

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



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

**Date:** 09.28.2021

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—NOTEWORTHY ADMINISTRATIVE DECISIONS**

The lot line adjustment for the [former] Armstrong site at 1645 Railroad Avenue is complete. As a reminder, this was to separate pollution remedied uplands from the not so pollution remedies lowlands. This is an important step towards the sale and reuse of the upland (developed) portion of this long-time industrial site.

## **PLANNING ADMINISTRATION—PREAPPLICATIONS MEETINGS**

Had a preliminary Q&A meeting for potential right-of-way vacations around 90 Columbia Boulevard.

## **PLANNING ADMINISTRATION—MISC.**

Authorized removal of about three smallish trees within a sensitive lands protected are behind property addressed as 35111 Roberts Lane. One was leaning well into the property and other had dead tops. Allowed removal as an imminent hazard.

Prepared maps and legal descriptions for Oregon Dept. of Revenue preliminary review for two more annexations (following four last month). One is vacant and 12 acres (though partly encumbered by wetlands) and will mostly likely result in a residential subdivision. However, determining zoning as part of the annexation is the first order of business. There will be a number of options for zoning for Planning Commission and City Council consideration. The other are a couple commercial lots (with a home) off US30 just a bit north of Les Schwab Tires.

The marijuana dispensary at 100 St. Helens Street was authorized to open this month. Some of you may recall how tumultuous the original land use approval was. The Planning Commission denied the Conditional Use Permit, which was appealed to the Council who approved it and was then appealed to LUBA who upheld the Council's approval.

Effective January 1, 2022 HB 2560 requires public meetings to allow for virtual participation. The city will implement this now. This resulted in some busy work this month updating our legal notice templates for land use matters.

Continue to review information as part of the city's water, sanitary sewer and storm sewer master plan update, managed by the Engineering Department.

## **DEVELOPMENT CODE ENFORCEMENT**

In the June and July department reports, I mentioned an unlawful structure case on the 400 Block of Greycliffs Drive. Asking that code enforcement issue a citation since no progress has been made. This is the second of such request from code enforcement, the first of which was last month.

264 N. Columbia River Highway was mentioned in last month's report. Enforcement correspondence sent last month and some contact with the "tenant" has been made. Neither owner or tenant are local folks.

1771 Columbia Boulevard has unwanted occupants who are contributing to blight on this block. Staff (building, planning, and code enforcement) have been in contact with the owner as this matter is handled.

Not Development Code related but helped city's prosecuting attorney with a trespassing case.

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

September 14, 2021 meeting (outcome): The normal meeting was cancelled. Instead, the Planning Commission and City Council had a joint meeting on September 22<sup>nd</sup> to discuss city goals and such. All Councilors and the Mayor were present along with 5 of the 7 Planning Commissioners. All felt the meeting was worthwhile.

October 12, 2021 meeting (upcoming): The Commission will have at least three public hearings: two annexations and a variance for a lot the city is selling on the 400/500 block of S. 12<sup>th</sup> Street. Term expirations will be discussed. The soon to be adopted sanitary sewer and storm sewer master plans will also be presented to the Commission by the consultant team working on that.

## **GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS (GIS)**

The Port of Columbia County is embarking on an Industrial Land Inventory Project. They are asking for various data and plans for cities, including St. Helens. Much of this is GIS data. Updated the road shapefile to properly reflect the city's street classification for this effort. The Port anticipates completion by December of this year.

Started to create a redevelopment/shadow plat shapefile this month. These are land use restrictions whose purpose is to ensure efficient future divisibility. Problem is that they are done, only sometimes, as part of land divisions. Many of these over the course of years in both the county (within the UGB) and city—where we are at now—makes this challenging to track. GIS helps immensely with this, but only if the data is created. This will be an ongoing process.

Assisted City of Scappoose by providing information on how we create our APO data for the e-permitting system.

## **MILLARD ROAD PROPERTY**

Planning staff continues to guide potential buyer/developer prior to a presentation to council (as property owner, not review entity) for their acceptance of a development concept, which we anticipate in the next couple months.

