



PLANNING COMMISSION

Tuesday, February 16, 2023, at 6:00 PM

APPROVED MINUTES

Members Present: Chair Steve Toschi
Vice Chair Dan Cary
Commissioner Russ Hubbard
Commissioner Charles Castner
Commissioner Ginny Carlson
Commissioner Russ Low

Members Absent: Commissioner Jennifer Pugsley

Staff Present: City Planner Jacob Graichen
Associate Planner Jenny Dimsho
Community Development Admin Assistant Christina Sullivan
Councilor Mark Gundersen

Others: Brady Preheim
Tina Curry
Robyn Toschi
Dave Lauridsen

CALL TO ORDER & FLAG SALUTE

TOPICS FROM THE FLOOR (Not on Public Hearing Agenda): Limited to five minutes per topic

Preheim, Brady. Preheim was called to speak. He expressed concern that Steve Toschi was elected chair for the Planning Commission. He said it should concern the City that the decision was divided on him being chosen for this position. He wanted to address that the Chair should remain neutral in all decisions and not show what his or her opinions are as decisions are made. Preheim also discussed his opinions on why he felt that Commissioner Charles Castner should not be on the Commission at all.

CONSENT AGENDA

A. Planning Commission Minutes Dated January 10, 2023

Vice Chair Dan Cary asked for an amendment to a motion and vote.

Commissioner Russ Hubbard also had a request for a change to a motion and also to have it noted he asked about an acoustic study done on the stage proposals and never heard a response.

Chair Steve Toschi wanted some information added to the responses for public comment. He also asked for amendments on the sub-committee for HB 3115 and the clarification on the task force participants. He also requested changes to the new proactive items and his response to why he included certain sections on items he submitted.

Motion: Upon Vice Chair Cary's motion and Commissioner Low's second, the Planning Commission unanimously approved the Draft Minutes dated January 10, 2023 with the suggested amendments.

[AYES: Vice Chair Cary, Commissioner Carlson, Commissioner Castner, Commissioner Hubbard, Commissioner Low; NAYS: None]

DISCUSSION ITEMS

B. Architectural Review at 343 S 1st Street – Dave Lauridsen (Crooked Creek Brewery)

Associate Planner Jennifer Dimsho presented the architectural review report. She explained this would be a recommendation to staff for compliance with the Architectural Guidelines for the Riverfront District. She explained the property was located just outside of the St. Helens Downtown Historic District, but was still inside the Riverfront District zone.

She said there were a few exterior modifications proposed to update the building. She said the building itself had a Site Design Review on file from the 1980's where they added an additional 1,260 square feet to the building making it an almost 2,000 square feet.

She said the applicant proposed to remove the existing metal awning on the front of the building. She said the guidelines generally discourage the removal of awnings as they promote pedestrian activity, and they help prevent weather exposure. She said the other improvements being made to the building might make up for the removal of the awning including enlarging the windows and creating an outdoor dining area. The applicant was also adding some additional awnings to other areas of the building.

She said the applicant was proposing to replace the exterior siding as there were areas with rot and no flashing at all. The applicant was proposing to replace all the current wood siding with a similar shiplap siding that would be stained a dark neutral color.

She showed the dwelling above the commercial building and where the existing entrance was for it. She said there was a gangway access to the dwelling. The proposal says they would add a new, more direct, entry to the dwelling on the opposite side of the building.

She said he also proposed an overhead door to connect more of the outdoor dining with the indoor dining area. She said the Commission would have to decide if they were comfortable with a more non-traditional entry being proposed.

She discussed the lighting that was proposed on all sides of the building. She said the design and fixture type meets the standards of the guidelines as well. She also discussed the materials and colors of the building and said the proposal complies with the architectural guidelines.

She said there was a mechanical unit proposed to go on the southwest corner of the roof of the building and she said there should be screening from the public and are not visible.

She talked about the structure in the back would be utilized for coolers and then half of it would be for dry storage. She said the plans show it to be enclosed, but the plans did not clarify what type of siding.

