



PLANNING COMMISSION

Tuesday, August 13, 2024, at 6:00 PM

APPROVED MINUTES

Members Present: Chair Dan Cary
Vice Chair Jennifer Shoemaker
Commissioner David Rosengard
Commissioner Scott Jacobson
Commissioner Charles Castner
Commissioner Ginny Carlson
Commissioner Brooke Sisco

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: City Planner Jacob Graichen
Associate Planner Jenny Dimsho
Community Development Admin Assistant Christina Sullivan
City Councilor Mark Gunderson

Others: Steve Toschi
Lenore Thawley
Dave Innocenti
Carmel Carrasco

CALL TO ORDER & FLAG SALUTE

TOPICS FROM THE FLOOR (Not on Public Hearing Agenda): Limited to five minutes per topic

There was no topics from the floor.

CONSENT AGENDA

A. **Planning Commission Minutes Dated June 11, 2024**

Motion: Upon Vice Chair Shoemaker's motion and Commissioner Rosengard's second, the Planning Commission unanimously approved the Draft Minutes dated June 11, 2024, as written. [AYES: Vice Chair Shoemaker, Commissioner Sisco, Commissioner Jacobson, Commissioner Rosengard, Commissioner Castner, Commissioner Carlson; NAYS: None]

B. **Joint City Council & Planning Commission Minutes Dated June 12, 2024**

Motion: Upon Commissioner Jacobson's motion and Commissioner Carlson's second, the Planning Commission unanimously approved the Draft Minutes dated June 12, 2024, as written. [AYES: Vice Chair Shoemaker, Commissioner Sisco, Commissioner Jacobson, Commissioner Rosengard, Commissioner Castner, Commissioner Carlson; NAYS: None]

PUBLIC HEARING AGENDA (times are earliest start time)

C. **6:05 p.m. St. Helens Development Code and Comprehensive Plan amendments (file CPZA.1.24) in response to Measure 109 (2020) regarding psilocybin land uses, House Bill 3109 (2021) regarding childcare land uses and other**

"housekeeping" amendments, validity periods for land use decisions in particular – City of St. Helens

Chair Dan Cary opened the Public Hearing at 6:03 p.m. There were no ex-parte contacts, conflicts of interests, or bias in this matter.

City Planner Jacob Graichen presented the staff report dated August 6, 2024. Graichen briefly discussed all the code amendments discussed this year, but noted this hearing was just for the non-residential portions of the new code amendments. He mentioned the City Council had discussed holding off on moving forward with some, but he clarified that some had to be worked on due to time constraints.

He talked about Measure 109, that legalized psilocybin for mental health purposes in the state. He said as allowed by the state legislation there was a two-year moratorium period for cities to figure out how to move forward. He said that moratorium period will end at the end of the year for St. Helens. He mentioned based on the joint City Council and Planning Commission meetings, where this measure was discussed, they decided to make it a conditional use and to keep the psilocybin service centers separate from where the psilocybin is produced. He also mentioned they discussed allowing this as a conditional use in all districts except the Riverfront District.

He also discussed the state bill that updated the childcare facility rules. He said this bill prohibits being too strict with the more commercial side of childcare verses the ones done in residential homes, which have been generally immune from land use law for many years. He said this would allow childcare centers in the industrial areas and there were some exemptions and definitions added to align with the house bill.

He also discussed the other "housekeeping" items that would be included in this round of code amendments.

In Favor

No one spoke in favor of the application.

In Neutral

Toschi, Steve. Toschi was called to speak. He said they needed to be very careful in talking about the Columbia Community Mental Health type housing and clogging our city with those. He said he wanted to be sure they gave plenty of notice to the City and the citizens and the direction that our housing was headed.

In Opposition

No one spoke in opposition.

Rebuttal

There was no rebuttal.

End of Oral Testimony

There were no requests to continue the hearing or leave the record open.

Close of Public Hearing & Record**Deliberations**

Vice Chair Cary noted that these code amendments are strictly non-residential, and have nothing to do with housing.

Motion: Upon Commissioner Castner’s motion and Commissioner Carlson’s second, the Planning Commission unanimously recommended approval of the Development Code Amendments as recommended by staff. [AYES: Vice Chair Shoemaker, Commissioner Rosengard, Commissioner Carlson, Commissioner Jacobson, Commissioner Sisco, Commissioner Castner; NAYS: None]

DISCUSSION ITEMS

D. Update on Floodplain Policy

Graichen shared this was to update the Commission on the updated floodplain policy. He showed them communities affected by the new policy, including St. Helens. He said they had received correspondence from FEMA about enacting interim measures by December with permanent measures by next July. He said the model code was based on Oregon code that St. Helens used about 4 years ago, so should be easier to implement when the new laws are enacted.

He shared some of the different models that could be used to meet the standards.

