

October 29, 2019

Dear Mayor and City Commissioners:

In 2015 the Citizen Involvement Council (CIC) was restructured, renamed, codified and put under the direction of the Community Development Director. It was made clear at the February 2015 CIC meeting that if these changes did not happen, the CIC would no longer have staff support and would not be allowed to continue. At this time the CIC were reminded that they serve at the discretion of the City Commission and that is who gives them their roles and purposes to fulfill. They were given a framework to clarify and provide direction moving forward (see attached January 20, 2015 memo) and were challenged by the Community Development Director to improve communication and coordination between the City, CIC, Neighborhood Associations and the general public.

At the time of this change all 12 neighborhoods were once again active and participating in the CIC. Each neighborhood had up to 2 voting members and the bylaws had just been revised and were in the process of being adopted (see attached Nov 14, 2014 draft bylaws). The CIC had recognized changes needed to happen and had taken steps to make this change. (This included revisiting the current Citizen Involvement Section of the Oregon City Comprehensive Plan, see attached.) The abrupt restructuring put a halt to any such plans and set the CIC on a new course.

We now find ourselves five years later asking, have we accomplished the goals of this change as were given to us by the Community Development Director? Have we increased public participation? Have we doubled attendance? Have professionals been brought in as a supplement to staff to invest, expand and improve citizen participation in the land use process? Have we been given the tools and expertise needed to succeed?

As of the most recent CIC meeting 2 neighborhoods are completely inactive, 1 chair officially resigned at the meeting and he alerted us to the fact that one more is on their way out soon. Neither of these neighborhoods anticipates having replacements. Only 8 of the 12 neighborhoods have been sending representatives to the CIC meetings, and these are not consistent.

A few concerned citizens, including current and past CIC members have met to discuss their concerns with the current status of the CIC and have proposed three changes in the hopes to turn the tides back towards increased citizen involvement. These three suggestions were brought to the CIC at the October meeting and were unanimously agreed upon to be brought before the City Commission for their approval.

Tonight we are asking for your approval to:

1. Restore voting rights to both Neighborhood CIC Representatives
 - We believe that by restoring voting rights it will encourage members to attend CIC meetings and increase the pool of citizens to draw from for outreach and involvement.
2. Restore Bylaws for the CIC
 - Bylaws are currently used by 6 of the 8 city boards and commissions.
3. Restore the responsibility of the agenda to the CIC Chair
 - We believe this will encourage CIC members to suggest items for the agenda and set the tone that the meetings are citizen driven and everyone's input is encouraged.

If approved we will return to the CIC to create the necessary wording and documentation to update the Bylaws and bring before you recommendations needed to change the City Code Chapter 2.30.

We want to be clear that we appreciate the Planning Department's support and the work they do with the CIC. We believe we have many of the same goals and desires and know they work hard to achieve citizen involvement.

Thank you,

Amy Willhite
Chair, Citizen Involvement Committee