



**BENICIA PLANNING COMMISSION  
CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
MINUTES**

**Thursday, June 14, 2012  
7:00 p.m.**

**I. OPENING OF MEETING**

**A. Pledge of Allegiance**

**B. Roll Call of Commissioners**

**Present:** Don Dean, Susan Cohen Grossman, George Oakes, Belinda Smith, Brad Thomas and Chair Rod Sherry.

**Absent:** Commissioner Lee Syracuse (excused)

**Staff Present:** Kat Wellman, Contract Attorney  
Amy Million, Principal Planner  
Lisa Porras, Senior Planner  
Kathy Trinque, Administrative Secretary

**C. Reference to Fundamental Rights of Public** - A plaque stating the Fundamental Rights of each member of the public is posted at the entrance to this meeting room per Section 4.04.030 of the City of Benicia's Open Government Ordinance.

**II. ADOPTION OF AGENDA**

On motion of Commissioner Dean, seconded by Commissioner Thomas, the agenda was adopted by the following vote:

**Ayes:** Commissioners Dean, Grossman, Oakes, Smith, Thomas and Chair Sherry

**Noes:** None

**Absent:** Commissioner Syracuse

**Abstain:** None

**III. OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT**

**A. WRITTEN**

None received.

**B. PUBLIC COMMENT**

No comments received.

**IV. CONSENT CALENDAR**

**A. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM MAY 10, 2012**

On motion of Commissioner Oakes and seconded by Commissioner Smith, the May 10, 2012 meeting minutes were approved by the following vote:

Ayes: Commissioners Grossman, Oakes, Smith and Chair Sherry  
Noes: None  
Absent: Commissioners Syracuse  
Abstain: Commissioners Dean and Thomas

**V. REGULAR AGENDA ITEMS**

**A. CONTINUED: GENERAL PLAN ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT**

**PROPOSAL:**

The City of Benicia's General Plan was adopted on June 15, 1999. California Government Code Section 65400 requires that cities submit an annual report of the status of their General Plan and progress in its implementation to the Governor's Office of Planning and Research and Department of Housing and Community Development. Prior to submittal to the State, the annual report must be presented to the City Council for review and acceptance. As a procedural matter, and concurrent with past action, staff is bringing this Annual Report to the Planning Commission for receipt and acceptance prior to the Council given the Planning Commission's duty, right, and power to implement the General Plan.

**Recommendation:**

Receive and file the 2011 General Plan Annual Progress Report for final acceptance by the City Council.

Lisa Porras, Senior Planner, reviewed the staff report and stated that this item was continued from the April 12, 2012 meeting. At that meeting, the Commission requested a comprehensive edit and reformat to the report for additional clarity and that each program be identified with its policy and goal as organized in the General Plan.

Ms. Porras reviewed the General Plan's background and from the annual progress report briefly described the City's recent accomplishments.

Commissioner Dean asked how the Climate Action Plan relates to the General Plan. (The Climate Action Plan is a stand-alone document with its own directives and functions as a work program.)

Commissioner Smith asked for clarification on the action requested of the Commission. (The report is before the Commission for discussion, comments, and then receive and file it – no adoption of resolution required.)

Commissioner Oakes asked if there is a time limit as to when comments may be provided staff. (Staff will continue to accept Commissioners' comments; however, the report is scheduled for City Council's acceptance in July.)

Commissioner Smith provided staff with detailed comments and questions contained in the report. She stated that she has more comments and would like to meet with Planning staff rather than to take the entire Commission's time during the meeting.

Ms. Porras responded that she would be happy to meet with Commissioners and that staff was making note of comments/questions. She thanked the Commissioners for their input.

Chair Sherry complimented staff on the brilliant job done to revise the annual report. He sees this as a "living" document that will continue to be improved upon over time.

Commissioner Grossman agreed with Chair Sherry's comments and also complimented staff on the report's revision. She stated that the revised format is clear and user friendly. She provided additional comments concerning the City's fiscal year budget, how the budget cycle works and requested staff to revise some specific descriptions in the report.

Commissioner Smith agreed with other Commissioners that the revised report is much improved from that provided at the last meeting. She recognized the staff effort required to complete the report.

**Public comment opened.**

None received.

**Public Comment closed.**

Commissioners continued to discuss details and provide comments on the report such as: Commissioner Grossman asked about an outdated fee study (staff will check with the Finance Department); Commissioner Dean commented that the draft Lower Arsenal Specific Plan is not pending at this time, its approval is some time in the future, that the East H Street connection to downtown should be removed or identify the reason it is not feasible; Commissioner Smith asked about the gateway item and stated that the Western gateway is part of the City's work program. Chair Sherry asked that the Commission's recommendation of design criteria for City gateways be reflected in the report.

Ms. Porras stated that staff will follow-up and respond to Commissioners' questions and comments.

Commissioner Dean asked for clarification on a conflict of the City's sign ordinance and a freeway sign program in the report.

Ms. Wellman answered that concerning the sign ordinance revision currently in progress and a sign enforcement program listed in the report, the program in the report is for freeway sign enforcement, which is Caltrans' responsibility. The City's sign ordinance that is currently being updated will address signs within the City.

**VI. COMMUNICATIONS FROM STAFF**

Ms. Porras reviewed the memo included in the Commission's packet addressing the Sign Ordinance Regulations for Billboards and informed the Commission about a proposed modification to an existing CBS billboard. She noted corrections to page 2 of the memo that the project will come before the Commission in August rather than July and the sign will require a Use Permit process rather than amendment. She informed the Commission that the proposal consists of a digital LED screen.

**VII. COMMUNICATIONS FROM COMMISSIONERS**

Commissioner Grossman stated that she will be on vacation for the July 12 Planning Commission meeting and will not be attending.

Commissioner Smith asked Ms. Wellman about the legal parameters for Commissioners' decisions, specifically how much of a commissioner's background can be used when making decisions. She asked if a memo could

be provided and this item agendaized for an upcoming meeting for Commission discussion and information.

Commissioner Smith congratulated Commissioner Dean on his upcoming marriage.

Chair Sherry invited everyone to attend the Championship Little League game Friday, June 15 at 5:30 pm at the Community Park.

#### **VIII. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:08 pm.