E. Architectural Review of Signs at 291 S 1st Street – Lightning Treats & Sweets

Associate Planner Jenny Dimsho reviewed the possible architectural changes to this location. She mentioned that sign permits in the Riverfront District require Historic Landmarks Commission review for compliance with the Design Guidelines.

She mentioned that she had started the process with the new business to get the correct paperwork, she realized what was being installed was potentially not in compliance with the sign code. She said the signage was made from corrugated plastic and was adhered to the building and windows with Velcro. She mentioned this was not a normal practice and made the Planning Department question if these were considered a permanent or a temporary sign. If it was temporary, it would not be subject to architectural review.

She mentioned there was a very traditional storefront at this address with transom windows, storefront windows, and a transom above the windows. She also talked about the recessed doorway, the paneled bulkhead and the kickplate on the door. She said there was six panels that had been adhered over these paneled areas. She said the definition of a sign is very broad and her panels would be considered signs. She mentioned that the applicant had worked with her engineer to remove the lettering as a possible way to meet the sign code.

She said the main question for the commission was whether these signs would be considered a permanent exterior alteration. If not, this discussion item was not necessary. If they did consider that to be a permanent alteration, then she would go into details about the sign.

There was a small discussion about the definitions of temporary signs versus permanent signs.

Thawley, Lenore. Applicant. Thawley was called to speak. She shared about her business and why she used the signage that she did. She mentioned the owner of the building supported the signage she had put up as well. She talked about the type of materials she used and how they were designed to last for many years. She said it was a higher end corrugated acrylic and will not degrade in a timeframe they might be used to in a yard. She did say they were affixed in a way that was very temporary, but they like to think of them as permanent. With this design they can remove them easily and have them fixed or replaced to keep them nice. She said they wanted to delight the eyes with their signs and bring smiles to their faces to hopefully create something that was a little magical for the downtown area.

There was a discussion about the materials and the design of the signs.

discussed the different definitions of each and some conditions they would want to set if considered permanent.

Vice Chair Jennifer Shoemaker said she thought this investment into the signage was done well. She felt it met the standards and it looks nice for the district. She did want to be sure there was no precedent set for future signs to be less quality. Graichen mentioned the difference between permanent and temporary signs. There is a vested right with a permanent sign because the “sign copy” can be changed by right, whereas a temporary sign is something intended to go away.

Commissioner Ginny Carlson mentioned temporary signs should be looked at when they are considered blight, but she felt these signs were done well.

The Commission decided together this application was not an example of a permanent sign.

Motion: Upon Vice Chair Shoemaker’s motion and Commissioner Rosengard’s second, the Planning Commission unanimously agreed the corrugated plastic attached with Velcro does not constitute a permanent exterior alteration. [AYES: Vice Chair Shoemaker, Commissioner Rosengard, Commissioner Carlson, Commissioner Jacobson, Commissioner Sisco, Commissioner Castner; NAYS: None]

PLANNING DEPARTMENT ACTIVITY REPORT

- F. Planning Department Activity Report – June
- G. Planning Department Activity Report – July

There was no discussion on the Planning Department Activity Reports.

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

- H. Temporary Use Permit at 2295 Gable Road – Sabater
- I. Site Design Review (Minor) at 144 S River Street - Lopez
- J. Temporary Sign Permit at 2100 Block of Columbia Blvd – Columbia County Fairgrounds
- K. Site Design Review (Minor) at 134 N River Street – Hubbard
- L. Lot Line Adjustments at North Side of 154 S 6th Street & across S 6th Street from 135 S 6th Street – Scholl
- M. Site Design Review at 2180 Gable Road – JLJ Earthmovers, LLC

There was a small discussion on what the City Planner looks at to make these types of decisions.

PROACTIVE ITEMS

- N. Architectural Standards
- O. Vacant Storefronts
- P. The Plaza Square

Vice Chair Shoemaker said she would like to move forward with getting other commissioners set in place to be the chair of the subcommittees for the other items on the list. She said some of the Commissioners had expressed interest in getting involved.

Vice Chair Shoemaker wanted to chair the sub-committee for the Plaza Square. Commissioner Brooke Sisco and Commissioner Castner mentioned they wanted to participate in this committee as well.

There was a discussion of Commissioner Carlson, Commissioner Jacobson, and Commissioner Rosengard working together to move forward on the Vacant Storefronts as a sub-committee.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION ITEMS

Commissioner Carlson asked about an update for the property that cleared trees off Gable Road. She said it looked like there was going to be a storage facility with an access point placed there.. She

wanted to know what frontage improvements are required for these new developments. Graichen mentioned it depends on the development as to what they can require. Graichen said some of the blackberry plants and tall grass can be reported to Code Enforcement for removal.

Dimsho mentioned there was a mistake made for the Certified Local Government Historic Preservation Grant. The owners at S. 3rd Street installed historically inaccurate windows.. Because of this, Dimsho had to negotiate with the state to remove the incorrect windows from the grant.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the Planning Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 7:51 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Christina Sullivan
Community Development Administrative Assistant*