The windows are being proposed to change from four feet tall to six-feet tall and would remain eight-feet wide. She said they are currently tinted, but they will be changed to be more transparent which is encouraged by the Guidelines. She also discussed the upstairs windows and that the applicant was going to replace with them similar to what was already there. She said the guidelines would like to see longer and more vertical windows that are more symmetrical on 2nd story windows. She said the Commission could give some suggestions on the 2nd floor window to help bring them more into compliance with the guidelines.

There was a small discussion on the casings for the windows and the type of materials that would be used to make the upstairs and downstairs windows look the same.

Lauridsen, Dave. Applicant. Lauridsen was called to speak. He shared what his vision was for the building. He discussed the roll-up door and said that with the energy code changes, he would be changing that to more of a French door style to meet the energy standards. He also showed an alternative 2nd floor window design that were more in compliance with the Guidelines. He said because of the CMU construction, it would be difficult to create new openings. He talked about why he wanted to remove the awning and how it would create a better view for the customers and lighting for inside the building by opening up the windows. He said he would plan to screen the mechanical unit on the roof.

He did mention they would eventually change the sign, but they were not proposing to do that now.

There was a small discussion on the materials that would be used for the rear storage area. The Commission agreed to the T1-11 material to be used on the storage building due to its hidden location and small size.

The Commission felt the French door option given by the applicant was an appropriate option. The Commission also agreed that the front entry door should have a kickplate, per the Guidelines.

Motion: Upon Commissioner Low's motion and Commissioner Carlson's second, the Planning Commission unanimously recommended that the proposal complies with the Architectural Guidelines with the recommended changes as discussed. [AYES: Vice Chair Cary, Commissioner Carlson, Commissioner Low, Commissioner Castner; NAYS: None; Commissioner Hubbard Abstained. Motions passes.]

C. Practical Councilor Liaison Attendance

City Planner Jacob Graichen advised that City Councilor Gundersen wanted to understand what the Commission expected of him for attendance. City Councilor Gundersen wanted to know if him attending by ZOOM was an issue and if him being at the whole meeting was necessary, as the meetings have been very long. Councilor Gundersen expressed concern that the Planning Commission was not getting along as a team and wanted to see them more cohesive. Councilor Gundersen expressed that two hours for the meeting was the amount of time he felt necessary for him to attend. He wanted to see the Commission express the concerns he needed to hear in that timeframe. He wanted to be conscious of staff time and the rest of the team.

Both Commissioner Carlson and Vice Chair Cary expressed they would like to see the meetings be efficient and to have meetings end on time or earlier. They understand there are times when the meetings might run late, but each meeting running long is not a respectful use of the time of everyone involved.

Commissioner Castner also agreed that he would like to see the meetings be more efficient.

Commissioner Hubbard expressed he would like to see the City Councilor in person at the meetings instead of ZOOM. He felt it was part of the Council Liaison's job as a representative of the people and serves as the Commission's only connection to the City Council.

Commissioner Low expressed that the City Councilor should attend as many of the Planning Commission meetings as possible. He said there is a lot going on, and this way, Councilor Gundersen would be informed and could be the best voice for them at the City Council meetings.

There was a small discussion about the role of previous City Council Liaisons.

D. Vision Sharing for Future Meeting

Chair Steve Toschi expressed that he would like to see more planning going on at the meetings. He said he wanted to see more of a collaboration on the different items on the proactive list and to come

together as a team to help move the City forward. He said he wanted to change the agenda to begin by planning first for at least an hour so they could look at them with fresh eyes and constructively move through the different proactive items.

Vice Chair Cary said that sometimes there is more than one public hearing on the agenda and that can take up a huge amount of time with public comment, applicant testimony and staff reports. He said if they push the hearings to later, it makes the same issue of providing poor decision making to the hearings instead of the proactive items. Vice Chair Cary noted that they changed the start time to 6 p.m. so that they could get out earlier, not later.

The Commission discussed the agenda items and possibly moving the public hearing times at the last minute if needed to discuss more pressing items, but Graichen mentioned these are time sensitive applications and they have to give legal notice for these. There is not an option to change the start time of the public hearing last minute.

The Commission agreed to host a Special Meeting to have a Planning Commission Retreat where each member could discuss what they see as the vision for the city and their goals for the Commission itself.

REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING THE CITY'S 10/11/12th STREET BLUFF PROPERTY

City Planner Graichen presented the staff report that will be given to the Council. Graichen said that he brought this to the attention of the Commission now, as there was time in his schedule to allow him to work on it (i.e., winter time) and it is a task identified on the Council's adopted Strategic Plan..

He mentioned the proposed right-of-way dedication and street vacation area was just east of the St. Helens Middle School. He said it was a bluff area. He showed that the City owned the property on both sides of the right of way to be vacated.

He shared the current zoning of the property. He asked if the Commission felt we should proactively change the existing zoning. The Commission was divided, with some wanting to rezone to Public Lands to preserve as open space and others suggesting waiting for a developer to be involved, who may have their own vision of the property.

There was a small discussion about what could be developed on the property.

Graichen discussed the area that would be vacated and that doing it now would be easier for future development. He said there would be a public hearing with the City Council to clean up this area of the property.

The Commission agreed with proposed right-of-way dedication as depicted in the packet materials.

There was a small discussion on how to re-plat the area.

Motion: Upon Vice Chair Cary's motion and Commissioner Carlson's second, the Planning Commission unanimously recommended to City Council to vacate the 10th/11th/12th street bluffs as recommended by staff. [AYES: Vice Chair Cary, Commissioner Carlson, Commissioner Low, Commissioner Castner, Commissioner Hubbard; NAYS: None]

PLANNING DIRECTOR DECISIONS (previously e-mailed to the Commission)

- E. Sign Permit at 270 Strand Street (Columbia View Park) – City of St. Helens
- F. Extension of Time for Lot Line Adjustment at Tract F of the Elk Ridge Estates – 3J Consulting, Inc.

There was no discussion of the Planning Director Decisions.

PLANNING DEPARTMENT ACTIVITY REPORT**G. Planning Department Activity Report – January**

There was no discussion of the Planning Department Activity Report.

PROACTIVE ITEMS**H. HB 3115 Effort**

Commissioner Toschi shared an email sent from a citizen, John Campbell, to the Planning Department about how to address homelessness and the HB3115 effort. Graichen shared some of the items that would be shared at the Joint City Council and Planning Commission meeting to be able to adopt a new code before the deadline of July 1, 2023. City Council requested that their legal counsel be present at the joint meeting.

There was a small discussion about the challenges the sub-committee faced and discussed how to move forward with changing the code for HB3115.

There was also a small discussion on places or properties that could be used for appropriate camping. They discussed different areas on where they would not want individuals to camp. The discussion led to more discussion on how to structure the laws to protect properties.

I. Architectural Standards

The Commission agreed to move this item to the next agenda when Commission Pugsley was back to share her research.

J. New Proactive Item Proposals

The Commission agreed to move this item discussion to the Planning Commission retreat.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION ITEMS

Graichen shared that Broadleaf Arbor Apartments and how they were making progress on getting the buildings finalized. He said they would have some of the buildings opening up in March and the last of the buildings would be opening up in October. He said if the schedule goes as planned the project should be completed by the end of the year.

There was a discussion about the Columbia View Park and the timeline of construction. Commissioner Carlson had some questions about parking in that waterfront area. She also mentioned that there was no longer access to the waterfront from her neighborhood. She hoped they would open a space back up to the area from Plymouth Street. Dimsho mentioned there was not a safe way to open up the waterfront access in that area because of the active construction occurring.

There was a small discussion about the new kayak ramp that was approved through a grant program from the Oregon Marine Board. Dimsho said it was still in the works, but last she heard, they were hiring for the In-Water Permit Technician who would be managing the technical assistance program that the City is involved in.

Commissioner Hubbard asked if there was an acoustic study to be scheduled for the new stage to be built in the Columbia View Park. Dimsho said no Audio or Acoustical Engineer had been hired or consulted. She also mentioned that new sound equipment was not included in the budget. Chair Toschi asked if there had been a rendering of the stage location from the amphitheater seating. Dimsho said no, only a side profile of the stage from the Riverwalk itself was completed. She also noted that the stage location and orientation was probably the most heavily critiqued aspect of the project by the public, the technical advisory committee, and staff.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the Planning Commission, the meeting was adjourned 9:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Christina Sullivan
Community Development Administrative Assistant*