

City of Bandon

CITY COUNCIL AGENDA DOCUMENTATION	DATE: January 10, 2023
SUBJECT: Committee of Community Involvement	ITEM NO: 6.2.2

BACKGROUND:

Meeting Minutes of the Committee of Community Involvement as submitted by Richard Taylor, Minutes Clerk

June 29, 2022 – Regular Meeting

FISCAL IMPACT:

None

RECOMMENDATION:

Motion: to approve Committee of Community Involvement Minutes from June 29, 2022

SUBMITTED BY:



June Hinojosa, City Recorder

**Meeting of the Committee for Community Involvement
at Bandon City Hall and via Zoom Meetings
June 29, 2022**

COMMISSION:

- Peter Braun, City Council
- Steve Friedland, Parks and Recreation Commission
- Catherine Scobby, Planning Commission
- Karen Thomas, Library Board

STAFF:

- Dana Nichols, Planning Manager

1.0 CALL TO ORDER

Nichols called the meeting to order at 11:01 a.m.

2.0 ROLL CALL

Roll Call was taken as indicated above. Members of the Committee introduced themselves. Braun was unable to attend the meeting.

3.0 PUBLIC COMMENT

Comments from the public on any item not on the agenda - none

4.0 INFORMATION

4.1 Brief History of Goal 1

Nichols explained that the main purpose of this first meeting was to introduce the members to the history and responsibilities of Committees for Community or Citizen Involvement. Documents related to her presentation were included in the meeting materials the members received.

Nichols said the Committee's purpose was to gather community input on various City planning actions. This type of committee originated with Statewide Planning Goal 1 in the State of Oregon's land use regulations. It was intended to be an advisory committee that would enable two-way communication between the City and the public. Bandon Municipal Code (BMC) Chapter 2.18 established the guidelines for a Committee for Citizen Involvement (CCI). Ordinance 1501 outlined the City's Citizen Involvement Program (CIP), which was incorporated in the City of Bandon Comprehensive Plan.

Nichols encouraged the members to read through the documents she provided, to get a better understanding of their role. For the benefit of those who joined the meeting via Zoom, she read the Committee's responsibilities as proscribed by Ordinance 1501:

1. The CCI, under the direction of the City Council, shall ensure that the Citizen Involvement program is being implemented.
2. The CCI shall make an annual written report to the City Council that assesses the effectiveness and overall implementation of the Citizen Involvement Program. Copies will be distributed to all Standing Committee members.

3. The CCI shall assist citizens and citizen groups in becoming aware of opportunities provided by the Citizen Involvement Program.
4. The CCI shall make recommendations to the City Council for improving the Citizen Involvement Program if necessary.
5. The CCI shall perform such other duties as directed by the City Council.

Nichols emphasized that the City welcomed more citizen involvement and looked forward to receiving more feedback from the community. She noted that a lot of people were affected by the decisions being made by the City, and informing and involving the public was important.

The meeting packet included information on local implementation of Oregon Statewide Planning Goals and Guidelines, which called for “citizens to be involved in all phases of the planning process.”

Thomas was “mystified as to how people who have no background” in land use planning issues could be helpful beyond gathering information from the public through public outreach.

Nichols observed that the goal of the CCI was to help the community become more informed about land use planning, and the people on the Committee were there to represent a broad cross-section of the community, with varied interests and knowledge. Since the Library was a place where many citizens went for information, she felt Thomas’ experience on the Library Board would help the City connect with the Library as a resource to inform the public.

Nichols pointed out that Scobby had a background in planning and Friedland was involved in events and activities involving City Park that would reach people in a different way. “You don’t have to know anything about planning,” she stated, “so much as how to reach the public.”

4.2 Responsibilities: Putting the People in Planning

In their meeting packet, Committee members had received a copy of a document from the Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD), “Putting the People in Planning—A guide for local governmental agencies in Oregon.” Nichols told them it would provide a “toolkit” to help them understand the role they played in carrying out the City’s public involvement objectives.

Nichols described an example of a community engagement process in use by the Planning Department. When changes to the City’s code were proposed, a notice would be posted at City Hall and on the City’s website about the Planning Commission’s meeting on the issue. In some instances, the City was required to mail notices to nearby residents who might be affected by the Commission’s decision. Nichols felt there were aspects of the City’s community outreach efforts that could be improved upon, particularly the availability of planning and technical documents at the Bandon Library. She asked the members for their initial thoughts on how the City could improve its public engagement.

