



CITY OF ST. HELENS PLANNING DEPARTMENT

MEMORANDUM

TO: City Council
FROM: Jacob A. Graichen, AICP, City Planner
RE: Planning Commission Annual Report
DATE: May 12, 2021

This report covers Planning Commission activities from **June 2020** through **May 2021**. The Planning Commission discussed this report at their May 11, 2021 meeting.

- **Number of meetings: 13 (last year 10)**

More than 12? Yes. Commission had a special session outside of normal meeting dates to deliberate on a matter in July. So the Commission met twice in July 2020.

- **Number of public hearings (a continued hearing is counted separately): 19 (last year 18)**
- **Acceptance Agenda Items: 9 (last year 12)**

For administrative land use actions that are more significant (e.g., Site Design Review) the Commission motions to formally accept the decisions or otherwise. This is a check and balance of sorts.

- **Planning Director Decisions: 41 (last year 54)**

For lesser administrative land use actions (e.g., Home Occupations, Sign Permits, Temporary Use Permits), the items from the last month are included on the agenda to facilitate discussion and query usually for clarification purposes or to address concerns.

- **Discussion Items/Workshops: 16 (last year 11)**

Items included (in no particular order): Recommendation of proposed accessibility improvements as they relate to street standards; Planning Commission term expirations; Urban Renewal amendment; new Council adopted Zoom Meeting Policies and Guidelines/Commission operations, excused absences, etc.; Oregon House Bill 2001; overview of City Council first take on proposed duplex standards; S. 2nd Street ROW vacation recommendation; proposed interior setbacks rules; Bennett Building façade renovation update and recommendation; term expirations – Interview Committee recommendations; Chair/Vice Chair nominations; End of Year Summary Report; 2021 Development Code Amendments; SHIBP Master Plan Document; and the Commission’s annual report to City Council.

- **Architectural review: 3 (last year 2)**

Certain proposals within the Riverfront District require architectural review.

- **Projects in process:** None specific. But note the Commission discussed the 2021 Development Code amendments at several meetings before their March 2021 public hearing on the matter. They need a break!
- **Future projects/plans:** The Commission is largely reactionary in that it reviews things as they come. With all of the city projects going on combined with continued robust development in the community, the Commission will stay busy the next year.

- **What can the Council do to support the Commission?**

Last year the Commission said they would like an in-person work session with the Council to discuss long range planning issues, housing, riverfront development and such. In person is preferred over Zoom or another virtual meeting medium.

Due to the persistence of COVID-19, there was no practical in-person opportunity.

The Commission still desires this and noted that if it must be virtual to happen, then so be it. The council chambers and recreation center were discussed as possible in-person locations.