

**CITY OF SILVERTON
PLANNING COMMISSION WORK SESSION MINUTES**

7:00 P.M.

May 28, 2019

The Planning Commission of the City of Silverton met at the Silverton Community Center on May 28, 2019 at 7:00 p.m. with Chairman Flowers presiding.

I. ROLL CALL:

Present	Absent	
<u> X </u>		Chairman Clay Flowers
<u> </u>	<u>Excused</u>	Vice-Chairman Gus Frederick
<u> </u>	<u>Excused</u>	Morry Jones
<u> X </u>		Chris Mayou
<u> X </u>		Rich Piaskowski
<u> X </u>		Tasha Huebner
<u> X </u>		Peter Matzka

STAFF PRESENT:

Community Development Director, Jason Gottgetreu, Assistant to the City Manager and Human Resources Coordinator, Elizabeth Gray and Planning and Permit Assistant, Kate Schlee.

II. BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR:

There were no comments.

III. AGENDA ITEMS:

3.1 Neighborhood Associations Discussion

Community Development Director, Jason Gottgetreu and Assistant to the City Manager and Human Resources Coordinator, Elizabeth Gray gave a brief introduction of the purpose for the discussion being that one of the city council’s goals is to identify new methods for specific outreach, communication and participation. A specific objective for this goal was to reconvene the Citizen Involvement Committee to make a recommendation on the formation and support of neighborhood associations.

Ms. Gray explained that special invitations were issued to people who were involved in producing the 2012 Citizens’ Involvement Committee Report on neighborhood associations. The attendees introduced themselves as Douglas Jenkins, former Planning Commission member and Jim Squires. Both were involved in the 2012 Citizens’ Involvement Committee Report on neighborhood associations. Audience members Charles Baldwin, a citizen volunteer and Karen

Garst, the Abiqua Heights Homeowner's Association President also introduced themselves. Both are Sustainable Silverton members.

After introductions, Director Gottgetreu and Ms. Gray presented framing questions for the evening's discussion and a timeline on the evolution of the Citizen Involvement Committee and a history of how the City had considered neighborhood association formation. The questions posed were: (1) Would neighborhood associations be beneficial for Silverton; (2) If so, what role do you see the city having in association formation and support; (3) How much bandwidth and enthusiasm is there with this group for beginning those efforts and does this group want to move forward? (4) If not neighborhood associations, what could the city do to streamline or formalize communication with localized groups.

Chairman Flowers asked if he was a member of a neighborhood association and did not agree with the other members on an issue with the city, is he stuck with the group's project recommendation. Director Gottgetreu's response was that there would not be a restriction stating that only neighborhood associations could testify on an issue so, a private citizen could still testify. He further stated that the idea in mind was to use the neighborhood associations as more of a way to disseminate information. Ms. Gray added that the common definition of neighborhood associations is to provide a mechanism for citizens to become more informed and allow members to participate in formulating common opinions. This would not exclude anyone's ability to raise a concern on their own.

Mr. Baldwin explained an experience he had when his group was trying to get out information regarding the energy study. They went to 14 community organizations and still only reached a small fraction of the city's residents because the city didn't have a system that would allow them to give out information to every household. In their recommendations to city council, they recommended that a committee be formed in the city to try to implement the recommendations of the study going forward. They got a tremendous push-back from the city council and city staff because staffing is very thin and adding another committee seemed overwhelming to staff. This body needs to address how much more staff time is going to be required for neighborhood associations.

Mr. Jenkins stated he feels it is clear in the notes from the city council's March work session that if neighborhoods do not come to the city, the city will not be involved. So, his question is how is the process different than what we have now because people who want to have input, have input. He doesn't see anything changing in regards to input to the city. If the point of the movement is for disseminating information he would like to know how to measure success of the movement and how it differs from what goes on right now. He said that he does not oppose the concept, but doesn't know what the difference is in the end.

