

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PLANNING COMMISSION CANDIDATE

CANDIDATE: Lisa Heller

PLEASE RESPOND IN WRITING BY: Wednesday, February 5, 2020, at 5 p.m.

PLEASE SEND TO: Lynda Rose
Assistant to Mayor Chuck Bennett
VIA EMAIL: lrose@cityofsalem.net
OR VIA FAX: 503-588-6354

1. Please explain your understanding of the role and responsibilities of the Planning Commission.
The planning commission advises the City Council on growth and development issues. These are land use and transportation. The commission reviews city planners' advice as well as holds public hearings appealing planning administrators' decisions. As I read, the Commission's 2018-2019, there were four goals, including increasing public input and neighborhood associations training.
2. What skills, knowledge and perspectives do you possess that will enable you to be an effective member of the Commission?
I have worked for the Oregon Department of Revenue as a hearings officer where I learned about zoning. I held public hearings for proposed administrative rules for the state. As a former practicing attorney, I understand that public hearings can be fought with ill expressed strong feelings. I also saw, frequently, the inability of middle income clients unable to find adequate housing because rents were too high. As a former state administrator, I have experience in setting goals, developing plans, and following the goals through.
3. One of the most common application types you will hear at the Planning Commission is a Comprehensive Plan Change and Zone Change, where an applicant wants to change their zoning to facilitate a development proposal. What is your perspective regarding responding to the current market versus maintaining a long term vision?
I see this as a balancing process. While some proposals may have an immediate positive impact, such proposals must be concerned in light of the Salem Comprehensive Plan. In some cases it must be a difficult decision. In others, the zoning change request may well follow the long term goals.
4. What are some examples of how you believe Salem has done a good job of land use and transportation planning? What are some areas for improvement?
I think that the increase in downtown residential units are very good for the vitality of the city center and I am a fan of multiuser structures which the city is expanding. As for transportation, I really like all the bike lanes and the improvements to the curb cuts. As for improvements, I'm not sure that the parking system for vehicles has been as effective for discouraging single occupant has increased carpooling. But I don't have the statistics, I only make that comment as an observer.