



PLANNING COMMISSION

Tuesday, December 9, 2025 at 6:30 PM

APPROVED MINUTES

Members Present:

Chair Jennifer Shoemaker
Vice Chair Brooke Sisco
Commissioner David B Rosengard
Commissioner Charles Castner
Commissioner Scott Jacobson
Commissioner Reid Herman
Commissioner Trina Kingsbury

Members Absent:

None

Staff Present:

City Planner Jacob Graichen
Communications Officer Crystal King
Community Development Administrative Assistant Angelica Artero

Council Members:

Councilor Mark Gundersen
Councilor Russ Hubbard

Others:

Julie Pelletier
Brian Delashmutt
Jeff Heller
Darrel Smith
Adrienne Linton
Patrick Birkle
Sid Hariharigat
Ray Jones
Lucy Frost
William Doster
Lee Rigdon
Jay Echternach

1. 6:30 P.M. CALL TO ORDER

2. TOPICS FROM THE FLOOR (Not on Public Hearing Agenda): Limited to five minutes per topic None.

3. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Draft Minutes dated October 14, 2025

Motion: Upon Commissioner Jacobson's motion and Commissioner Sisco's second, the Planning Commission voted to approve the draft minutes dated October 14, 2025

AYES: Commissioner Jacobson, Commissioner Kingsbury, Commissioner Herman, Commissioner Rosengard, Commissioner Castner, Vice Chair Sisco **NAYS:** None.

4. PUBLIC HEARING AGENDA

B. 6:30pm Annexation A.1.25 Sykes Roa/Morton Lane (Stuzman)

Chair Shoemaker opened the public hearing at 6:30 PM. City Planner Jacob Graichen presented the staff report. The applicant and owner, Susan Stutzman, was requesting annexation from Columbia County into the city of St. Helens with R-7 zoning to match surrounding properties. Graichen explained that the property is surrounded by city limits, creating an island of county property. He noted the property has wetlands and riparian areas, as well as a 100-foot wide BPA easement running through it. Susan Stutzman, the applicant who resides in Olympia, Washington, explained that she and her sister inherited the property in 2021 from their mother who grew up in St. Helens.

In Favor

Jeff Heller spoke in support, identifying himself as the applicant's cousin and noting that his family owns adjacent property. **Neutral**

None

Opposition

There was no oral opposition to the application, but a letter of opposition was submitted, which the city planner provide to the Commission.

Applicant response

The applicant, Susie Stutzman, addressed the commission and explained that she supported annexation to allow for future development that would be compatible with city planning standards, police protection, and water/sewer.

End of Oral Testimony

Close of the Public Hearing & Record

Deliberations

During deliberations, the Commission discussed the appropriateness of R-7 zoning to match surrounding properties. They examined whether the annexation would create any issues for neighboring properties and concluded it was a logical annexation since the property was surrounded by city limits.

Motion: Upon Commissioner Rosegard's motion and Commissioner Kingsbury's second, the Commission moved to approve the annexation based on the recommendation by staff. They recommend the R7 zone.

AYES: Commissioner Castner, Commissioner Herman, Commissioner Jacobson, Commissioner Kingsbury, Commissioner Rosengard, Commissioner Sisco **NAYS:** None.

C. 7:06pm Subdivision Preliminary Plat SUB.2.25 Seal Rd (Davis)

Chair Shoemaker opened the public hearing at 7:06pm. City Planner Jacob Graichen presented the application for a 28-lot planned development preliminary plat subdivision on Seal Road. The heavily forested 4.5-acre property includes wetlands and would be developed using the planned development overlay adopted in 2007, which allows for flexibility in design and smaller lot sizes than standard R-5 zoning. Graichen explained that there were multiple access considerations, including emergency access challenges, and the proposal included several tracts for wetlands, stormwater facilities, and a private park.

Wayne Hayson from Pioneer Design Group represented the applicant, explaining the subdivision design, which included two types of streets: a standard 50-foot wide right-of-way and "skinny streets" with a reduced 40-foot right-of-way and parking on only one side. He addressed concerns about fire access, explaining that the Fire Marshal provided recommended options of either installing sprinklers in the homes or providing emergency vehicle access via Seal Road.

In Favor

Delashmutt, Brian spoke in favor of the application as the owner. He explained to the Commission that his parents bought the property 40 some years ago and other matters. H

Neutral

Halstead, Jeff & Oran, Donovan Jeff Halstead, resident of 605 Seal Rd spoke of concern that he wanted to keep his turn around and driveway. He expressed concern that property that was promised to them from the family is being taken away from him without discussion. He owns property that is lot 25 of the proposed subdivision, and the lot has an accessory structure on it that he wants to keep.

Bonn, David Shared parking & traffic concerns, construction costs, and expressed that utilities should be limited to electric supply only—no gas.

Rigdon, Lee Commented that the accessory structure and turn around was there in the 1980's.

Opposition

Frost, Lucy Mentioned she lives adjacent to lot 1 of the proposed subdivision. She mentioned that there is an accumulative amount of water that streams on lot 1 anytime there is a significant amount of rainfall. Parking and traffic congestion were another concern, difficulty for emergency access, and worry of property values decreasing.

Jones, Ray Expressed that he is opposed to some of the issues that he does not feel has been fully vetted out with the subdivision plans. Property values, trees, replanting, and sewer capacity were among the few things that he addressed with concern if the subdivision were approved.

