

CITY OF ST. HELENS PLANNING DEPARTMENT ACTIVITY REPORT



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

Date: 02.27.2024

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.

ASSOCIATE PLANNER/PROJECT MANAGER—*In addition to routine tasks, the Associate Planner/Community Development Project Manager has been working on: See attached.*

PLANNING ADMINISTRATION—PREAPPLICATIONS MEETINGS

Conducted a pre-application meeting for a potential improvement to the Klondike building in the Riverfront District.

Had a preliminary Q&A meeting for potential commercial development at US30 / Millard Street.

Had a preliminary Q&A meeting for potential new café in an existing building in the Riverfront District.

Some time spent on a pair of annexations submitted last year that will probably be fully processed this year. One was communicating with the owner about probate and ownership changes; the other starting an above average complex legal description.

PLANNING ADMINISTRATION—MISC.

Proactive projects this month include continuing to work on the 2024 Development Code amendment and we had our kickoff meeting for the Economic Opportunities Analysis (EOA) effort, which is anticipated to be completed and adopted in 2025.

Conducted final inspection for the RV park at 58551 Kavanaugh Avenue on the first day of the month. The land use permit started in the county, but the site has since been annexed. Another project from the last several years done.

Ridgecrest Lots 152-157 are the last remaining undeveloped lots in this subdivision on the far west side of town. Working with an ecological consultant hired by the owner for updated information to address conditions of a planned development subdivision decision in 2007. Issue has to do with wetlands/riparian area rules being adopted and the timing of the development.

Responded to a County referral for a nonconforming use determination at 35259 Pittsburg Road for the city's water reservoir replacement proposal. This is a city project.

DEVELOPMENT CODE ENFORCEMENT

In 2017 an application was submitted to use a property as a storage site along Gable Road. A fence was built, but the application to the County was withdrawn. Towards the end of last year, the site started to be used for storage despite conversations with County and City staff. Not having any progress, I filed a complaint with the County. The site is on the west side of 2130 Gable Road. There seems to be movement of cooperation as of the date of this memo.

An unlawful use of land / unpermitted fill issue for a vacant on N. 14th Street finally came to a conclusion after the issue started in 2013 and lasted through several owners. The current one, finalized a fill permit originated by a previous owner. 2013 is not a misprint! This will be a good example—with photos—of residential zoning in the next semi-annual report.

City Administrator requested we deal with the damaged O'Reilly Auto Parts sign. Its state of disrepair for at least 90 days triggers certain code provisions. Hoping that sending correspondence to the corporate office will result in action to remove or repair the sign.



PLANNING COMMISSION (& acting HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION)

February 13, 2024 meeting (outcome): The Commission approved a Variance to allow a walking path closer to a windowed wall than normally allowed. This is for development underway in the Houlton area.

The Commission considered the recommendations of the Commission's interview sub-committee and agreed with selecting the two candidates. A Commissioner who will be generally unavailable after April (and why two candidates were selected instead of one) resigned effective at the end of this meeting.

The Commission also discussed this year's code amendments.

As the Historic Landmarks Commission, they considered revisions to a previously approved Historic Resource Review for the John Gumm School.

March 12, 2024 meeting (upcoming): At a minimum, the Commission has three public hearings including a couple of yard (setback) variances and an appeal of a 3-parcel partition/lot line adjustment. The other is an Historic Resource Review which they will review, *as the Historic Landmarks Commission*, for modifications to the historic resource at 175 S. 1st Street.

GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS (GIS)

Data updates relates to recent Comprehensive Map and Zoning Map amendments.

Quarterly data updates.

MILLARD ROAD PROPERTY

Chase road easement agreement originated in 2009 with an 11-year window for development to occur to vest the easement. This is an access easement from the western boundary of the Millard Road property to the Chase Road right-of-way. We extended this for two years in 2020. Still no development. It was extended again in 2022 for two more years, making the next deadline March 31, 2024. Still no development, yet. Speaking with the grantor again towards the end of this month, no more extensions will be granted but this doesn't mean a new easement can't be negotiated in the future. Although the access easement will be moot in a month, there is also a utility easement reserved that does not have a timeline to vest, so we still have some tools to facilitate urban development in this area.

