

*City of Burien*

BURIEN PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING  
February 10, 2009  
7:00 p.m.  
Shared Conference Room, Burien City Hall  
MINUTES

**Planning Commission Members Present:**

Janet Shull, Stacie Grage, Rebecca McInteer, Jim Clingan, Brian Bennett

**Absent:** Joe Fitzgibbon

**Others Present:**

Scott Greenberg, Community Development Department director; Jeremy Hammar, Planning intern; Gabe Snedecker, AHBL

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**Roll Call**

Janet Shull called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. At the call of the roll, all commissioners were present except Commissioners Fitzgibbon and Bennett. Commissioner Bennett arrived at 7:11 p.m.

**Agenda Confirmation**

Motion to approve the agenda as printed was made by Commissioner Clingan. Second was by Commissioner Grage and the motion carried unanimously.

**Public Comment**

None

**Approval of Minutes**

A. November 19, 2008

Commissioner Grage moved to approve the minutes as presented; Commissioner Clingan seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

**Old Business**

A. Discussion on Sustainability

Scott Greenberg introduced Gabe Snedecker, from the firm AHBL, who would be speaking on his firm's work helping the City of Shoreline develop a sustainability strategy, and Jeremy Hammar, intern with Burien's planning department, who would be giving a brief presentation on the memo included in the commissioners' meeting packet.

Mr. Greenberg explained that he hopes to gain direction from the commissioners, either at tonight's meeting or at a future meeting, about how they would like to proceed to work on sustainability this year.

Mr. Hammar briefed the commission on what he found in his research to be the three most successful sustainability strategies implemented by cities. The first is the model used by the City of Shoreline; Mr. Snedecker will explain that later in the meeting. The second is the ICLEI Emissions Inventory Plan. ICLEI is the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives, which is an association of local

governments committed to advancing climate protection and sustainable development. Conducting the inventory helps identify the sources of harmful emissions and allows governments to prioritize their efforts and tailor their policies to address the specific needs of the community.

The ICLEI plan is based on five milestones:

1. Conduct a baseline emissions inventory and forecast
2. Adopt an emissions reductions target
3. Develop a local climate action plan
4. Implement policies
5. Monitor and verify results.

ICLEI's plan relies on two pieces of software provided by the organization. The first is the Clean Air and Climate Protection software, which does many of the needed calculations and predicts future levels of emissions and the effects of an emissions reduction plan. The second software is the Climate and Air Pollution Planning Assistant, which provides a library of emissions reduction strategies.

The third strategy is the Comprehensive Plan modifications. This plan can be a more manageable start for cities and creates a foundation for future sustainability efforts. Goals for the city can be placed directly into the Comprehensive Plan. This strategy requires the fewest resources.

Mr. Hammar went on to explain the four important details to consider with any plan:

1. Bring sustainability down to Earth – make the “big picture” relevant to day-to-day life.
2. Work with the public to better address its needs – sustainability relies on public involvement and activity.
3. Coordinate with other municipalities – learn from the ideas and practices that have been beneficial in other cities and work together with cities that are working toward the same goals.
4. Sustainable decision-making – sustainability should be a consideration in all decisions to be made in the city.

He noted that the three strategies are not mutually exclusive; they can be used in combination or elements from each can be combined into a new plan.

Gabe Snedecker, with AHBL in Seattle, presented what his firm has learned in working on sustainability with other cities, focusing primarily on the City of Shoreline. He said the key to developing a sustainability strategy is to break the effort into manageable pieces.

Mr. Snedecker explained that the first task in developing a sustainability strategy is establishing a definition. He noted the Planning Commission already has done this. The three Es of sustainability are:

1. Environmental quality
2. Economic vitality
3. Equity/social benefit.

Mr. Snedecker outlined the steps to achieving a sustainable community:

1. Establishing guiding principles or policies
2. Assessing existing efforts
3. Ensuring the plan reflects the community's values

4. Setting specific objectives and tying them to actions for achieving the objectives
5. Establishing a baseline to track progress
6. Developing a mechanism to assess progress.

Mr. Snedecker reviewed the steps the City of Shoreline took to create its sustainability strategy. He noted that the strategy components included establishing criteria to guide environmentally sustainable decision making, creating maps of existing and potential green infrastructure opportunities, assessing current city efforts to identify gaps and opportunities for improvement, establishing measures for tracking progress, and doing a capacity assessment for implementation.

