

**DRAFT Minutes**  
**Stevenson Planning Commission Meeting**  
**Monday, May 13, 2024**  
**6:00 PM**

**Planning Commission Chair Breckel** called the meeting to order at 6:16 p.m. A quorum was present.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

PC Chair Jeff Breckel; Commissioner Anne Keesee. Commissioner Hales attended via Zoom.

**STAFF PRESENT**

Community Development Director Ben Shumaker, Planning & Public Works Assistant Tiffany Andersen

**GUESTS PRESENT**

Glen Daman, Cole Butler, Ron Mitchell, Kara Owens. Courtney Wheeler via Zoom.

**PUBLIC PRESENT**

Mary Repar, Art Yeoman, Greg Stafford, Debbie Taylor, Valerie Kelly-Ginter, Phil Ginter

**A. Preliminary Matters**

**1. Public Comment Expectations**

Shumaker explained use of tools for remote participants: \*6 to mute/unmute & \*9 to raise hand. Commenters must raise their hand and be acknowledged by the Chair. Individual comments may be limited to 3 minutes. Disruptive individuals may be required to leave the meeting. Persistent disruptions may result in the meeting being recessed and continued at a later date.

**2. Public Comment Period**

(For items not located elsewhere on the agenda)

Mary Repar commented about the shoreline appeal she initiated and invited the group to the board site visit on Friday, at noon.

**3. March 11, 2024 Minutes (No Meeting in April)**

The Planning Commission meeting minutes from March 11, 2024, were approved unanimously as presented.

**B. New Business**

**4. CUP2024-01 (The River Church)**

**a. Appearance of Fairness Disclosures**

**Shumaker** explained and administered the Appearance of Fairness Doctrine. The Appearance of Fairness Doctrine is a rule of law requiring government decision-makers to conduct non-court hearings and proceedings in a way that is fair, impartial, and unbiased in both appearance and fact. Any conflicts of interest must be disclosed to ensure fairness and impartiality. Disclosures include any financial interest in the final outcome, any outside (ex-parte) communications made with any party of interest or anything else that could be construed as a conflict or affects any decision making. Decision

makers can be challenged regarding any perceived conflicts of interest.

None of the Planning Commissioners present disclosed any ex-parte communications concerning the application, and none reported any financial conflicts or other matters that would impede a fair and impartial decision. There were no challenges by the applicant or the public.

**Shumaker** explained the details of the Conditional Use Permit application.

**Glen Dahman** provided a description of the project. Preschool for approximately 10 children, aged 3-5, three days a week, from 9am to 11am. The church had new playground equipment donated, which will be used. There will be a certified teacher, Courtney Wheeler, and one assistant on staff. The maximum head count of children would be 12.

**Courtney Wheeler** spoke in favor of the school, as young children need early education programs in Stevenson. They wish to provide this option, on a small scale.

**Breckel** explained the rules for Public Comment.

**Public Comment began with those in opposition.**

**Art Yeoman**, 293 NW Roosevelt, expressed opposition as per relevant conditional requirement #1: Will not endanger the public health or safety. **Yeoman** stated there are currently no sidewalks, the road is narrow, and the intersection at the base of the road has a negative curve. Suggested moving to a place with better infrastructure.

**Commissioner Keesee** stated she drove the road prior to this meeting and noted there were no sidewalks, which could be a concern.

**Greg Stafford**, 291 NW Roosevelt, stated the application was submitted with incorrect zone listed. His opposition as per relevant conditional requirement #1: Will not endanger the public health or safety. Opposition is due to inadequate parking, the road being too narrow, and no sidewalk. Opposition for many of the same reasons stated as per relevant conditional requirement #2: Will not substantially reduce the value of adjoining or abutting property.

**Debbie Taylor**, 291 NW Roosevelt, expressed opposition as per relevant conditional requirement #1: Will not endanger the public

health or safety. **Taylor** believes traffic flow would be dangerous, drivers' vision is impeded by the narrow road and entry onto Roosevelt. Opposition as per relevant conditional requirement #2: Will not substantially reduce the value of adjoining or abutting property. **Taylor** believes the children will be noisy, as the proposed playground is located near their property, lowering the value for potential future buyers.

**Phil Ginter**, 205 NW Roosevelt, expressed opposition as per relevant conditional requirement #1: Will not endanger the public health or safety. **Ginter** believes there is a question of traffic safety and suggests finding an alternate location.

**Coleen Kelly-Ginter**, 205 NW Roosevelt, expressed opposition as per relevant conditional requirement #1: Will not endanger the public health or safety. **Ginter** believes this is a good idea, just not in the proposed location, as there is a street safety issue.

