

City of Scappoose
Ad-Hoc Economic Opportunity Analysis Advisory Committee Meeting
City Hall
February 24, 2009
6:00pm

Introductions

Cheri Davis introduced herself and explained she is here working with the City of Scappoose as a consultant.

Greg Winterowd, Consultant Land Use Planner, explained he and Cheri have worked together on a couple of similar projects in the past.

Ben Currin explained he works for Cheri Davis.

Brian Varricchione explained he is with the City of Scappoose.

Debbie Jacob explained she is a planner for Columbia County.

Cliff Tetreault explained he is on the Port of St. Helens Commission.

Bill Blank explained he is on the Scappoose Planning Commission.

Rita Bernhard explained she is a Columbia County Commissioner.

Paula Miranda explained she is with the Port of St. Helens.

Brian Rosenthal is a local business owner.

Dennie Houle explained he is with the Oregon Economic and Community Development Department.

Donna Gedlich explained she is on the Scappoose City Council.

Gary Fish explained he works for the State Department of Land Conservation and Development.

Susie Wilson explained she is with John L Scott and is on the mayor's Development Committee.

Diana Holmes explained she is the owner of Diana's Formal Affair.

Sven Christofferson and Rex Cross explained they are also on the Development Committee.

Carmen Kulp explained she is with Col-PAC.

Jon Hanken explained he is the Scappoose City Manager.

Review Economic Data/Review Survey

Greg Winterowd, Consultant Land Use Planner, explained he is just learning what his role may be with this project. He explained he sees himself as a technical advisor to this Committee about doing things called economic opportunities analysis, about looking at land need and supply questions within urban growth boundaries and looking at alternatives to meet those needs if land is needed outside the urban growth boundary. He explained he also works closely with Cheri in listening to what your needs are, what your aspirations are as a community and making sure he doesn't come down with too many preconceived notions. He explained he has developed over the last 20 years of private practice he thinks strong relationships with the Department of Land Conservation and Development and with the economic staff at OECDD, which is also important to make this process work. He stated the key thing that he would like to emphasize is that as we move ahead with the studies that are needed to analysis whether there is enough and the right kind of land, employment land, within the Scappoose Urban Growth Boundary that it is critical that we do the study objectively, that we look at all the alternatives, that we look at all property owners' property, not a few, that we coordinate carefully with public works folks here, the County, with ODOT on transportation issues to make sure that we have a plan that will stand the test of time, meet your needs but also complies with State law. He went over some of the projects that he has done. He explained they work with both small and large communities and in some way the tasks are similar because everybody has to do some kind of an economic opportunity analysis and a buildable lands inventory. They need to compare the two and need to make sure they have adequate sites to meet identified needs and they need to make sure that we can actually service those sites: sewer, water, transportation services. He explained another important thing is to make sure there is a market for what we are proposing and sometimes those things can be forgotten in the planning process. Also how do we learn what works in a community and you find that out by asking the local businesses here that have been successful in doing business as well as looking at national, state, regional, local trends. He wanted to emphasize that sometimes people think of economic studies as things that are from the outside, forces that we must respond to, but another way of looking at that is what does this community want to achieve, what are your aspirations and polices and how do those interact with those outside forces to create something that actually works. He explained you don't have to have the same economic plan that St. Helens has or that Gresham has, it can be unique to your community.

Cheri Davis explained in talking with Greg they discussed looking at survey tools. Greg Winterowd explained he brought a couple of options; one was done in the City of Brookings and the other is a much simpler survey that they did for Cottage Grove. He handed out copies to the committee so they can get an idea of what a survey might look like. He explained the key thing is asking the business community and people who are actively involved in economic development, like everybody on the committee, what are your thoughts and experience about what types of firms might come to the area, what do the firms that are here need in order to stay, prosper, and grow and what types of industries, what types of businesses don't you want here, that is the flip side. He

explained it is better to figure out what types of business you don't want here early rather than late after land has been allocated for it. He explained what comes out of the economic opportunity analysis out of these surveys is also plan policies need to be adjusted, code language needs to be changed to reflect the direction you want to go as a community. He explained it isn't just a study that gets shelved, it is a study that becomes the basis for comprehensive plan amendments, map amendments, zoning map amendments, zoning code amendments. So you can see how the information that we put together which begins with the survey is translated into action in terms on the ground that you can actually see over time.

