

CITY OF SULTAN COUNCIL WORKSHOP – March 2, 2023

Mayor Wiita called the regular meeting to order at approximately 7:01 p.m. The meeting was a hybrid with attendees both in person at City Hall Council Chambers and via Zoom Internet Conference Service. Mayor Wiita announced that zoom video was malfunctioning so zoom attendees would have audio only. Mayor Wiita called roll and the following were in attendance:

Councilmembers: Morgan, Aldrich, Dearborn, Hund, and Sivewright

(It was noted Dearborn joined the meeting via Zoom a short time after the start of the meeting.)

Councilmember Absent: Beeler

Staff: City Administrator Ibershof, Community Development Director Hart, Assistant Planner Bond, Assistant Planner Donk, and City Clerk Pevey.

CHANGES/ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

None noted.

DISCUSSION

AB23-09_ Comprehensive Plan Update

Presentation on file with the city clerk's office

CDD Hart explained the goal of tonight's discussion is to provide staff direction that will provide them with a work plan moving forward on the comprehensive plan update. He started the meeting by explaining land use decisions have a long-term impact for generations and gave a breakdown of the elements involved in the planning process. He provided the council with an explanation of Washington's current planning laws in relationship to growth management to include the authority over planning governance. Hart explained the department has recently been reviewing the process through the eyes of the citizens in an effort to assist in the process. In addition, he reviewed the periodic update requirements for Snohomish County to include:

- Amendments to the growth management act
- Comprehensive plans/equity and inclusion must be addressed.
- Development regulations consistency state laws
- Changes in urban growth areas/requests
- Updated population projections/Census/State OFM
- Updated critical areas date.

Required elements for sultan include land use, housing, capital facilities, utilities, and transportation. Optional elements include sub areas, parks and recreation, economic development, environmental/conservation, climate change, and solar energy.

Periodic update starts with creating a work plan to develop a community engagement plan and initiate a public engagement program to reach out to the community; data gathering to include analysis and begin the SEPA review which will result in development of staff reports and maps through the consulting team and keeping council updated on growth through the process. Staff are anticipating an upcoming first review of the housing strategy being prepared by the BlueLine Group. Requesting input from the council on where they want the city to go over the next 20 years or longer; as well as examples of well-planned cities council likes. Provided council with additional big ideas to consider for discussion to include commercial growth, complete streets ordinance and how to measure success, downtown growth potential to include downtown and commercial design guidance, neighborhoods and offering some commercial opportunities, walkable neighborhoods, and sub area planning all as elements to consider.

Opened to input from council and input provided as follows:

- Councilmember Hund interest in housing, commercial mixed use, more affordable housing.
- Councilmember Morgan felt Bellingham and Woodinville are two cities that represent a good mixed use space; felt focus should be on transition from commuter town to mid-sized city; for elements he suggested focus on

