further refined. He suggested that the recommendation could be organized by laying out the issues that were heard, along with the findings and policies that flowed from each, but that would take some time.

Councilor Hann clarified that he doesn't want to broaden the TF's scope but he wants to present the information in the most understandable way possible. Chair Gervais agreed; she said the TF already has a tremendous amount of information to summarize, consider, and package.

Councilor Hogg said Councilor York was concerned that we are lacking a vision that will drive the policies. Chair Gervais said she thinks we have to rely on the current adopted vision statement because that update process will likely take a couple of years. Councilor Hann added that this group's focus is much narrower in communicating to OSU how the City wants things done.

Councilor Bull suggested a check-in with Council to lay out the issues and the work done to date, and start the conversation about the next process and timeline. She said this higher level check-in might allow for more focused work. Chair Gervais said she doesn't want to expand the TF work beyond its current scope, and the only way to shorten the task would be to not consider testimony received. Councilor Hann said the scope is in place and he wants to complete the process; he thinks the work can be divided and completed by September. Chair Gervais agreed; she suggested the group's time should be spent reviewing testimony and fine-tuning the proposed language, and the narrative and packaging be done as "homework" and shared with the group.

Discussion followed regarding how to best package the information. It was agreed that Chair Gervais will draft a narrative which summarizes the process used, the concerns heard, and the intent behind the proposed changes. Councilor Hann will work through the Collaboration matrix and summarize the issues. Commissioner Woods will draft information about issues related to Chapter 3.36. Manager Young will organize all revised and new findings and policies by theme, in order to provide a better sense of the ground that's been covered. "Homework" will be circulated early next week. Staff will circulate a Doodle Poll to schedule the next meeting.

#### **IV. FINALIZE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHANGES TO FINDINGS AND POLICES/**

## **NEED FOR ANOTHER MEETING?**

Chair Gervais led an item by item review of Dan Brown's testimony, dated June 30, 2015, Subject: Improving Proposed Changes to the Comprehensive Plan. The group discussed each suggestion and revised the proposed findings and policies as noted below.

Finding 13.2.q: Chair Gervais recalled that this finding was proposed based on testimony that some development on campus was perceived as a workaround of the regulations, and that development that serves the larger community should meet the requirements of that larger community. She noted Mr. Brown's concern was related to specificity.

It was agreed to reword the finding as follows: *Private businesses that operate in coordination with OSU, but serve the larger community have led to concerns that City development requirements that would have been applied outside the OSU zone were not met.*

Policy 13.2.7: Chair Gervais reviewed the proposed language and Mr. Brown's proposed change. Following review, it was agreed to reword the policy as follows: *Permitted uses on the OSU campus shall be primarily University-related. Where public-private partnerships are intended to serve the larger community, a public hearing review process by the City shall be required for development proposals.*

Policy 9.7.6: Following review of the proposed language and Mr. Brown's question regarding the term "experimental community," it was agreed to reword the proposed policy as follows: *The City and OSU shall cooperate to facilitate innovative development that is not dependent upon the single-occupant automobile.*

Councilor Hogg asked if the above contradicts other proposed policies. Chair Gervais said it's not unusual to have contradictory policies in the Comprehensive Plan; the goal is to create an umbrella under which other things can happen. The intent of Policy 13.2.7 is to make clear that some development should come to the City for review, but this should not be so restrictive that there is no room for innovative attempts to solve problems.

Finding 11.4.n: It was agreed to delete the reference to (Shoup 2011, Speck 2013).

Policy 5.4.18: The group reviewed the proposed policy, noting the intent is to balance density with historic character. It was agreed to reword as follows: *The City shall evaluate zoning patterns in the neighborhoods near OSU with the intent of balancing density goals with preservation of neighborhood character.*

Policy 9.7.3: Chair Gervais reviewed the proposed wording and Mr. Brown's comments. She said "dwelling unit" means some kind of housing arrangement, and she doesn't think it's necessary to define all of the particulars. Commissioner Woods noted that "dwelling unit" is defined in the LDC. He said the intent isn't that all faculty and staff would be housed near campus, but that the option would be more available. It was agreed to revise the policy slightly for clarity: *The City and OSU shall work toward the goal of housing more faculty, staff, and students who work and attend regular classes on campus in dwelling units on or near campus.*

Finding 11.2.k: Following discussion, it was agreed to reword the finding as follows: *The proximity of University-related housing to OSU affects the number of trips made on the transportation system, which affects its performance.*

Finding 13.2.p: Chair Gervais noted the intent of the finding was to get at concerns about the monitoring. In discussion, it was noted that the plan stated that monitoring would occur but the process was not clearly defined. It was agreed to reword the finding as follows: *The 2004-2015 Campus Master Plan monitoring process was not clearly defined. A review of the monitoring submittals over the 2005-2014 time period indicates that there were periodic gaps primarily related to parking utilization counts in off-campus parking districts, transportation demand management reports, and Jackson Street traffic counts.*

## **V. PUBLIC INPUT OPPORTUNITY**

**David Dodson**, OSU Campus Planning Manager, said OSU has been making refinements to the District Plan (DP), which is a much higher level plan than the Campus Master Plan (CMP), because they found there was confusion when it came to certain land use decisions. The DP stays at a higher level, provides background statistics, and speaks more to aspirations. He said OSU is well aware of issues related to parking and housing, and they are currently working on mitigation strategies which will later be presented for public comment. Regarding the discussion about Chapter 3.36, he said that once this group has made its recommendation on the related Comprehensive Plan policies, that will provide sufficient information for OSU to begin moving ahead with packaging the DP application and associated materials to be reviewed by the City, Planning Commission, and City Council.

