

City of Mount Vernon
Planning Commission Meeting
Minutes from March 1, 2016

Chairperson Tom Waller called the meeting to order. Present were Planning Commission members Adair Orr, Chris Bollinger, Linda Piazza, Fred Clark and Shelley Acero. Staff members Rebecca Lowell and Bob Hyde were also in attendance. Planning Commission member Al Lyon was absent.

Minutes:

Minutes from November 3, 2015 were tabled until the Planning Commission members that were present at the November meeting are present to approve the minutes. Minutes from February 2, 2016 were tabled due to an incomplete sentence.

Comprehensive Plan Vision Statement:

Mrs. Lowell provided several handouts and summarized the SWOT analysis (Strength, Weakness, Opportunities and Threats). Several different groups participated in this exercise and it has helped to provide a framework to create a community vision. A discussion ensued among the Planning Commission members on the identity and vision of the City of Mount Vernon. Agreeably, agriculture and the Skagit River are large parts of Mount Vernon's identity. In addition to protecting the city's identity opportunities for growing a local economy to keep people invested should be created. Guidelines are needed for future growth as new development could change Mount Vernon's character. Technology, art and food were discussed as industries that would be beneficial for the identity of Mount Vernon. More businesses that cater to local residents were also mentioned.

A brief discussion occurred regarding the Planning Commission's vision statement. Mrs. Acero has been working on this and shared with other members. Mr. Orr would like a little more time to review the working draft so he may contribute to its' content.

Mrs. Lowell offered to email the members a sample Comprehensive Plan vision statement to help assist them. She asked that they work on it together and bring their draft to the next meeting on March 15th. Mr. Hyde recommended a vision statement that is not too much but targets where we want to be in 20 years.

2nd Transportation Element Briefing:

In 2014 and 2015 WSDOT and the National Bicycle and Pedestrian Documentation Project performed a bicycle and pedestrian count at seven locations within the city. The GMA requires the city provide information on non-motorized routes. The figures from the count will provide staff with a baseline they can use later.

Miscellaneous:

Mrs. Lowell gave a brief report on Affordable Housing. Affordable is defined in terms of income. The income benchmark is Area Median Income, or AMI, provided by HUD annually. The AMI for a family of four in Skagit County in 2015 was \$68,200.00. Housing vouchers are provided for those living in subsidized housing to supplement their rental costs. There are programs that help with different income levels and different segments of the population. The City is required to plan for all economic levels of our community.

There being no further business, Mrs. Piazza moved, second by Mr. Orr, to adjourn. Motion carried.