

**Tacoma Permit Advisory Task Force**  
747 Market Street Tacoma, TMB 243  
Meeting #17 –January 9, 2020, 10:00am

**Task Force Members in attendance:** Jim Dugan (chair), Michael Fast (Vice Chair), Ben Ferguson (Vice Chair), Justin Gorocho (Vice Chair), Layne Alfonso, Jim Collins, Jessica Gamble, Jason Gauthier, Joshua Jorgensen, Peter Levy, Evan Mann, Mandy McGill, Kim Nakamura, Jeff Paradise, Claude Remy, John Wolters, Stuart Young

**Excused:** Chuck Sundsmo

**Absent:** Doug Orth, Michael Sullivan

**10:01 am: Call to order**

**10:01 am: Icebreaker**

**10:07 am: Approval of the December Minutes**

Michael Fast moved, Justin Gorocho seconded, minutes approved.

**10:07 am: Administrative Items**

(Attachments 1, 2, and 3)

The Task Force welcomed new members. All Task Force members were asked to make notes on their name tags to assist staff with updating information before the February meeting.

Jessica Gamble introduced two guests: Lacey Hatch, from Phillips Burgess PLLC, and Clinton Brink, from the Brink Law Firm. Both are land use attorneys who are interested in joining the Task Force.

Lynda Foster reiterated information emailed out on Dec. 31 regarding the Open Public Meetings Training. All Task Force members are required to complete this training within 90 days and turn in their certificate.

Three policies were included in the meeting packet at the request of membership: the neighborhood engagement resolution to be discussed later in the meeting, the Climate emergency resolution, and the proposed multifamily tax exemption (MFTE) ordinance from Dec 2019. Staff updated the Task Force on the time line for considering changes to the MFTE ordinance, highlighting that the Mayor has postponed the discussion until after the legislative session.

**10:18 am: Overview of Council Resolution Directing the City Manager to Review Neighborhood Engagement and Protection Standards for Construction Projects**

(Attachment 1, PowerPoint 1)

Terry Forslund presented on the Council Resolution that directs staff to review neighborhood engagement and protection standards for construction projects. He shared background on how Planning & Development Services currently does outreach, as well as provided an overview of the community concerns that Council responded to when passing this resolution. Task Force members asked for specific examples of development that concerned the community. Examples include Cubesmart, Proctor 3, and the Grand Pacific.

Staff explained this presentation was part of an outreach process (slide 10), and that staff would be returning to the Task Force in March or April to discuss this further.

Staff shared an example of one outreach option under consideration (slide 8). Task Force members discussed the proposed signage at length, asking the following questions and offering the following feedback:

- Concerns about the cost to create the sign, specifically around the cost to create the image of the building that would be on the sign
- What would trigger the need of the sign? Consideration should be given to proportionality
- Concerns that the need to notify more people doesn't address the underlying problem of certain communities not wanting development
- Consideration of a different type of sign, similar to the yellow one currently required, that could not include a picture and have required information in text
- Discussion around who the contact person listed on the sign should be.
  - Suggestion of city staff, who could provide public information to individuals with questions
  - Conversation around whether the contractor would be the best point of contact for the applicant side; suggestion is to let the applicant decide best point of contact instead of being prescriptive
  - Conversation around the value of having a point of contact on the applicants' side compared with only directing people to City staff
- Questions about how long the sign would stay up at the construction site
- Discussion around the cost of creating the sign and who would bare which cost, for example: rendering the image, printing the sign, and installation of the sign
- Feedback that most large projects already have some sort of graphic of the project that could be used, maybe a sketch instead of a full on rendering
- Suggestion to have folks directed to a website, some prefer directing them to the City's website, instead of to a phone number
- Conversation around the value of putting more information into the community that conveys the applicants' intentions, and that they are good intentions.
- Conversation around setting clear expectations to the community, since this wouldn't be creating new opportunities for the community to have an impact on whether or not something is developed
- There was disagreement around how much notification should be given to renters impacted by construction, with feedback for both more and less
- Suggestion that the City can send out information via email to a listserv or through another electronic device, instead of having builders be responsible for communication
- Discussion around how much this would cost projects and how to do a cost estimate

Staff shared that they will be taking into consideration all the feedback provide. They will be seeking a voluntary pilot project to learn more. Additionally, they did not hear consensus from the Task Force so they understand that the ideas raised were for consideration, but not official recommendations.

Task Force members were asked to direct additional feedback to Lynda Foster prior to next week's Infrastructure, Planning and Sustainability meeting.

**11:08 am: Planning & Development Services Organizational Structure**

(PowerPoint 1, Attachment 4, and Attachment 5)

Terry Forslund presented background information on how the Planning and Development Services department is organized, and how staff processes permits at the City of Tacoma (attachment 5).

In addition to the organizational chart (attachment 4), staff provided a list of email addresses that they ask the public to use when they have questions about permits (slide 15). The Task Force discussed using the general email addresses and compared that to reaching out directly to a contact in the permit department. City staff explained that using the general email addresses assists staff in managing workflow and ensures the questions get to the right staff person, and that no emails are missed should someone leave a position or be out on leave. Task Force members discussed the value of having a relationship with individual folks in the permit department, and how to quickly connect with individuals when there is an urgent matter. General consensus was to use the general email addresses for non-urgent items, and to try using them more in general.

There was conversation on the org chart, with a desire to see how it connects to other departments. This is a topic that will be covered in a future Task Force meeting.

**11:33 am: Final comments**

Jim Dugan reiterated that to have a good work relationship with staff folks should do a combination of everything discussed previously: follow the rules, get the application in the system, use the communication as directed, and then, if needed, follow up directly with a person. He also emphasized that folks should be judicious when following up on urgent issues, because staff know which applicants always have urgent items.

Ben Ferguson reinforced that the City is a partner that cares about what Task Force members think. He appreciates the good partnership.

**11:36 am: Adjourned**