**Mary Repar**, Stevenson, expressed opposition as per relevant conditional requirement #1: Will not endanger the public health or safety. **Repar** believes Roosevelt is a dangerous street. Suggested moving the program over to the elementary school.

**Breckel** closed the Public Hearing at 6:50 PM.

**Breckel** opens up for deliberations.

**Commissioner Hales** expressed issues with relevant conditional requirements #1: Will not endanger the public health or safety and #3: Will be in harmony with the area in which it is located. **Hales** believes this is a poor decision based on the road safety issues. He also has reservations about approving this venture in the zone Residential 1. This appears to be compounding a previous poor decision.

**Commissioner Keesee** expressed issues with relevant conditional requirement #1: Will not endanger the public health or safety. After driving to the school herself, she agrees there are safety concerns.

**Commissioner Breckel** expressed concerns with relevant conditional requirement #1: Will not endanger the public health or safety. While he applauds the church for wanting to provide this service, he worries about access, as the road is very narrow and not very safe. He is also concerned about issues in line with relevant conditional requirements #3: Will be in harmony with the area in which it is located. **Breckel** does not see a workable option, due to the neighborhood expressing their concerns.

**MOTION: Commissioner Hales** moves to deny application pending adoption of findings of fact relative to requirements #1 and #3.

**Commissioner Keesee** seconds.

Voting aye: **Commissioners Breckel, Hales, Keesee.**

**Shumaker** states the findings will provide a framework to withstand appeal, should there be one. **Commissioner Breckel** underscored the need to ensure specific rationale used for denial, so there is a record.

#### **5. Zoning Interpretation – Seasonal Employee Housing in the CR Commercial Recreation District**

**Shumaker** informed the Planning Commission of the process and criteria involved in conducting use interpretations under the Zoning Code. The specific use involves Skamania Lodge’s proposal to construct temporary employee housing. The Planning Commission is asked to interpret the zoning code based on its understanding of a) whether Seasonal Employee Housing is consistent with the purpose of the R3 District and b) whether the use is the same general character as other uses in the district. Secondly, the Planning Commission can determine whether the use is customary and incidental to an instant principal use.

**Kara Owens** relays the plan is to expand an area onsite to house seasonal workers. Employees find it difficult to find living accommodation while working at the lodge. The addition of employee housing helps with that hurdle.

**Ron Mitchell** has been arguing for employee housing for years. This perk is part of the hospitality culture, especially in areas where employers have a difficult time keeping full staff during peak times. Because the units will be located on lodge property, employees will be able to reside and walk to work.

**Breckel** believes this to be a good idea and asked fellow commissioners to weigh in.

**Keesee** agreed.

**Hales** believes the issues surrounding affordable housing for employees is a problem and this is a huge need.

**MOTION: Commissioner Hales** moves to approve the interpretation as drafted. **Commissioner Keesee** seconds.

Voting aye: **Commissioners Breckel, Hales, Keesee.**

## 6. Joint Meeting Request

**Shumaker** informs the Planning Commission of a staff suggestion to bring the City Council and Planning Commission together to discuss level of service standards. Expectations are not consistent between types of service or public expectations. A joint meeting series would evaluate whether to create/revise the existing standards.

Planning Commissioners all agree to Joint Meeting. Will determine date at a later time.

## C. Old Business

### 7. December Parking Study:

**Shumaker** updated Planning Commission on the Parking Study results from December. Visuals compared usage in December and August and display seasonal changes in demand. Zoning Code amendments will be put forward for consideration when the Parking Advisory Committee concludes its work.

## D. Discussion

### 8. Staff & Commission Reports

**Shumaker** presented brief updates on the following items:

**Zoning Code Update** related to setbacks has been adopted and is in effect. City Council will look to approve floodplain federally backed insurance this month.

**Tree Preservation Planning** is beginning. The City received a grant through the Washington State Department of Natural Resources Urban Forestry program. Options are being explored to preserve tree canopy by working with the PUD to underground overhead utilities, hopefully to also reduce loss of trees to fires.

**Parks Projects** are currently being developed. Two grant applications for RCO WWRP/Local Parks Grants are being created to fund two projects identified in the Parks Plan. One is regarding the splash pad addition to the Courthouse Plaza. The City is also moving forward on buying land for a path, per the Parks Plan.

**1<sup>st</sup> Street Overlook** will break ground soon. The bids are in and tabulated. The winner of the bid will be introduced soon, and work will begin shortly after.

**Sewer System Upgrades** are still under construction due to equipment and parts delays.

### 8. Adjournment

**PC Chair Breckel** declared the meeting adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

Minutes recorded by Tiffany Andersen.