Friedland noted that the Library was a popular location that had a “wonderful bulletin board.” He added that there were also bulletin boards at McKay’s and Ray’s Markets, and there were active Facebook and Nextdoor web pages along with some local print publications. Friedland urged the Committee to take “a broad-spectrum approach” to reach and inform the public in a low-cost effort.

Thomas asked if the notices Nichols mentioned were included in the City’s utility bill.

Nichols answered that the City Manager sometimes included news of planning issues in his monthly newsletter, but she agreed that it would still be helpful to insert a separate flyer in the utility bill announcing Planning Department and Planning Commission activities and decisions. She was curious about the extent to which the public paid attention to what was included with the utility bill.

Thomas commented that she always read the newsletter. She pointed out that flyers for community activities and organizations were always put out on the library desk, and she noted that information could be spread by the Bandon Library Friends and Foundation, who were active in the community.

Nichols observed that some planning matters were of a technical nature and dealt with specific situations and structures, but other planning activities were long-range and all-encompassing in their scope. In the near future, for example, the City was having a Housing Needs Analysis (HNA) conducted and the Transportation System Plan (TSP) was going to be updated. Nichols thought these major projects affecting the whole community would benefit from community meetings that were not of the formal type conducted by the Planning Commission. She felt flyers distributed at the Library would help alert and attract the public to such events.

Thomas interjected that the library's new director was reinstating a program of informal conversations with people from the community. It had been discontinued during the COVID-19 pandemic. She had suggested having representatives from the City come and give a brief talk about what their daily work involved. Thomas was aware of interest in the community about issues such as housing. She believed people who were intimidated by speaking in public but were curious and wanted to learn more would come and participate in an informal discussion setting already provided by the Library.

Scobby stated that the Library's lecture series was "amazing," and she recommended holding an open house to go over the City's bigger planning goals. She thought doing that could help attract potential at-large members to the CCI and give City officials an opportunity to meet informally with the public.

Thomas liked the idea of "a meeting that's so informal that people feel like they're not really testifying to anything." She added, "A cookie and a cup of tea goes a long way."

Nichols noted that Bandon's Citizen Involvement Program required the City's budget to include a line item for the cost of hosting public events. She liked the idea of conducting town hall meetings dedicated to specific topics, such as housing or transportation.

Thomas recommended the Sprague Room at the Library as a good venue for such gatherings. She observed that there would be no cost to the City to use the facility.

Nichols went over a few of the measures recommended in Ordinance 1501 for implementation of the City's CIP. One was to promote the City's website and another was to survey public opinion about community issues. Nichols said the City Manager had conducted an online survey about whether food carts should be allowed to operate in Bandon, and there were over 600 responses.

Nichols envisioned coming to the Committee for ideas on how best to publicize major issues before the Planning Commission, to get public feedback, and to involve the community. She added that Bandon's Ordinance 1501 also called upon the CCI to "perform such other duties as directed by the City Council." Nichols mentioned that the CIP called for the CCI to meet at least bi-monthly.

4.3 Upcoming Opportunities for Engagement: Housing Needs Analysis, Transportation System Plan

Nichols suggested that the Housing Needs Analysis and Transportation System Plan Update were two upcoming opportunities for public engagement. Advisory committees would be needed, and the CCI members could help Staff find citizens to serve on those committees. The Housing Advisory Committee, which would meet three times between July 2022 and March 2023, had to have a specific composition, consisting of one Planning Commissioner, one City Councilor, two persons from "priority populations," one person from the real estate industry, one housing organization representative, and a member-at-large.

Nichols commented that there was a tendency for the same people to apply every time the City advertised for committee positions, and she solicited recommendations from the CCI members as to how to attract “different voices.”

Friedland noted that one of the suggestions in the meeting material was to “go to where the people are,” such as churches and religious organizations, civic-minded clubs, and the Library. “Rather than having people come to you, you go out to them,” he said.

Nichols stated that she had listed local priority populations for the Housing Advisory Committee that were different from those given by DLCD. She was aware, for example, that there were a lot of seniors in Bandon who were struggling to find safe, stable, comfortable housing. There were also families who wanted to move to Bandon but could not afford to.

Thomas interjected that there were people who were offered jobs in Bandon but could not take them because they could not find a place to live.

Scobby recommended partnering with the schools, who were using email and text messages to reach families with a broad range of information.

Thomas suggested conducting outreach through Bandon Cares.

Nichols elaborated on the Transportation Advisory Committee as well. She said it would probably meet five times over a two-year period. The committee’s composition could include interested citizens, representatives of transportation interest groups and community economic interests such as the Chamber of Commerce and the Greater Bandon Association, local business owners, advocates of bicycle, pedestrian, and public transit, representatives of the Coquille Tribe and Bandon School District, and others.