Fifty recommendations were made by AHBL to the City of Shoreline in five focus areas: city operations and outreach, energy and carbon, sustainable development and green infrastructure, waste reduction and resource conservation, and ecosystem stewardship, Mr. Snedecker said. The lessons learned, he said, are:

1. Make sustainability the overarching policy framework
2. Identify champions, preferably at the highest levels
3. Set clear goals and priorities
4. Engage the community
5. Reward change
6. Give the plan authority
7. Base decisions in science but don't let perfect be the enemy of good
8. Start with a measurable rallying point
9. Focus on executable tasks
10. Focus on money savers or low cost first
11. Find a sustainable funding source
12. Start small and scale up
13. Use an incremental approach to expensive items
14. What gets measured matters.

Mr. Snedecker listed the following strategic and practical considerations as Burien develops a sustainability strategy:

1. Developing goals around the three Es
2. Internal vs. external focus – being conscious about where to put resources
3. Looking at what the City is already doing
4. Focusing on incremental additional visible actions
5. Determining what is politically and financially possible
6. Looking at internal efficiency and waste reduction as first steps
7. Identifying partners and committing to using available tools.

The floor was then opened to questions from the commissioners. Commissioner McInteer asked how the program inventory in Shoreline was accomplished. Mr. Snedecker responded that the City of Shoreline had a planner assigned as the project manager for the inventory, who gathered information on what every

department was doing in every possible program. He then assisted the planner in breaking the information out into the applicable topics, and then recommendations were made on each program.

He further explained that the experience with the City of Covington was different, beginning with staff training and brainstorming of staff suggestions about things the City could do, more of a grass roots approach. They discussed specific topics to elicit input about green infrastructure opportunities or ways in which the City could conserve resources, then compiled the information and generated a document containing recommendations for further study. Mr. Snedecker said many of the best ideas came from staff who, as the people actually doing the jobs, knew exactly where improvements could be made.

Chair Shull asked about the public participation aspect of Shoreline's program. Mr. Snedecker explained that there was constant communication through the City's website, some mailers and two big events with stakeholders, one focusing on gathering input on the guiding principles and objectives and the other focusing on actions.

Mr. Snedecker said he thinks the best way for the City to proceed is to break the effort down into steps, and then committing to follow certain steps with the available resources, guided by the overarching policy vision.

Mr. Greenberg noted that the City is a member of ICLEI and can purchase the inventory software right away; he asked if that was something Mr. Snedecker recommends as an early step. Mr. Snedecker said the City could get started on that anytime, but his recommendation is that the policy direction piece needs to come early in the process and is perhaps more important than the tools used. He also cautioned that the City needs to be flexible, understanding that the process will evolve.

Chair Shull said she feels strongly that there needs to be a citizen involvement component to Burien's efforts.

Commissioner Clingan asked how long Shoreline worked on their project. Mr. Snedecker said Shoreline made sustainability a focus and completed the bulk of the work in 6 or 7 months, followed by several months of the draft strategy going through the city council adoption process. He added that there are ways to improve upon the Shoreline model.

Mr. Greenberg suggested that representatives of Sustainable Burien be invited to participate in the commission's next meeting to gain their input and the commissioners agreed.

### **New Business**

None

### **Planning Commission Communications**

Commissioner Grace said she has heard many comments from Burien residents about the B/IAS art installation being a waste of taxpayer funds. Mr. Greenberg said he believes the City's contribution to the art installation was about \$10,000; the land is privately owned, it's not a public park, it's temporary, and the concept is that it's an artistic "pea patch." Commissioner Grace said she gets the impression people don't understand that the City didn't buy the art and perhaps the news needs to get out more effectively.

### **Director's Report**

Mr. Greenberg updated the commissioners on the Town Square project. The privately owned building will be completed and opened sometime in April, followed by the City Hall opening for business on May 19. The library will open on June 13 following a joint grand opening event with the City Hall. The new transit center will open with the June service change; the buses will be moved to the interior of the site from the current 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue Southwest stops. He added that if the economic stimulus money comes through, shortly thereafter there will be a groundbreaking for the transit-oriented development project.

King County has selected Wasatch Alliance Group to build the project. Phase 1 of the project will be an approximately 500-stall parking garage for the transit center; Phase 2 will be about 100 housing units. Mr. Greenberg noted that presently the talk is the housing will be anywhere from 60 to 100 percent affordable units and available for teachers and senior adults.

Mr. Greenberg then told the commissioners that in the coming year they will be working on a fee-in-lieu-of parking study for the downtown area, code updates, a revision to the Commute Trip Reduction ordinance, zoning code amendments including a revision of the subdivision code, and the annual Comprehensive Plan amendments. Regionally, there will be an update of the Countywide Planning Policies. He then updated the commissioners on the potential annexation of a portion of the North Highline area.

### **Adjournment**

Motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Grage. Chair Shull adjourned the meeting at 8:40 p.m.

/s/ Janet Shull, chair