Brian Rosenthal asked how long is the expected time for this whole process.

Greg Winterowd replied he would say that we should be able to go from start to finish in 9 months to a year, but it depends on you. He explained they know how to do these things, they have done them, but making sure that the community buys in to the economic vision and the plans and the direction that this group recommends over time and that is a different question and that is what can take more time sometimes. He feels that in 9-12 months it would be ready for adoption. Then there is the adoption process and to get to that point there would be a number of meetings with State agencies, with the public, with the Port, with neighboring cities possibly, definitely with the County to make sure that we have listened and incorporated. He explained it is a joint process in Oregon, it can't happen any other way. He explained one of his first tasks is going to be to work with Cheri and others here to come up with a work program. He explained once we get that work program on the ground we have a work session with the Planning Commission and the City Council inviting the Economic Development Committee so we can all be on the same page.

There was discussion on having graphics and information in the Spotlight soon. Greg Winterowd talked about having a graphic on the wall so at each meeting we can say we did something and here is where we are.

Rita Bernhard explained years ago when they went through a process there were a number of properties that were identified north and south of town as well as out at the airport and when we gathered up all the information did all the work and it ended up that DLCDC would not allow them to take in the amount of property that they wanted so what the City at that time said it was very valuable to the City to have the property out at the airport so they would forgo the requested property north and south of town. She doesn't know the number of acres or specific boundaries. She knows that you could probably get some information from that process and kind of see what was done back then, you might save a little time and energy. Greg Winterowd thinks that is a splendid idea and that is something that he would really like to work with both the City and County Planners on to make sure we benefit from work that has been done in the past. He would ask if Brian could start collecting some of the information. He would like to get information to make sure we don't reinvent the wheel.

Commissioner Rite Bernhard asked if we are back in the discussion of where commercial is actually going to be in this town. Greg Winterowd replied yes among many other things but that is certainly a big issue.

Greg Winterowd explained he is going to ask this committee consistently to keep your eye on the prize. Where do you want to go as a community, you decide that and sometimes there are trade offs to getting there. He stated let's focus on where you want to go and if there are a few bumps on the road we can deal with those. If we get sidetracked by the small stuff that can make things take a long time.

Cheri Davis explained as we compile data about trends and do surveys to businesses and work with Oregon Economic & Community Development to do what they see as opportunities then we want to bring it to the group for their advice.

Greg Winterowd explained the Development Committee could be extremely valuable in doing things like canvassing existing businesses, identifying problems and opportunities that could be a part of the over all economic opportunities analysis. He explained the problem that happens with these kinds of studies is we get so "gaga" over what might come to town that we forget what is here already.

Cheri Davis and Greg Winterowd explained they are very happy to have the members from the Development Committees here tonight, they feel it is very beneficial.

County Commissioner Rita Bernhard stated in regards to an enterprise zone. She explained a number of years ago there was discussion about enterprise zones, because Scappoose doesn't have one, but St. Helens does and that does make a difference when you're dealing with businesses. She explained back when they talked about it, she was on the City Council, the decision not to enter into an enterprise zone situation, what the group decided on at that time, they felt that this area was very desirable, it was close to Portland and they felt we really didn't need to do that because it was so desirable that folks would want to locate here without that. She explained that might be a subject that we might want to talk about again because it has been a lot of years since it has been discussed. She doesn't know if the current Council has discussed that situation at all.

Brian Rosenthal replied he feels pretty strongly about this. He feels Scappoose needs to the tax base of commercial and industrial. He doesn't think that reducing the tax base with enterprise zones for the City is not a smart idea, because there is a lot of overhead for the City and for the City to reduce their income stream and that is not going to get the City where they need to go. The City needs infrastructure.