Scobby asked if the advisory committees’ meetings would be open to the public.

Nichols replied that the public could attend but probably not participate. Open houses and public hearings would provide opportunities for public participation.

Friedland observed that the Coos County Area Transit (CCAT) buses would be a good place for flyers. To find an advocate for bicycle transportation, he suggested contacting Cycle Oregon. He also agreed with Scobby that the school system would offer a means of reaching a lot of people.

Thomas added that flyers could be posted on a bulletin board in the Senior Center.

Nichols observed that the City’s last Transportation System Plan was written in 1996, and there had been many changes since then, such as new technologies. She mentioned that Oregon had added one tenth of one percent to the payroll tax, to be used for transportation improvements in communities.

Scobby thought the local food bank would be a good location for flyers regarding the Housing Advisory Committee.

Thomas mentioned The Barn as another spot where needy people picked up meals and information.

Friedland felt flyers could be put up in thrift stores, too.

Nichols liked the members’ ideas and thought a mailing list could be created that could be utilized for purposes beyond recruiting advisory committee members. She added that the call for community participation was also going to be in the City Manager’s newsletter.

5.0 DISCUSSION

5.1 First Project: Community Outreach to Find Three At-large Members

Nichols asked the Committee members to help in the process of finding three citizens who would like to serve in the at-large positions on the Committee. The four-year appointments would be made by the City Council. She said interested individuals could apply on the City's website.

Friedland expressed willingness to reach out to people he knew. He felt the topics of housing and transportation alone would attract interest.

Thomas thought her involvement with the Library and the book club there would provide opportunities for her to bring up the CCI openings.

Nichols observed that the CCI had been on a hiatus of about five years because there had been a lot of turnover and some members were not showing up at meetings. It had been a struggle to maintain the Committee. She offered to compose a handout that the current members could give to people who were interested in joining, briefly explaining the roles and responsibilities of CCI members.

Thomas commented that there were people who would like to be involved but first needed to be told why they should give their time and why their input could be valuable.

Nichols thought Staff could prepare a flyer that could be posted on Nextdoor.

5.2 Setting a Regular Date and Time

Nichols checked with the members to determine the best dates, days, and times for future meetings. She noted that the Committee was supposed to meet every other month.

Every member indicated a preference for daytime meetings. They tentatively agreed on Wednesdays at 11:00 a.m.

Nichols anticipated the next meeting taking place in two months. With the Housing Needs Analysis and Transportation System Plan Update underway, she saw the Committee's task as determining how to encourage more public input for those projects.

Nichols clarified that the Committee's official name was Committee for Citizen Involvement, but many localities had moved away from using the word "citizen" in favor of a more inclusive term, "community," which would imply non-residents, business owners, and others with an interest in Bandon were not being excluded in the City's planning process.

Friedland felt "community" sounded "much more warm and welcoming."

Thomas agreed that "community" was inclusive.

Nichols planned to take a request to the City Council for the Committee's name to be changed to Committee for Community Involvement.

6.0 OPEN DISCUSSION

Committee Member Comments

Thomas asked if Nichols would primarily communicate with the members by email.

Nichols responded that she would email them and might utilize Google Drive to share documents, as the Parks and Recreation Commission had been doing.

Friedland stated that the Parks and Recreation Commission had expressed a need to get a sense of what the community wanted for City Park, by conducting a general survey.

Nichols thought the Committee might need City Council approval as within the Committee's purview, but she did not expect them to disapprove. She noted that the Committee had been created specifically under terms of Oregon Statewide Land Use Planning Goal 1, and she added that Ordinance 1501 allowed for the City Council to assign other duties not listed there.

Thomas commented that City Park and the schools in Bandon were at a great walking distance from the northeast section of the city, without any playgrounds nearby.

Nichols responded that the City had a Parks Master Plan, which listed sites currently used for park land and sites designated for future parks. She said those sites had not been developed because the City lacked the funds to do so, a result of its low tax rate. City Park was located in an Urban Renewal District, which enabled funding for projects there. Nichols added that parks had been proposed at Harvard Street and in neighborhoods on the north side of Bandon and near Seabird Drive.

Friedland observed that the current emphasis was on improving the quality of City Park, "making it as good as it can possibly be." He agreed with Thomas about the access problem posed by transportation.

Nichols said the City could look into the Safe Routes to School and Safe Routes to Parks, which funded infrastructure projects to help children get from their homes to schools or parks.

7.0 ADJOURN

Nichols adjourned the meeting at 11:46 a.m.

Committee for Community Involvement Meeting Minutes
Submitted by Richard Taylor, Minutes Clerk