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

**From:** [Jennifer Dimsho](#)  
**To:** [Jacob Graichen](#)  
**Subject:** September Planning Department Report  
**Date:** Monday, September 27, 2021 1:41:45 PM

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Here are my additions to the September 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 three flex sport courts, adds a picnic viewing area, improves natural stormwater facilities, expands parking, and improves ADA access. Grant deadline is 10/31 likely to need extension. Soil amendment work completed. Concrete work scheduled. Working with Shanna on scheduling planting work for the stormwater area.
2. **CDBG- Columbia Pacific Food Bank Project** – JH Kelly continuing \$1.6 million construction bid. Demolition complete. Tracking all requests for information and submittals to ensure questions are answered. Up to RFI #22(!!!) 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. Reviewed Business Oregon staff report and recommendation in May, prepared presentation for board review/approval on June 4 with John Walsh. Successful presentation and approval for the project! Contracting is underway.
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. First round of blackberry removal completed by contractor in July. Meeting on site 9/28 prior to 2<sup>nd</sup> round of treatment and to discuss project with Shanna D.
6. **Certified Local Government – Historic Preservation Grant Program** – Letters went out to eligible property owners on 5/24 announcing that there is \$12k available with a 1 to 1 match requirement and a grant deadline of 7/26. Only 1 incomplete application received, so Plan B work plan is for the City's Court/Utility Billing exterior roof and cornice work. Worked with SHPO on work plan and began working through scope with contractors to begin soliciting direct bids. Site visit from 4 contractors on 9/24.
7. **Technical Assistance Grant with the Oregon State Marine Board**- To assist with design and permitting of an in-water facility at Grey Cliffs Park. Preliminary conversations for the project include an accessible non-motorized floating boat launch dock with a separate

area designated for fishing. Coordinated survey work to be conducted by OSMB the week of 8/23. Once survey work is complete, a more detailed contract will be drafted for review and approval by Council for the assistance.

8. **US Economic Development Administration (EDA) funding** – Met with Rachael Barry and Aryeann (COLPAC) on 9/29 to discuss potential federal funding sources for transportation and utility infrastructure to and within the SHIBP

## **PROJECTS & MISC**

9. **Riverwalk Design/Engineering (OPRD Grants x2)** – Prepared for and reviewed materials for Council presentation of preferred design on August 4. Handled press inquiries, reviewed press release, and materials in advance of the meeting. Initiated Work Order 2, coordinated TAC meeting scheduling through December 2021. Held our kickoff TAC meeting for 2<sup>nd</sup> work order. Held our 2<sup>nd</sup> TAC meeting focused on the “Recreation Hub” at the south end. NEPA (federal) compliance will require an archeological survey for the tribes consultation. This will be covered with additional grant funds. Environmentally, the project is categorically excluded which means we won’t need a full Environmental Assessment!
10. **Riverfront Streets/Utilities Design/Engineering** – Roadway alignment determined and approved by Council at their 6/16 meeting. 30% design review complete. Initial cost estimates higher than anticipated, working on a phased approach to reduce costs. Discussed pump station area and stormwater treatment in detail. Kicked off “Work Order 1” amendment which added Cowlitz Street extension and deals with the re-do of Strand near the courthouse on 9/23. Design work still anticipated to be complete 1/3/22.
11. **St. Helens Industrial Business Park (SHIBP) Public Infrastructure Design (Phase I)** – Met with Mackenzie again to discuss Work Order 1 in detail. Made suggested changes, and awaiting their response. Scope of work is getting refined before going to Council to proceed.
12. **Millard Road City-Owned Property Request for Proposals** - RFP closed on 6/11. At the 6/16 Council meeting, Council requested an interview/presentation from Atkins & Dame, Inc. Staff worked through BOLI concerns with legal counsel at the request of Atkins & Dame. Staff met with Atkins & Dame & Designer to tweak design so that less variances would be needed. Held follow up meeting with Atkins and Dame on 9/28. Still planning for an October presentation to Council by the proposed developer.
13. **Waterfront Video Project** – Attended regular meetings with production team. Helped coordinate interviews and filming sessions with the production team. Reviewed preliminary videos of interviews and video edits.
14. **PC/Council Joint Session** – Reviewed materials and prepared for 9/22 joint PC/CC session.

Jenny Dimsho, AICP

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