Greg Winterowd asked Dennie Houle to explain how an enterprise zone works. Dennie Houle explained an enterprise zone would be intended for a company to consider locating in a location that you designate as a zone. He explained the City and all the taxing districts would have to agree that they would like to form this enterprise and what that does is forgive the property taxes, the new improvements that are located in that zone for about two years during construction and during the first three years of operation. He explained once you ask for that zone to be created, there are only so many zones located

in the State and so you have to ask for that zone to be designated. He explained once the zone is designated it has a certain life of so many years and what happens is that if a developer comes in or a business comes in and they want to build a building that is worth several hundred thousand dollars, if they fill out the application and meet the criteria they automatically get the forgiveness of taxes for two years during construction and the first three years of operation. He explained sometimes there is a provision, under certain circumstances it could be extended two more years.

There was discussion that the enterprise zone is not a traditional planning zone it is an area or boundary.

Greg Winterowd discussed the handout from the last meeting regarding what an economic opportunity analysis is step by step on how you go through it. He explained the economic opportunity analysis goes through a bunch of steps. The first step is basically looking at State, local and regional trends; where is the economy going, what is the framework we are looking at and how does the city, the cities in the county, and the county as a whole fit in to that. What is our relationship to the Portland region for example, that is a big question here. He stated what Portland does influences Scappoose and what Portland doesn't do also influences Scappoose. How do we fit in to the region as a whole and what types of employment do we expect to have. He also discussed once you decide what kind of industries, what kind of retail that you would like, then you look at what they need, based on research and learn from talking to people, then you compare that with what kind of land you have. Then and only then can you begin to answer the question do we need to expand the growth boundary to met specific needs that cannot be met inside the urban growth boundary and then at the very end of that process you say one of the strategies for economic development is to have enough of the right kinds of land but other strategies are how do we zone it, how many zoning restrictions do we put on it, does it have to be compatible with residential neighbors, should it go near residential zones, do we want to minimize conflicts; these are all the questions that come up. Then the questions like enterprise zone, urban renewal district, and local improvement districts come up as tools that are probably appropriate for different kinds of economic development. He explained enterprise zones you usually don't use for commercial, urban renewal you might more often. He stated the tool has to match the need. Then you have the economic development strategy and part of that strategy says if you say you need a site of 20 acres, 30 acres, whatever the size to attract a particular type of industrial firm then what the law says you have to do is walk the walk; you say you need it, you've got to preserve it for that use. So you need to be careful what you ask for because if you ask for something that has a 2% chance of getting it then you'll be reserving that land for something that may not come.

Greg Winterowd explained our job is to listen to what you want, translate that into an economic development strategy that is based on a good factual base that maximizes your community values in a way that satisfies State Law. Goal 9 is the most flexible goal of the bunch that gives you the most options. He stated think about keeping your options open but not allowing things that preclude your options the same time.

County Commissioner Rita Bernhard explained all around the County we hear people want to have local jobs. She explained no matter where we go, what ever the arena is that is the topic of conversation. She explained it is about 80% of Scappoose that commutes to Portland. She stated people in this community are desperate for jobs here. Cheri Davis explained they have been gathering some statistical data and it looks like it is about 26 miles for the average commute for people who live in Scappoose and it was a very high number of people who live in Scappoose who commute.

County Commissioner Rita Bernhard explained another thing that they are noticing County wide is because of the fact that people are commuting so they are not able to participate in community events like they used to and that is a huge thing because we depend on volunteers for a lot of things in this whole County because we don't have the resources some of the larger communities have.

Sven Christofferson replied if you are working here in town you are more likely to spend money here in town.

Next Steps in EOA Process

Greg Winterowd explained he has a couple of assignments and one of them is to come back to the committee with a flow chart. He explained they will try to get the committee to the policy choice stage as quickly as they can.

Review Previous Meeting Minutes

The committee will review the minutes at the next meeting.

Confirm next meeting date in March

There will not be a meeting in March. The next meeting will be April 28, 2009 at 6:00 p.m.

Minutes typed by Susan M Reeves, CMC, City Recorder