Mr. Squires added that people like him would be willing to go out and reach out to the community because not everyone has the time, effort and energy to be involved.

Commissioner Huebner recommended that caution be taken when deciding how to structure the program.

Commissioner Matzka made a point that the idea of participating in a neighborhood association is welcoming compared to the formality of the city council, planning commission or other formal committee that might scare off someone who wants to voice an opinion.

Commissioner Piaskowski stated that he likes the general idea of neighborhood associations, but has concerns if we are trying to do more than disseminate info.

Douglas Jenkins outlined his research of Oregon cities with neighborhood committees that are similar in size to Silverton.

Mr. Baldwin brought up that it would help to know precisely what the city council is looking for.

Commissioner Mayou stated that she feels like the discussion is about something that is not defined.

Mr. Squires stated that he thinks that the city has done a good job of disseminating information that was not there when this discussion originally came up.

Chairman Flowers expressed that he does not think that the city should be involved in the formation of the neighborhood associations. The role he thinks that the city should play is establishing a communications link.

Commissioner Huebner recommended that the city be divided into wards and have alderman as a point of contact similar to Chicago, IL.

Mr. Squires stated that there have been several times in the city's history that the citizens have expressed that they would like the city council to be elected by district, instead of the city at large.

Commissioner Piaskowski stated that he thinks that the next step is for the city to consider how to use its current website to determine how it can reach different groups within the community.

Chairman Flowers stated that Commissioner Piaskowski's idea would be too much work for the city webmaster.

Mr. Jenkins asked for the staff's recommendations. Director Gottgetreu responded that they did not have any pre recommendations; he and Ms. Gray are just observing the conversation. He thinks that the most common thread is not creating new groups, but dialing in, connecting with and coming up with better ways to facilitate those interactions.

Director Gottgetreu explained that the City could coordinate information on the website for various existing groups, which generally have one point of contact. It's a way for the City to have available information organized, but also a way for people to see where they fit in and which group to contact. Further, the City's roles in regards to neighborhood associations could be defined for the public.

Mr. Jenkins asked if there could be information from the city to let neighborhood groups know how to self-identify, communicate with city staff and become part of the communications network. He also requested if the planning commission members would engage in informal conversations with the city council members about individual councilors having an area, not that they are formally zoned to represent, but an area that they would focus on communication with neighborhoods.

There was discussion about having councilors visit neighborhood association meetings. Caution was given about neighborhood association members bringing up land use items. It was suggested that training take place in advance for any council or commission members who would be visiting with the public. Mr. Squires brought up the issue of getting information to senior citizens who do not use computers or the city's website.

Commissioner Matzka suggested creation of a map of the current associations so that it can be put on the website and distributed in the city's update in Our Town. Mr. Squires stated that he would be willing to work with Director Gottgetreu to create the map because he has a good idea of the neighborhoods and groups within the city.

Chairman Flowers stated that he feels the city should not have a role in formation of neighborhood associations, but should be willing to communicate with them. He stated that he does not see the city providing monetary support to any associations, but could provide guidance.

All of the planning commission members agreed that the city should put into writing the relationship between city employees and existing groups or neighborhoods who want to self-identify and come up with a list of what the groups would be interested in seeing from the city. Also, a protocol for commissioners and councilors who speak to neighborhood groups in order to retain impartiality.

Staff indicated they would pull together a set of recommendations that would layout parameters for how groups could be recognized, define roles of city staff and elected officials and how they would interact with groups, and present a map of known neighborhood groups. Director Gottgetreu stated that this topic will come before the planning commission again as a public hearing, possibly at the July 9th regular meeting.

IV. REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

The Land Use Board of Appeals reversed the decision, which will result in a development code change being discussed at the June planning commission meeting.

Also, the city council chose not to extend the annexation hold and will now be processing annexation applications for properties over two acres.

V. ADJOURNMENT

The Meeting adjourned at 9:27 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Kate Schlee,
Planning and Permit Assistant