Councilor Hann asked for information about OSU's timeline. Mr. Dodson said it is hoped that the Comprehensive Plan policies related to OSU will be adopted or acknowledged by October. Based on that, they envision submitting application materials to the City at the end of January. They have built in two iterations of staff review, three Planning Commission meetings, three City Council meetings, and final adoption of findings, with a finalization date toward the end of 2016.

Councilor Hann asked if calling out concerns about Chapter 3.36 would help OSU's efforts. Mr. Dodson said any clarity and guidance is helpful; however, OSU is aware of many of the issues and where the rubber meets the road is what OSU is going to propose to provide assurances and mitigate impacts.

Councilor Hann said it is his opinion that none of us can predict the future that the University will be moving into. He sees lots of creative things that can happen; but at some point there has to be transparency. He said issues, such as the hospital facility locating on campus, have created problems and lost the public trust. He said it would be great if OSU would house all students on campus, but that isn't realistic. Looking into the future, he said, OSU giving transparent feedback, in a really forthright and honest way, that is realistic and achievable in terms of housing would be really helpful.

Mr. Dodson said he has conveyed to the University the importance of the housing issue. He said OSU's new food pantry and childcare facility fall under the existing use category of University Services and Facilities, and a question was raised related to how much of those facilities are associated with OSU. City staff made a determination that the threshold is 70% of the patrons utilizing such a facility should work or study at OSU, and both of those

facilities exceed that threshold. He said OSU will continue to take a stand that, with the size of campus and in order to maintain the core of campus as an attractive, pedestrian-friendly environment, they don't want delivery trucks and cars in the core of campus. The question is how to accommodate accessibility needs, and there are things that can be done to make that better.

Councilor Hann said that reduced accessibility to the library and events on campus is almost creating an environment where campus is more isolated from the community as a whole.

Commissioner Woods asked if the University is expecting to offer LDC language. Mr. Dodson said it is their hope to be able to develop that language.

**Dave Bella** thanked TF members for their work. He distributed *Planning: A More Holistic Approach*, submitted by himself, Charlie Vars and Court Smith (Attachment A). He said one of the early meetings of this group included a discussion about big strategies, and the paper he submitted includes some of those ideas. The information isn't intended to bring more work to the TF at this point; but perhaps it could be submitted along with the recommendation. He and his group will be following up with OSU on opportunities to do some really creative things in terms of accessibility. Brief discussion followed.

## **VI. REVIEW OF MEETING MINUTES**

### May 14, 2015

Corrections to name spellings for Jennifer Gervais and Jasmin Woodside were noted. In addition, Chair Gervais suggested that clerical corrections were needed.

MOTION: Councilor Hann moved to approve the May 14 minutes with clerical corrections. Councilor Bull seconded the motion, and it passed 6-0.

### May 28, 2015

MOTION: Commissioner Woodside moved to approve the minutes as presented. Councilor Hann seconded the motion, and it passed 6-0.

### June 8, 2015

The following corrected language was requested for Item II, the first paragraph: "Charles Vars distributed written testimony on a new Finding 7.2.8, and stated that OSU and the City should cooperate to reduce car dependence."

MOTION: Commissioner Woodside moved to approve the minutes as revised. Commissioner Woods seconded the motion, and it passed 5-0-1, with Councilor Bull abstaining.

## **VII. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:57 p.m.

## Planning: A more Holistic Approach

The planning process within the Corvallis community puts the focus on particular actions based on findings and policies. A broader perspective can be lost in the business of addressing details.

The following comments provide a language to address our concerns.

Dave Bella, Charlie Vars and Court Smith

July, 2015

RECEIVED

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Community Development  
Planning Division

The words "strategy" and "strategic" refer to long term and overall aims and purposes and the means to achieve them.

The words "tactics" and "tactical" refer to limited and immediate aims and purposes and the means to achieve them.

Strategies are concerned with the whole (cumulative, overall) outcomes of many tactical (limited, immediate) decisions.

Independently, each tactical decision may make sense; but cumulatively, they can lead to harm and even disaster. That is, the character of the whole (strategic outcome) cannot be reduced to the character of the parts (tactical decisions).

Common examples of wholes that cannot be reduced to parts include the following. The character (quality) of great music cannot be reduced to the quality of notes. The humor of jokes cannot be reduced to "funny" words.

Undesirable and even catastrophic outcomes can emerge from a succession of well intended tactical decisions that each made sense at the time.

Strategies serve to redirect tactical actions to promote favorable cumulative outcomes.

A strategic perspective requires looking at wholes (patterns, interactions, cumulative outcomes). This requires a shift in thinking that is difficult to imagine.