

City Planning Commission Operational Meeting

Minutes – June 13, 2023

The City Planning Commission Operational Meeting, which included the City Planning Commissioners and CPC Staff, was held on June 13, 2023, in Conference Room A on the 7th floor of City Hall.

Attendance:

Present:	Absent:
Lorey Flick	none
Dianne Alexander	
Kelly Brown	
Nomita Gupta	
Jonathan Stewart	
Dasjon Jordan	
Robert Steeg	
Katie Witry	
Kathleen Lunn	

At 11:41 PM Chair Lorey Flick called the meeting to order. A motion was made by Commissioner Alexander and was seconded by Commissioner Stewart to approve the minutes from the April 11, 2023 meeting. All present voted in favor.

REPORT FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Hiring update for CPC – a review: Before the pandemic, CPC had 27 positions filled. Due to pandemic stresses, that number was reduced to 13 by 2021, but was rebuilt to 21 by the end of 2022 (with 29 allocated). In exchange for a salary increase for planners, CPC had agreed to give up 3 of the 29 allocated positions – but when the 2023 budget was announced, only positions that were already filled were allowed without special permission. CPC was allowed one more position as 2023 continued, bringing us up to 22 but in a recent meeting with Finance, Larry Massey was told no new positions are likely to be approved at all this year due to a lack of money in the City’s general fund. The salary increases CPC has asked for, however, have been approved, with possible approval for a further increase pending.

Safety & Permits long awaited move is currently ongoing for the rest of the week of June 12-16, 2023, and they will reopen for business at 1340 Poydras Street, Suite 800 on June 20, 2023, after the holiday weekend. Desk Duty shifts will now be held in the new location. Now that S&P is gone from the seventh floor of City Hall, talks are ongoing between CPC, HDLC, VCC and Property Management for each department to shift their offices and expand to better suit their space needs before other departments have a chance to view the space and move into the newly vacant areas.

There are also ongoing negotiations, not finalized, for a New City Hall to be built on Duncan Plaza. This would require many things to be resolved, including the City taking over the half of Duncan Plaza currently under control of the State of Louisiana. If a new City Hall were to be built, the current City Hall would be leased to developers who would redevelop the site.

New residential Short Term Rental regulations take effect on July 1, 2023. A lottery will be held in August 2023, and about 350-400 are expected to lose their right to rent. This is anticipated to create many special exception applications in late summer. Senior City Planner Cameron Boissiere-Morris has offered to take over this process and train any temps we hire to deal with the initial onrush of applications.

Little guidance has been provided in the Ordinance on how to determine evaluation criteria for an exception, so the plan is to simplify the process as much as possible and then send our decision to City Council for approval or denial.

The Study on Commercial Short Term Rentals (and other hospitality) has been approved. The IZD limiting new Commercial Short Term Rentals has also recently been passed by City Council, intended to last while the study is written.

Other studies may not be getting all the staff time and attention anyone would like due to CPC's issues of being short-staffed. Some have had to be put on hold due to staffing issues. The Transit Oriented Communities Study was finished by Joanna Farley because she took it with her when she left CPC to go to RTA. Staff in general is less than pleased about this because they would rather their jobs be spent on tasks other than simply regulatory issues and more on community building issues.

Election of Officers

Current Chair Lorey Flick states that she has enjoyed her last two years of being chair and that this is her final meeting as chair.

Commissioner Witry nominates Commissioner Dasjon Jordan to be the incoming Chair. Commissioner Jordan states that despite having some travel arranged for the upcoming year, he expects to be able to fulfill his duties as chair and accepts the nomination.

Chair Lorey Flick asks if there is any further discussion.

Executive Director Rivers notes that Commissioner Jordan's term is up for renewal buy City Council, but that he is expected to be renewed for a full 9 year term.

Vote for Commissioner Dasjon Jordan as Chair:

Ayes:	Nays:
Lorey Flick	none
Dianne Alexander	
Kelly Brown	
Nomita Gupta	
Dasjon Jordan	
Jonathan Stewart	
Robert Steeg	
Katie Witry	
Kathleen Lunn	

Chair Lorey Flick nominates Katie Witry as Vice Chair.

Katie Witry accepts.

Kathleen Lunn seconds the motion.

Ayes:	Nays:
Lorey Flick	none
Dianne Alexander	
Kelly Brown	
Nomita Gupta	
Jonathan Stewart	
Robert Steeg	
Dasjon Jordan	
Kathleen Lunn	
Katie Witry	

Report from Chair: None

Report from Committees:

Discussion was held regarding a date for the annual staff retreat, but no consensus could be found.

Executive Session was held regarding Larry Massey's personnel evaluation.

Meeting Adjourned at 1:30 PM