

# **CITY OF ST. HELENS PLANNING DEPARTMENT ACTIVITY REPORT**



**To:** City Council  
**From:** Jacob A. Graichen, AICP, City Planner  
**cc:** Planning Commission

**Date:** 04.27.2021

This report does not indicate all *current planning* activities over the past report period. These are tasks, processing and administration of the Development Code which are a weekly if not daily responsibility. The Planning Commission agenda, available on the City's website, is a good indicator of *current planning* activities. The number of building permits issued is another good indicator as many require Development Code review prior to Building Official review.

## **PLANNING ADMINISTRATION—PREAPPLICATIONS MEETINGS**

Conducted a pre-application meeting for a potential commercial subdivision of a property along US30 that is about 3.3 acres in size. Potential new commercial business wanting highway exposure including new drive-through businesses.

## **PLANNING ADMINISTRATION—MISC.**

We received notice that Columbia County is adopting a revised flood ordinance—[see attached](#). Interestingly, their Community Assistance Visit (CAV) was prior to the City's, which was in November of 2019. Both jurisdictions needed to update their codes to comply with the then recently FEMA approved model code for the State of Oregon. St. Helens completed this in May of last year.

Planning staff prepared for the semi-annual report to the Council for the April 21<sup>st</sup> Work Session.

Conducted the last final inspection for the St. Helens Place Apartments. This is the complex along Matzen, McBride and Brayden Streets. All 18 residential buildings were completed late last year. The remaining building is the storage facility for the apartments on the opposite (south) side of Brayden Street. This month's final inspection was for that.

Attended a webinar on April 16<sup>th</sup> about the latest updates to the Biological Opinion on the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) in Oregon. This started with a law suite in 2009 about floodplain development and its impact on endangered species. The NFIP has historically been about mitigating structure damage. For St. Helens, this affects us because we will most likely need to amend our flood regulations to include critical habitat impact provisions. The date this is supposed to be implemented keeps getting pushed out. Originally it was supposed to be two years ago (April 2018). Then it was October 2021. Now we are being told it will be 2023 or later.

We received the building permit package for the 238 multidwelling unit (apartment) development along Gable Road (approved by the Planning Commission in 2019). All buildings are included in one set of plans, so it is a big set! Started review.

## **DEVELOPMENT CODE ENFORCEMENT**

The resident at the property on the corner of US30 and Pittsburg Road has discussed (with staff) the issues we presented to the property owner in February. Issue is unlawful use of property for a wrecking/junkyard. Property owner agrees to start getting rid of junk cars and boats, although slowly. We will need to monitor things in the next couple months.

## **PLANNING COMMISSION (& acting HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION)**

April 13, 2021 meeting (outcome): The Commission unanimously denied a 2-parcel land partition on Belton Road. Deliberations took place at this meeting, with the public hearing in March. This matter could be appealed to the Council.

The Commission recommends approval of annexation of property along Kavanagh Avenue proposed to be developed as an RV park. The Council will hear this matter in May.

The Commission approved a yard reduction Variance along the 100 block of S. 1<sup>st</sup> Street.

May 11, 2021 meeting (upcoming): The Commission has two public hearing scheduled. Both are annexations, one off N. Vernonia Road and the other off Six Dees Lane (from Columbia Boulevard). The Commission will also discuss its annual report to the Council.

## **COUNCIL ACTIONS RELATED TO LAND USE**

The Council approved the 2021 code amendments that largely address the requirements of Oregon HB 2001, but rejected on a split 3-2 vote, to allow any provisions for tandem parking.

## **ST. HELENS INDUSTRIAL BUSINESS PARK PROPERTY**

Council approved the contract for WEST Consultants, Inc. to analyze the extent the floodplain within the vicinity of the proposed new police station. WEST promptly started field work this month too.

## **MILLARD ROAD PROPERTY**

The Council authorized requests for proposals from developers for this property. We will see what kind of responses we get.

**ASSOCIATE PLANNER**—*In addition to routine tasks, the Associate Planner has been working on:*  
**See attached.**

## NOTICE OF LAND USE ACTION – Required by Measure 56

---

### Notice for Adoption of Oregon Model Flood Ordinance

This is to notify you that the Columbia County Board of Commissioners have proposed an amendment to a land use regulation that may affect the permissible uses of your property and other properties. Our records indicate you own land that has been identified as a Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA) and will be affected by the proposed land use amendments that regulate activities within a floodplain. (Please note, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM) for Columbia County will not be amended with this proposal).