Pelletier, Julie Concern over digging up the wetland area, sewer capacity and worry about access to homes if sewer needed to be dug up due to the road being only one lane.

Applicant Response

Delashmutt, Brian Clarified that Mr. Halsted will get the turn around on lot 25.

Hayson, Wayne Expressed that a family dispute over the design on the turn around is not approval criteria for the subdivision, and that they are confident that there is a turn around on the property. Hayson explained that this new subdivision will have lesser impact on facilities than most of the existing homes.

Deliberations

The Commission considered several things. Regarding the existing accessory structure that would be located on proposed Lot 25, the Commission agreed with staff recommendation that the 605 Seal Road property file a consent to annex and the portion of the subject property not within city limits do the same, to allow the accessory structure to continue with the Subdivision.

The Commission allowed taller walls for the open space/wetland/storm water tracts as a condition of approval.

The Commission agreed with staff's recommendation that a mailbox cluster for the subdivision include a slot for the 605 Seal Road property.

Because of lack of data for proper review (wetland and tree inventory) the Commission finds that if there are improvements to Seal Road other than the sanitary sewer extension, they need to review that for consideration.

The Commission was ok with a recommended change to the tree plan condition with clarification about trees on neighboring properties with their tree influence zone (roots, etc.) within the subject property.

The Commission recognized and implemented the Fire Chief's recommendation that automatic sprinkler systems be necessary unless a second means of suitable emergency access is established.

Otherwise the decision was as recommended by staff per the staff report, more-or-less.

Motion: Upon Commissioner Rosengard's motion and Commissioner Jacobson's second, the Commission granted approval for the Subdivision preliminary plat.

AYES: Commissioner Herman, Commissioner Jacobson, Commissioner Kingsbury, Commissioner Rosengard. **NAYS:** Commissioner Castner

Motion: Upon Commissioner Kingsbury's motion, seconded by Commissioner Sisco, the Commission made a motion for signature.

AYES: Commissioner Herman, Commissioner Jacobson, Commissioner Kingsbury, Commissioner Rosengard. Commissioner Sisco **ABSTAINS:** Commissioner Caster

D. 10:29pm Conditional Use Permit CUP.2.25/Sign Permit S.19.25 1771 Columbia Blvd

Chair Shoemaker opened the public hearing at 10:29pm. City Planner Jacob Graichen presented the application for a conditional use permit and sign permit for a new police station at 1771 Columbia Boulevard. He explained that while a police station is a permitted use in the Houlton Business District, the fenced area was being classified as "outdoor storage," requiring a conditional use permit. The proposal included an 8-foot security fence, a public plaza along Columbia Boulevard, and improvements to all street frontages.

Sid Hariharigat and Adrian Linton from Mackenzie represented the applicant, explaining the site design featured a public plaza with basalt columns, landscaping, secure gated access points, and a single-story 11,300 square foot building with masonry walls. They noted the building was originally designed for the previously proposed Caster Road site but was being adapted to this location, requiring the relocation of a sewer line.

In favor

Birkle, Patrick Former City Councilor Patrick Birkle, who spoke in strong support of the application. He shared that during his time on the council, he believed they were given poor information by the

former police chief regarding site selection. He expressed relief that the project was now moving forward at what he considered a more appropriate location that would enhance the Houlton Business district.

Walsh, John City Administrator John Walsh mentioned that the covered parking for the officers is being built with the assistance of a grant.

Neutral

Opposition

Applicant Response

Deliberations

During deliberations, the Commission discussed the 8-foot security fence and its necessity for police operations, the aesthetics of the chain-link fence with privacy slats, and tree species and landscaping considerations, particularly along 18th Street where utilities might conflict with trees.

The Commission agreed that the application met all criteria and that the 8-foot fence was justified for security purposes. They added conditions regarding the green strip between the street and sidewalk along 18th Street and approved the engineering department's request to move the Cowlitz access eastward or as a potential alternative, recess the driveway gate to allow a depth between the street and gate of at least one vehicle.

Motion: Upon Commissioner Rosengard's motion, and Commissioner Castner's second, the Commission made a motion to approve the conditional use permit and sign permit with the discussed conditions.

AYES: Commissioner Castner, Commissioner Herman, Commissioner Jacobson, Commissioner Kingsbury, Commissioner Rosengard, Commissioner Sisco **NAYS:** None.

Motion: Upon Commissioner Sisco's motion, seconded by Commissioner Castner, the Commission made a motion for signature.

AYES: Commissioner Castner, Commissioner Herman, Commissioner Jacobson, Commissioner Kingsbury, Commissioner Rosengard, Commissioner Sisco **NAYS:** None.

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

E. Agenda item was noted but not discussed.

6. DISCUSSION ITEMS

Planning Commission Interviews

City Planner Graichen announced that the scheduled interviews with Patrick Birkle and Jay Echternach would be postponed to the next meeting due to the late hour.

7. PROACTIVE ITEMS

F. Architectural Standards

G. Vacant and Underutilized Storefronts

No updates provided.

8. CITY COUNCIL LIAISON REPORT

No updates from Councilor Gunderson.

Councilor Hubbard provided brief comments about the police station project, noting his excitement for what it would bring to the Houlton Business district.

9. FOR YOUR INFORMATION ITEMS

Chair Shoemaker noted this was her last meeting as a commissioner and thanked all commissioners for their service.

10. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the Planning Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 11:32p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Angelica Artero

Community Development Administrative Assistant