

MEETING NOTES

Meeting Topic and Number:	Waterfront Committee Meeting No. 4
Meeting Date & Time:	7/27/2015; 3:00 – 5:00 PM
Project #:	0830.02.
Project Name:	St. Helens IPG
Meeting Location:	City of St. Helens Council Chambers
Recorded By:	Lauren Wirtis
Attendees:	<p>Committee Members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Al Peterson, Planning Commission • Howard Blumenthal, Parks Commission • Dian Dillard, Arts Commission • Chris Finks, Tourism/Maritime • Paula Miranda, Port of St. Helens • Eric Porchinow, Cascades Tissues • Ashley Baggett, Public Health • Susan Conn, City Councilor <p>Staff:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John Walsh, City of St. Helens • Jenny Dimsho, City of St. Helens • Jacob Graichen, City of St. Helens • Emily Picha, ECONorthwest • Seth Otto, MFA • Lauren Wirtis, MFA
Distribution:	Attendees and absent Committee members

General Topic 1: Meeting Start-Up

John Walsh welcomed Committee members to the final Waterfront Committee Meeting. John announced that the City had closed on the purchase of the Veneer site at the end of the previous week. Seth Otto reviewed the agenda for the meeting.

General Topic 2: Review the Committee Survey Results

Emily Picha presented the results of the Committee survey regarding the prioritization of waterfront uses and amenities (PowerPoint attached). There were 17 responses to the survey. The purpose of the survey was to have the Committee prioritize land uses and amenities for the Veneer site, identify barriers to such uses and amenities, and give suggestions regarding how to overcome these barriers.

Waterfront Uses

- Most supported: public open space and retail

- Least supported: multi-family residential and senior living

Waterfront Amenities

- Most supported: waterfront boardwalk and public marina
- Least supported: fishing pier and waterfront beach

Barriers to Implementation

- Funding
- Creating a partnership with a private donor or developer

Ways to Overcome Barriers

- Involve developers early
- Dream big
- Remain flexible and open to new ideas and opportunities
- Create excitement
- Widespread community involvement
- Not using taxpayer money

Committee Comments

The Committee revisited the idea of the waterfront beach. Some Committee members who had attended the Open House on June 23rd said that upon walking the site, a beach seemed more feasible. Seth Otto summarized that a beach would be especially challenging for this site due to the geophysical instability of the shoreline, potential soil contamination, and the overall cost to deal with those issues. Seth suggested a better approach might be to tell the public that the City understood the public desired this amenity and another, more feasible, site would be sought.

The Committee also said that they believed it would be useful for all of the uses and amenities to be better defined, especially when presented to the public. Several Committee members said that they had been somewhat unsure about the difference between certain items (e.g. boardwalk and trail) when taking the survey. The Committee also said that while they generally acknowledged that amenities typically had to precede private investment, if there was a private investor who was interested, they would be open to having the two processes happen simultaneously.

General Topic 3: Debrief the Open House

Seth Otto debriefed the Open House and described the outcome of the public voter boards.

- Waterfront Uses: Committee and community priorities matched exactly

- Waterfront Amenity: General agreement with two potential areas that need more discussion
 - Committee ranked the public marina as a higher priority compared to the community
 - Committee ranked the public beach as a lower priority compared to the community

Committee Comments

Committee members who attended the Open House reported that they heard a lot of excitement about getting on to the site and reaching the water. They also heard that word of mouth was an effective form of communication, since many people had discussed this event with their neighbors. Some heard Open House attendees say that this project seemed similar to the SDAT and wanted to know what exactly was going to be new in this endeavor. However, Open House attendees seemed to realize the potential of the site the more they were able to explore it.

The Committee asked if MFA or ECONorthwest was looking at revenue-earning potential for each of the use and amenity options. There was concern expressed that an over-emphasis on public amenities for the site would not be sustainable for the community without some revenue generated on the site. Messaging to the public should indicate that development is necessary to finance the public amenities and uses.

The Committee also suggested that it would be useful to find out how attendees from the public are finding out about the event. The Committee said that they are interested in becoming more involved in the details of site development. A suggestion was to have Committee members talk to a number of friends to get feedback on the project and ask if they'd be willing to participate in the form of volunteering, donating, etc. Emily Picha mentioned that the Willamette Falls Legacy Project developed a 'Friends of Willamette Falls' group, which could be a useful model for this project.

General Topic 4: Discuss Outline of Summary Report

Seth Otto presented the way the Committee's summary report could be outlined for the Committee's review. The proposed report organization was as follows:

- Summary of community outreach and work completed to date by the AIA panel
- Discussion of potential alternatives
- Recommendation for next steps

Committee Comments

Some Committee members wanted to look into the possibility of establishing a ferry between St. Helens and Ridgefield, similar to what exists in Westport. There is potentially grant money available for this type of project, because it would connect Highway 30 to I-5. The Committee requested that,

moving forward, there be a list for each use and amenity detailing the requirements necessary to make them possible. This could include a site plan outlining the environmental issues and the ways in which they limit development on the site.

General Topic 5: Discuss Next Phase for the Committee

Seth Otto and John Walsh invited the Committee members to continue their participation as the City embarks upon their area-wide plan. John reviewed the Committee charter (attached), including the mission, deliverables, duration, and frequency.

Committee Comments

Through discussion the Committee members agreed that the third meeting for the area-wide plan, which was intended to be a design charrette, should be broken into two meetings scheduled close together. That way Committee members would have some time to think about what was accomplished in the first meeting and talk to people about it. The Committee agreed that they could forgo the kick-off meeting to allow for this.

The Committee suggested adding someone in finance, the private sector, or Fiber credit union to join the Committee. Members also liked the idea of having guests from these sectors come to specific meetings where they could weigh in on certain issues.