

Spokane County Steering Committee of Elected Officials

April 20, 2022

9:00 AM

Members Present:

Breean Beggs, Chair, City of Spokane Council President
Art Bubb, City of Airway Heights, Council Member
Al French, Spokane County Commissioner
Michael Cathcart, City of Spokane Council Member
Cris Kaminskis, City of Liberty Lake, Mayor
Helen Dee Cragun, City of Deer Park Council Member
Josh Kerns, Spokane County Commissioner
Lori Kinnear, City of Spokane Council Member
Mary Kuney, Spokane County Commissioner
Micki Hanois, Small Cities Representative
Rod Higgins, City of Spokane Valley

Staff Present:

Scott Chesney, Director of Planning, Spokane County

Public Comment:

Paul Kropp

1. Call to Order

Committee Chair Breean Beggs called the meeting to order at 9:01 AM. A quorum was present by the time item 3 was considered.

2. Annual Growth Reviews from 2001 to 2021:

The committee used a spreadsheet which would track changes to the UGA's low-density residential lands over the past 20 years as a tool to see if the UGA's are currently used effectively. Mr. Chesney proposed that this land should also be considered from a multifamily, commercial, industrial, and institutional perspective for future use. Spokane County asked the communities, especially the larger communities, and their staff to put together a composite for growth. Chair Beggs mentioned an interest in the increase of potential capacity of units when jurisdictions, especially the City of Spokane Valley, have increased available density and height maximums for multi-family units. Mr. Chesney agreed to demonstrate this in a spreadsheet.

Commissioner French mentioned that the Land Quantity Analysis is influenced by privately owned vacant land that is not currently intended for development.

Mr. Cathcart suggested making the process of land development simpler, more streamlined, and to remove the barrier of the high cost. Mr. Chesney suggested the subcommittee might

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consider strengthening or restating infill goals in Countywide Planning Policy. Individual communities can interpret them to meet their needs to incentivize and to create their own policies so they may add development. Breean gave an example in which the legislature gave the city of Spokane authority to provide incentives to surface parking lots downtown to create growth and development.

3. Selection of a Vice Chair:

Al French nominated Rod Higgins, Helen Cragun seconded the nomination. Chair Beggs invited a discussion; Mr. French stated his reasons for the nomination as Mr. Higgins experience and his previous chairmanship.

A vote was held, Mr. Higgins was voted in unanimously

4. Countywide Planning Policies Review:

The committee focused on the headings of the CWPP. The first subject for discussion was Citizen Participation. The CWPP will bring the methods up to date with many modern forms of technology and then codify them in the Public Participation Guideline. The county will strive to make documents available on the web for review approximately 21 days before each meeting. This will give the public, stakeholders, and participants time to review and submit comments in open meetings, written form, and perhaps recordings. The Public Participation Guideline revision process has been in progress since before the first of the year, it is posted on the county website, it was announced in two previous Planning Commission workshops.

Next the committee focused on Neighborhood Character Preservation and Protection. Members of the committee acknowledged challenges when addressing neighborhood Improvements and the idea that gentrification can be perceived as a negative for some constituents, and that lack of housing has displaced more people than gentrification. The committee agreed the focus should be on a balance. Mr. French asked if the verbiage structure of the paragraph helps or hinders the ability to achieve infill development in the more urbanized areas. He explained that he was looking for ideas that would help to word the paragraph so that it would strike a balance between infill and neighborhood character protection. Mr. Higgins noted that the State Legislature's last session may be taking some of these considerations out of our hands. Lori Kinnear stated that as STA moves forward it brings opportunities to create density. She also mentioned a study STA was performing a study in the Logan neighborhood to create a density plan. Mr. French suggested creating density in certain areas and preserving others as the middle ground for a balance. Mr. Cathcart mentioned that increasing density in some neighborhoods could lead to giving an unfair advantage to wealthier neighborhoods. Ms. Kinnear agreed and mentioned that STA had routes that pass through wealthier neighborhoods, and this is also where density can occur. Chair Beggs suggested that a change to the language in this section could help to cut down on the possibility of misinterpretation. He felt defining the architectural standards, the similarities of neighborhoods, and assuring services are adequate before allowing new buildings, should be