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- parks & recreation as well as climate change regarding fire, sustainability, and flooding.
- Councilmember Sivewright suggested housing making sure to include accessory dwelling units (ADUs) and detached accessory dwelling units (DADUs). Interested in a visual matrix of what development allows in what zone within the city. Concerned about current street widths that don't allow proper parking and travel of larger vehicles and suggested more forward thinking on zoning and planning.
- Councilmember Hund – agreement on ADUs to include controls on short term rentals; agreement on street widths to increase to two lanes to drive and allow parking on both sides of the street.
- Councilmember Sivewright in agreement on control of short term rentals.
- Councilmember Dearborn – suggested trails between neighborhoods to include bike paths that are not on the roads for safety of children; agreement on suggestion of wider streets as well as better street lighting.
- Mayor Wiita – Interested in understanding how much the city is truly transitioning from a bedroom community and the impact to common spaces and how much can we expect that to continue as employers embracing remote work and the impacts remote work is having on the community to include data. Concerns on housing supply for older residents to downsize too; promoting development for first time home buyers as well as seniors downsizing; controls required so no one group controls the housing market; duplex/triplex designed to match the neighborhood.
- Community Development Director Hart agreed staff working on putting graphics into the housing action plan to be able to share ideas the city would like to see in this arena. Suggested leaders in the industry can be brought to the council to engage the council in further discussions.
- Councilmember Sivewright interested in a matrix and housing plans that were already in place developers could pick up that met the vision of the plan. Community Development Director Hart confirmed that cities such as Leavenworth have created plans that are available to purchase.
- Councilmember Hund in support of trails and suggested Eagle Ridge has great trails through that development; suggested larger green parks such as that; remove private roads in development to relieve conflicts and stress on HOA's that don't have the capacity to handle them adequately; prior council discussion on turning all commercial zoning into mixed use zoning.
- Councilmember Morgan in agreement with all comments; Sky Harbor neighborhood another area that reflects the current thoughts; incentivize ways to get better subdivisions; potential vacancy tax on commercial spaces; interested in Anacortes regarding municipal broadband; interested in seeing Sultan as a hub in the valley for internet access with a potential municipal broadband service.
- Councilmember Hund acknowledged WWTP and Water Treatment Plant upgrades, but confirmation on other utilities. Mayor confirmed stormwater is the other utility that needs to grow and expand and potential projects with stormwater, suggesting a capped stormwater pond versus open pond.
- Mayor concerned about redevelopment of downtown complicated by flooding and really seeking the true picture in the future for the city's downtown revitalization to include the four lanes area at the east end of town to review zoning elements; as well as the roundabout area on the far east end of town with focus on sub area planning and ways to may it make more appealing for a commercial developer coming in.
- Councilmember Hund expressed his feeling that the city is not interested in more self-storage areas being developed.
- Councilmember Morgan asked how the city can be a good partner to get the city built with a proper vision. Hart confirmed discussions with developers that the shift is moving from just commercial spaces to mixed use spaces that include housing elements within them.
- Councilmember Hund suggested the enterprise housing partnership model. Councilmember Morgan confirmed interest in ways to encourage innovation in housing and commercial mixed use.
- Councilmember Sivewright concerned the city is missing transportation and bus service to the Sultan Basin area; also acknowledged the city has a lot of aging infrastructure and would be good to be able to get ahead of that. Discussion on various options to offer potential bus routes as well as current stops while ensuring development include areas where buses can turn around for a future bus route.
- All in agreement interested in a parks & recreation department being established.

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Environment/conservation – acknowledgement that current state laws already appear to cover this in depth; interested in protected areas shouldn't be included in a plat; discussion feel city is already acquiring land that are critical areas to develop into parks and public facilities.

Discussion shifted to school, police, and fire services as the city grows and Hart suggested triggers can be built into the metric that expands the staffing in all departments. Hart suggested level of service in relationship to measures on cities nearby; discussion on requirement to grow police when population threshold met and discussion on own force versus contract with sheriff's office; Councilmember Hund feels mental health counselor and assistance going hand in hand; cameras in parks to push out this is a safe place.

- Hart stated one constraint fire department has to grow if community grows in height, the fire department would then need a ladder truck; above 30 feet the city would run against insurance issue if there isn't a ladder truck within a certain distance of that building; discussion on insurance rating and effect on insurance costs due to the ladder truck issue; discussion on potential impact fees to address fire department needs in relationship to growth
- Mayor and council discussion on schools and the impact on growth on them as well to include where the school can grow, and steps city can take to assist in that element. Also suggested community engagement elements to include social media, utility newsletter and other ways suggested.

Discussion shifted to ways to involve the citizens during the update and ideas discussed to include, but not limited to renting out a downtown shop and storyboard ideas; online assessments; public forums at HOA meetings, car counters, event booths, main street downtown party engagement and ice breaker community events.

- Mayor and council acknowledgement in discussion of inviting new members to the community since a majority of the growth occurred during the pandemic with flyers placed in various neighborhoods to attend events; new resident packet information hand delivered.
- Ibershof confirmed survey coming out to inquire on how best to contact citizens; also, internships to handle public outreach portion of the project and can handle many of the items suggested.

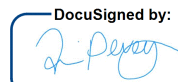
Will return with a recap at a later meeting but acknowledged enough framework to move forward, but may connect with individual councilmembers to expand the conversation regarding their comments.

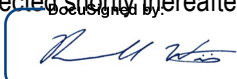
PUBLIC COMMENT:

None noted.

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Councilmember Morgan, seconded by Councilmember Aldrich the meeting was ended at approximately 8:53 pm. The Zoom meeting connection was disconnected shortly thereafter.

DocuSigned by:

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Tami J. Pevey, City Clerk

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Russell Wiita, Mayor