



Where Life is Sweet

Members of the Planning Commission
STAFF REPORT
For the Meeting of June 14, 2023

Title/Subject

Conditional Use Permit Review - HHS Athletic Fields 4N2810DC Tax Lot 100 4N2810DD Tax Lot 300- 425/435 W Orchard Ave

Summary and Background

Pursuant to the planning commission's approval of the conditional use permit for the construction of the softball fields, a review of operations is scheduled.

The Hermiston School District submitted documentation of the usage of the softball fields between June of 2022 and June of 2023. There were a total of 33 games played over the review period. It is estimated that 30 cars came and utilized parking for each game.

The planning commission approved a conditional use permit for the construction of new softball fields in June of 2020. The addition of two new softball fields constituted an overall expansion of the conditional use permit for Hermiston High School and required approval by the planning commission as a modification of the 2015 permit. The permit approved construction of new softball fields, bleachers, press box, bull pen, concession stand, and restroom facilities. This permit modification was part of a two-stage modification of the high school campus; construction of new athletic facilities and a new two-story annex building to be considered at a later date (2021).

Much of the discussion of the softball field construction centered around the proposed addition of 74 parking spaces to accommodate the bleacher seating. When the planning commission considered the request, ultimate design and construction of the parking was deferred to the second phase construction with the annex in the conditions of approval. The city's traffic engineers were unable to consider the full impact of either the proposed softball parking or additional high school parking until COVID restrictions ended and traffic circulation patterns returned to normal. As a result, the planning commission elected to impose a condition of approval requiring a review of softball operations after one year of operations. Again, as a result of COVID restrictions, no softball games were played in the first year and this review was postponed from 2022 to 2023.

The planning commission's approval of the softball field conditional use permit was subject to seven conditions.

1. The applicant shall dedicate a 20-foot public utility easement over the sanitary sewer line proposed for relocation as shown on Sheet C200. Said easement shall benefit the city and allow ingress, egress, and maintenance activities on the sewer line.
2. All areas for the standing and maneuvering of vehicles as shown on Sheet L200 shall be paved prior to completion and occupancy of the proposed high school annex in 2022.
3. New parking spaces added as part of this conditional use permit and located south of the softball fields shall be prioritized for athletic field use and student parking discouraged until a full traffic impact analysis is completed as part of Phase 2 of the Hermiston High School upgrade conditional use permit.
4. All storm water drainage shall be retained on site.
5. Applicant shall comply with all provisions of §92.12 of the Hermiston Code of Ordinances relating to the control of blowing dust during all phases of construction.
6. The Planning Commission will conduct a review of operations subject to the provisions for a conditional use permit in June of 2022.
7. A gravel fire lane satisfying the requirements of Umatilla County Fire District 1 shall be installed south of the new fields prior to use.

To date, the sewer easement required in Condition #1 has not been dedicated. Parking has not been constructed as required in Condition #2 as well. The traffic analysis required in Condition #3 has been completed and approved by the planning commission as part of the annex permitting process and subsequently approved by the city council on appeal by the school district. Conditions #4, 5, and 7 have been satisfied. The planning commission is holding this review to satisfy Condition #6.

The issue of bleacher parking as required by Condition #2 is worthy of special consideration by the planning commission. In researching the softball field project file, the annex project file, as well as minutes from each meeting, the overall intent of the softball parking is nebulous. It's clear from the 2020 softball report and findings that 74 parking spaces were/are intended to service attendees of softball games and were not to be used for student parking until the traffic analysis is complete. However, when the 2021 traffic analysis and parking plan was completed, the softball parking was not included in either document. It is clear from the adopted findings for the annex permit that the school has adequate parking to meet the zoning requirements for a school. Specifically, 662 spaces are provided and 402 spaces are required to meet the code standard. This leaves 160 spaces above the zoning minimum, which can be considered as accommodating or providing the 74 original spaces for the softball bleachers and still leaving 86 excess spaces. Conversely, the broader latitude in conditional use permitting requires the planning commission to consider neighborhood compatibility as well. There was extensive conversation surrounding this issue at both the staff and planning commission level as part of the annex permit approval.

The planning commission is holding a hearing at this meeting to review the District's compliance with the softball field conditional use permit. The dedication of the sewer easement in Condition #1 still requires completion. The planning commission should conclude if the 74 spaces originally shown on the softball site plan and required by Condition #2 are still required or if the excess spaces constructed for the annex fulfill this requirement.

Tie-In to Council Goals

N/A

Fiscal Information

There is no financial impact as a result of the hearing.

Alternatives and Recommendation

Alternatives

The planning commission should consider all of the evidence presented at the hearing and determine if additional conditions are warranted.

The planning commission may choose to:

- Continue operations with the existing conditions of approval
- Draft additional conditions as deemed necessary by the planning commission

Recommended Action/Motion

Staff recommends the planning commission make a motion to continue operations with the existing conditions in place.

Submitted By:

Clinton Spencer, Planning Director