

**24-006**  
**PLANNING AND PERMITTING COMMITTEE**  
**MEETING REPORT**  
**WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 31, 2024 @ 6:00 P.M.**

Attendees: Council Vice President Kit Collins, Committee Chair; Council President Isaac “Zac” Bears; Councillor Anna Callahan; Councillor George Scarpelli; Councillor Emily Lazzaro; Councillor Justin Tseng; City Clerk Adam Hurtubise; other participants as noted in the body of this report.

Vice President Collins called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. on January 31, 2024 in the Medford City Council Chambers on the second floor of Medford City Hall, and via Zoom. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the City Council’s governing agenda for this term, and to discuss papers referred to the Committee.

Vice President Collins thanked participants for attending. She gave an overview of topics to be discussed in committee and the papers referred to the committee. She said it made the most sense to talk about zoning reform first. She said that at the end of the last Council term, the Council selected a zoning consultant.

Councillor Callahan said it would be helpful to have a status report on each initiative or paper. She said that the Council will be working with the zoning consultant and with PDS staff. She said the idea is to organize this by goal, by topic, by category. She said it is a lot to get through in two years.

President Bears said we want to bring a draft of the categories to be presented, and a status on each category. He said that this committee will meet frequently, primarily because of the zoning work. He said with the current zoning, the digital map is almost ready to go.

Councillor Callahan said that some of the items on this document are vague and would need to be updated. Vice President Collins said that much of the agenda would need to be fleshed out with the zoning consultant during meetings.

Councillor Scarpelli said that zoning reform is such a huge and important process. He said he does not want to suffocate residents with all the information. He said he wants to create something that encompasses everybody’s efforts. President Bears said that we will probably have specific parts of the city to discuss in each of the zoning meetings. He said that the advantage of Committee of the Whole meetings previously was that topics were specific and limited. With this new committee structure, he said we would have to try to preserve that. He outlined the previous zoning recodification work.

Councillor Tseng said that these are good ideas and that he is confident that we will move forward. He said that City staff may want to do other components while we are doing zoning. Vice President Collins said that these are all good points and that we may do them in conjunction with each other.

Vice President Collins said that we will collectively decide on a sequence of work. She said she could be a repository for notes, lists of goals and priorities, and other items.

On ordinances, Vice President Collins said that some of these will align with other priorities. She spoke about the condo conversion ordinance. She also spoke about housing home rule petitions and reviewing the fee schedule. President Bears said the City charges fees for a variety of things and they are set by different bodies, or under state law, or by departments. He said it is time to review and potentially update the fees. He said fees differ by community as well. He said the goal would be to review these every year or two. President Collins asked if this would go department by department. President Bears said that it might not need to be that formal, outside of a request to departments to see which fees they would like to see updated.

Councillor Tseng said it would be helpful to find out the priority level for various fee changes. President Bears said that DPW just did this because many fees are at the discretion of the Commissioner.

Vice President Collins said that the goal of the cycling safety ordinance would be to align with DPW, and with bike lane work, with a goal toward increasing safety for all users. Councillor Tseng said that this is a place where we need to improve safety.

Councillor Scarpelli said that we might want to consider having the state delegation meet with us to discuss statewide bike safety initiatives and fees, and to see if there is a way to work together. He said we do have some occasional rogue cyclists. He said that in neighboring cities, a lot of fees go toward safety measures.

Councillor Tseng talked about Transportation Demand Management, which would create an ordinance whereby large employers or institutions would need to develop a transportation demand management plan, designed to reduce private vehicle trips to the site. He said that this might be tied in with zoning.

Councillor Callahan discussed several ordinances dealing with climate action, including energy disclosure, a benchmarking ordinance, and other items. Vice President Collins said it would be helpful to get tentative timelines and start dates for these ordinances. Councillor Tseng recommended speaking with Brenda Pike in PDS on these topics. Councillor Callahan said it would make sense to investigate what the state is working on.

Councillor Callahan also spoke about rental licensing. Councillor Tseng spoke about blasting and earth removal regulations. President Bears asked if these should be independent of zoning reform and Councillor Tseng said yes. Councillor Tseng discussed pesticide regulations and stormwater regulations.

Vice President Collins spoke about additional topics on the docket. Councillor Callhan said that some of these involve energy retrofits for the climate adaptation plan.

President Bears spoke about **21-070** about complaints about the inspection process. There were also outdoor Committee of the Whole meetings that were well attended late in 2021 on a Saturday. The Transportation Director presented short-term updates. He said that some of those updates were not enacted by the traffic commission when one resident complained to the traffic commission after multiple residents attended the Council committee meetings. He said that the Council can dissolve the Traffic Commission by a two-thirds vote of the Council. He said that it might be worth looking at what a different Traffic Commission would look like. Vice President Collins said that this would be worth discussing.

Vice President Collins invited Councillors to submit lists of priorities. She also suggested submitting start and end dates.

President Bears moved that the TDM and Green Score items be moved under zoning (Councillor Callahan second)—approved.

Councillor Callahan moved to adjourn at 7:04 p.m. (President Bears second)—approved.

Vice President Collins adjourned the meeting at 7:04 p.m.