The Columbia County Board of Commissioners has initiated amendments to Section 1100 of the Columbia County Zoning Ordinance relating to the Flood Hazard Overlay for Columbia County. The proposed amendments will adopt the State of Oregon Model Flood Hazard Management Ordinance prepared by the State of Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD) and reviewed and approved by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Region X. Adoption of the ordinance language provided will ensure County compliance with the minimum standards for participation in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). The model flood hazard ordinance includes standards and provisions that encourage sound floodplain management. The language is based on the minimum requirements of the NFIP found in the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR's), Oregon's statewide land use planning Goal 7 (Natural Disasters and Hazards), and the Oregon specialty codes.

Adoption of the proposed amendments may affect the permissible uses of your property, and other properties located within a Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA), and this may change the value of your property or other properties located in the SFHA.

On May 3, 2021 at 6:30 PM, the Columbia County Planning Commission will hold a public hearing to make a recommendation to the Board of Commissioners regarding adoption of Ordinance No. 2021-2, In the Matter of Amending the Columbia County Zoning Ordinance, Section 1100, Flood Hazard Overlay Zone, to Adopt the State of Oregon 2019 Model Flood Hazard Management Ordinance and Comply with the National Flood Insurance Program Regulations. During the COVID-19 global pandemic, the Columbia County Planning Commission will be holding their public hearing via virtual format. Please use the links below if you wish to participate in the public hearing through either the online platform or by telephone.

**From your computer, tablet or smartphone:** <https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/512758765>

**Dial in using your phone:** United States (Toll Free): [1 866 899 4679](tel:18668994679) or

United States: [+1 \(571\) 317-3116](tel:+15713173116)

**Access Code:** 512-758-765

The proposed amendments are available for inspection in the Land Development Services Department (LDS) at the Columbia County Courthouse located at 230 Strand Street, St. Helens, Oregon. Please note, due to the COVID-19 global pandemic you must call 503-397-1501, Extension 1 to schedule an appointment prior to visiting the Courthouse. A copy of the proposed amendment may be purchased at the LDS office at a cost of \$0.25 per page. A copy of the proposed amendments can also be obtained by visiting our website at:

<https://www.columbiacountyor.gov/departments/landdevelopment/planning>

For additional information concerning these amendments proposed in Ordinance No. 2021-2, you may call the Columbia County Department of Land Development Services at (503) 397-1501, Extension 1 and ask to speak with Planning Manager, Matt Laird or LDS Director, Karen Schminke.

COLUMBIA COUNTY  
LAND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES  
Planning Division  
COURTHOUSE  
ST. HELENS, OREGON 97051  
Phone: (503) 397-1501 Fax: (503) 366-3902

March 26, 2021

**REFERRAL AND ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

**To:** City of St Helens

On May 3, 2021 at 6:30 PM, the Columbia County Planning Commission will hold a public hearing to make a recommendation to the Board of Commissioners regarding adoption of Ordinance No. 2021-2, In the Matter of Amending the Columbia County Zoning Ordinance, Section 1100, Flood Hazard Overlay Zone, to Adopt the State of Oregon 2019 Model Flood Hazard Management Ordinance and Comply with the National Flood Insurance Program Regulations. During the COVID-19 global pandemic, the Columbia County Planning Commission will be holding their public hearing via virtual format. Please use the links below if you wish to participate in the public hearing through either the online platform or by telephone.

**From your computer, tablet or smartphone:** <https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/512758765>

**Dial in using your phone:** United States (Toll Free): [1 866 899 4679](tel:18668994679) or  
United States: [+1 \(571\) 317-3116](tel:+15713173116)

**Access Code:** 512-758-765

**THIS APPLICATION IS FOR:** ☐ Administrative Review; ☒ Planning Commission, Hearing Date: **May 3, 2021**

**PLEASE RETURN BY:** **04/05/2021**

**Planner:** **Matt Laird**

The enclosed application is being referred to you for your information and comment. Your recommendation and suggestions will be used by the County Planning Department and/or the Columbia County Planning Commission in arriving at a decision.

Your prompt reply will help us to process this application and will ensure the inclusion of your recommendations in the staff report. Please comment below.

