

City Planning Commission Operational Meeting

The City Planning Commission Operational Meeting, which included the City Planning Commissioners and CPC Staff, was held on December 12, 2023, in Conference Room A on the 7th floor of City Hall.

Attendance:

Present:	Absent:
Dianne Alexander	Dasjon Jordan
Kelly Brown	Kathleen Lunn
Lorey Flick	
Nomita Joshi-Gupta	
Robert Steeg	
Jonathan Stewart	
Katie Witry	

At 12:35 PM Commissioner Katie Witry called the meeting to order.

REPORT FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Executive Director Rivers discussed the large number of items for the January 9, 2024 CPC meeting, which includes both the regular meeting and the continuation of the December 5, 2023 Master Plan Amendment meeting. It is a reasonable assumption that not all the items will be able to be heard within the time allotted for the meeting. Discussion was held on how to handle this situation. A third meeting date will be set for either January 16, January 30, or a Tuesday in February to be determined – given Council Chambers schedule allows for one of those dates.

Time saving measures were discussed for the meeting, such as voting in special rules that would allow one minute per person only to speak – however, it was decided this could be perceived as unfair by members of the public from these Planning Districts, as citizens were given 2 minutes each to speak during the first Master Plan hearing.

The City Planning Commission and the Board of Zoning Adjustments have applied for their usual dates to reserve Council Chambers in 2024, but a number of the dates have been denied. Council Staff suggested alternate meeting dates, but CPC rules state CPC meetings on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month. Executive Director Rivers will continue trying to have all of our dates reserved for 2024 in order to avoid confusion for the public, who have come to expect our meetings to happen at the usual times. Alternatively, CPC could find another site to meet on those days.

An issue was brought up regarding CPC staff having the sense that their recommendations are not given enough weight by the Commissioners, particularly in contentious matters where the public is opposed to Staff recommendations. This has become particularly pertinent due to affordable housing issues, which are expected to continue being brought up at CPC Meetings. Discussion was held by the Commissioners, and it was decided that more Commissioner education on housing issues could be helpful, and some sessions and resources should be made during 2024. Commissioner Witry suggested the Data Center could be a resource for information about housing issues in New Orleans for the moment, as it also informs many staff reports. Commissioner Stewart notes that Commissioners could try to more fully articulate their decisions and the reasons for them to the public.

Deputy Director Larry Massey suggested that for Master Plan Amendments meetings, more pro-active FLUM meetings (beyond the legally required meetings) could be had with members of the community in order to create a dialog and avoid the impression on the public that CPC makes top-down decisions that do not take into account the wishes of the community.

Regarding staffing issues, CPC has interviewed several people in December for an open City Planner position and should make a hiring decision by the end of the week. This will bring CPC staff to 23. The budget for up to 24 staff members was approved for 2024, but CPC will ask for more positions in hopes that they will be approved.

Report from Chair

None

Report from Committees

None

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Commissioner Stewart and was seconded by Commissioner Alexander to approve the minutes from the October 10, 2023 meeting.

Ayes:	Nays:
Dianne Alexander	none
Kelly Brown	
Lorey Flick	
Nomita Joshi-Gupta	
Robert Steeg	
Jonathan Stewart	
Katie Witry	

Adjournment

Motion was made to adjourn by Commissioner Flick, seconded by Commissioner Alexander.

Ayes:	Nays:
Dianne Alexander	none
Kelly Brown	
Lorey Flick	
Nomita Joshi-Gupta	
Robert Steeg	
Jonathan Stewart	
Katie Witry	

Meeting Adjourned at 1:27 PM