From: [Jennifer Dimsho](#)
To: [Jacob Graichen](#)
Subject: February Planning Department Report
Date: Friday, February 23, 2024 1:17:15 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

Here are my additions to the February Planning Department Report.

GRANTS

1. **Business Oregon – Infrastructure Finance Authority** – Low-interest loan for Streets & Utilities Project and Riverwalk improvements. Provided updates to loan officer. Compiled invoices and submitted our 2nd loan disbursement request. Received confirmation that this was received/processed.
2. **Riverwalk Project (OPRD Grants x2)** – Final CDs received on 2/2, bidding open on 2/7 and anticipated to close on 3/7. Held pre-bid meeting on 2/15. 5 contractors are currently on the planholders list. Mayer/Reed contract extension approved by Council on 2/20. Working with County on an agreement to use County's parking lot as the construction access into Columbia View Park.
3. **Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)** – \$2.5 million grant award to fund design/engineering/permitting for the City's Sanitary Sewer Improvement Project which 3 sanitary sewer basins identified as deficient in the adopted Wastewater Master Plan. Consor contract approved on 2/21 by Council after meeting to discuss local land use and environmental permitting required. Working with CRPUD to get a triangular-shaped property annexed into the City which contains City sewer to be upsized as part of this project near US 30.
4. **CLG Historic Preservation Grant Program** – SHPO Certified Local Government Program. Received our contract for 17k. State approved work plan. Executed contract with property owners. Project to be completed by July 31, 2024.
5. **DLCD Technical Assistance Program** – 60k will fund a new Economic Opportunities Analysis (EOA). Contract approved with the state and with our consultants. Project kickoff held on 2/14. Provided initial baseline GIS data and signed an authorization form to gather economic data on behalf of the City. Began monthly project check-ins.
6. **ODOT Community Paths Program: St. Helens Scappoose Trail Refinement Project** – 405k to study a trail route refinement project (30% design) from St. Helens to Scappoose. Award is \$363,407, with a match of around 42k split between Scappoose, the County, and us. We finally received our draft/initial contract from ODOT after waiting since November 2023. I provided a series of questions to ODOT regarding the draft contract. Working on Draft IGAs with County and Scappoose to cover match and project coordination. Working on scoping with ODOT and scheduling scoping meetings with County and Scappoose.
7. **Travel Oregon Grant Program – Received 100k grant to fund ADA component of the Riverwalk Project** - Thanks to Columbia Economic Team and our Regional Destination

Marketing Organization for providing support. Received 50% of the grant as contract terms require.

8. **ODOT TGM Program: Transportation Systems Plan** – Assisting with planning process. ODOT says it could be ~6 months before we see movement on this project. Coordinated & attended another meeting with a contractor interested in the project.

PROJECTS & MISC

9. **Riverfront Streets/Utilities Project** – Attending weekly check-ins. Pump station just needs generator. Bluff trail construction is moving along. Tualatin staircase/bluff trailhead under construction. North and south water quality swales underway. Undergrounding at 1st Street and St. Helens Street design complete. 2 contractors provided bids on 2/22. Engineering is preparing contract with lowest bidder for approval at 3/6 Council meeting.
10. **Urban Renewal Agency** – Prepared for a URA Basics & Budget Overview meeting held on 2/7. Elaine Howard provided a URA 101 presentation, while John, Gloria, and I provided background on our adopted URA Plan and upcoming FY 24-25 budget process.
11. **US Census Boundary & Annexation Survey 2023** – This is an annual survey where we provide GIS shapefile updates of any changes to the City limits boundaries. In our case, this is usually a few annexations which were fully processed by Ordinance the following year. Our responses were due by March 1 in order to be included in the American Community Survey & Population Estimates Program. They have detailed methodology for creating the shapefile using their data and uploading it into their secure system. We received confirmation that they received our submittal.

Jenny Dimsho, AICP | Community Development Project Manager

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