1. ☐ We have reviewed the enclosed application and have no objection to its approval as submitted.
2. ☐ Please see attached letter or notes below for our comments.
3. ☐ We are considering the proposal further, and will have comments to you by \_\_\_\_\_.
4. ☐ Our board must meet to consider this; we will return their comments to you by \_\_\_\_\_.
5. ☐ Please contact our office so we may discuss this.
6. ☐ We recommend denial of the application, for the reasons below:

COMMENTS: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



**From:** [Jennifer Dimsho](#)  
**To:** [Jacob Graichen](#)  
**Subject:** April Planning Department Report  
**Date:** Monday, April 26, 2021 12:34:24 PM

---

Here are my additions to the April Planning Department Report.

## GRANTS

1. **OPRD - Local Government Grant – Campbell Park Improvements** (\$187k) includes replacement of four existing tennis courts and two basketball courts with two tennis flex courts and one flex sport court, adds a picnic viewing area, improves natural stormwater facilities, expands parking, and improves ADA access. Grant deadline is October 2021. Soil conditions are requiring a different approach to ensure that the concrete pad will not settle. Sue is working with a Geotech and a contractor to apply a concrete amendment to the stabilize the soil. Anticipated retention area will be planted in October after SBWC native plant sale on October 9. Coordinating with Shanna on volunteer day for plantings.
2. **CDBG- Columbia Pacific Food Bank Project** – Selected JH Kelly for \$1.6 million construction bid. Demolition mostly complete. Tracking all requests for information and submittals to ensure questions are answered. Tracking all invoices, and coordinating with grant manager on reimbursement requests and quarterly reports to the state. Project to be completed by December 2021.
3. **Safe Routes to School - Columbia Blvd. Sidewalk Project** – Construction timeline provided by David Evans, who is working through design/engineering process. Worked through change to schedule to allow an additional year for bidding the project to allow the County to replace a culvert which collapsed in 2020 during a heavy rainstorm. New schedule has bidding of the project in January 2022, with construction occurring Summer 2022.
4. **Business Oregon – Infrastructure Finance Authority** – Application for a low-interest loan to fund the streets, utilities, and Riverwalk on the Riverfront property. Resolution to apply approved by Council on 3/17. Submitted a full application in early March for board approval in June 2021.
5. **Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB)** – Awarded grant (approximately \$12k) to the Scappoose Bay Watershed Council in a partnership with the City for natural enhancements of the 5<sup>th</sup> Street trail and Nob Hill Nature Park. Continued tracking all in-kind contributions from the City on this effort.
6. **OPRD – Local Government Grant Program** – 500k request submitted back in May 2020 for Riverwalk construction. Our project was recommended for approval for 338k! Less than 30% of the projects were successful and our project was right at the cut off line, which is why we were awarded less than our request. Grant agreements signed and authorized by Council.

## MISC

7. **Bennett Building** (Water Department/ UB) – Windows anticipated to be delivered and installed late April/early May.
8. **Riverwalk Design/Engineering Consulting Services** – Kicked off the project with the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) on 4/14. Attended kickoff for Signage Interpretation

- Scope of Work on 4/20. Created a list of signage focus group attendees and invited them to 3 signage meetings through June. Attended the first Communications Team Meeting to plan for the first Open House on 5/19. Online survey and hardcopy surveys at Columbia View Park stage to go live 5/12 – 5/26. Reviewed and provided feedback on survey materials, open house presentation materials, and press/outreach materials. Attended Kickoff Meeting for the Streets/Utilities Project on 4/21.
9. **Millard Road City-Owned Property Request for Proposals** - RFP approved by Council on 4/21. Advertised and published RFP on 4/22 and in the Oregon DJC on 4/23 & 4/26. RFP will close on 6/11. I will compile any questions received and issue an addenda summarizing answers by 5/28.
  10. **Waterfront Video Project** – Attended regular meetings with production team. Attended first filming which involved an interview RE the Riverwalk/Veneer site.
  11. **Urban Renewal Agency** – Prepared for URA Budget adoption meetings (4/27) and the 1<sup>st</sup> URA meeting in 2021 (5/5).
  12. **Semi-Annual Planning Department Report** – Prepared for and presented the Planning Department Report to Council on 4/21.
  13. **Waterfront Tours** - Attended 2 tours with John Walsh with two potential Master developers of the Riverfront site.

Jenny Dimsho, AICP  
Associate Planner / Community Development Project Manager  
City of St. Helens  
(503) 366-8207  
[jdimsho@ci.st-helens.or.us](mailto:jdimsho@ci.st-helens.or.us)