



## PLANNING COMMISSION

Tuesday, July 11, 2023, at 6:00 PM

### DRAFT MINUTES

**Members Present:** Chair Dan Cary  
Vice Chair Jennifer Pugsley  
Commissioner Charles Castner  
Commissioner Ginny Carlson  
Commissioner Russ Hubbard  
Commissioner Russ Low

**Members Absent:** None

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

**Others:** Brady Preheim  
Tina Curry  
Steve Toschi  
Andrew Niemi  
Brett Kahr

Vice Chair Dan Cary called the meeting to order.

#### CALL TO ORDER & FLAG SALUTE

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

**Toschi, Steve.** Toschi was called to speak. He thanked the Commission for continuing to move forward as a Proactive Planning Commission. He said the planning and future of the City should come from citizens that are volunteering their time and them working together to make our city more prosperous. He also discussed the state guidelines for Architectural Standards and said he thought having these in place would encourage the production of housing. He said he thought there was an abundance of affordable housing here and he hoped they would move forward with a higher standard to encourage more design and historic preservation.

**Preheim, Brady.** Preheim was called to speak. He said he would like to see the Commission take on the plaza area as one of their proactive items to help preserve the area. He said it sees a lot of tourists and thinks improving it to make it more sustainable would be beneficial to everyone. He said he would also like to see the Commission set some standards or guidelines to prevent people taking up residences in business storefronts.

#### CONSENT AGENDA

A. **Planning Commission Minutes Dated June 13, 2023**

**Motion:** Upon Commissioner Pugsley's motion and Commissioner Low's second, the Planning Commission unanimously approved the Draft Minutes dated June 13, 2023 [AYES: Commissioner Carlson, Commissioner Castner, Commissioner Pugsley, Commissioner Low, Commissioner Hubbard; NAYS: None]

### **CHAIR/VICE CHAIR SELECTION**

Commissioner Ginny Carlson nominated Vice Chair Cary to move into the Chair position and Commissioner Jennifer Pugsley to Vice Chair position.

Both Vice Chair Cary and Commissioner Pugsley accepted the nominations.

**Motion:** Upon Commissioner Carlson's motion and Commissioner Hubbard's second, the Planning Commission unanimously approved Vice Chair Cary to be the Chair and Commissioner Pugsley to be the Vice Chair. [AYES: Commissioner Carlson, Commissioner Castner, Commissioner Pugsley, Commissioner Low, Commissioner Hubbard; NAYS: None]

### **PUBLIC HEARING AGENDA** (times are earliest start time)

B. 6:05 p.m. Conditional Use Permit at 1955 Old Portland Road – Seaford, LLP

Chair Dan Cary opened the Public Hearing at 6:11 p.m. There were no ex parte contacts, conflicts of interests, or bias in this matter.

City Planner Jacob Graichen shared the staff report dated June 30, 2023. He shared the history of the property. He said it was a vacant site until the early 1990s and then it was turned into a wrecking yard. He said the property was zoned Heavy Industrial. He said the applicant would like to use the property for storage as a business venture which is why it requires the Conditional Use Permit. He said sewer was available to the site, but the water line was far away.

He said requiring frontage improvements was inappropriate from a proportionality standpoint, but that there were some street trees already on the site that the applicant planned to leave in place. He also mentioned that in the Heavy Industrial zone, there is not a minimum percentage area for landscaping, therefore any landscaping requirements would be based on performance needs. He said with this application landscaping could be used for screening.

He said for surfacing, typically open storage yards use gravel. He mentioned the Commission should consider that the area outside the fence for accessing the property is already paved, but there could be a potential for more paving on some of the smaller areas where the proposed conex buildings would be located.

He mentioned there was one building on the property with a permit, but the other structures there were not permitted. According to the applicant, those buildings were dilapidated and would require a demolition permit to have them removed.

There was a discussion about the applicant using more greenery in their screening and providing landscaping along the front of the property due to the visibility of the site on Old Portland Road.

### **In Favor**

No one spoke in favor of the application.

### **Neutral**

No one spoke in neutral of the application.

### **In Opposition**

No one spoke in opposition to the application.

### **End of Oral Testimony**

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

### **Close of Public Hearing & Record**

#### **Deliberations**

There was a small discussion on the landscaping and improving the road frontage. The Commission would like to see some more green shrubs or trees added to the Old Portland Road frontage.

There was a discussion about paving. The Commission agreed that gravel was appropriate.

**Motion:** Upon Commissioner Low's motion and Vice Chair Pugsley's second, the Planning Commission unanimously approved the Conditional Use Permit with conditions of adding trees or vertical shrubs to the frontage area (with a recommendation of Cascara Trees) and not requiring any pavement. [AYES: Commissioner Carlson, Commissioner Castner, Vice Chair Pugsley, Commissioner Low, Commissioner Hubbard; NAYS: None]

**Motion:** Upon Commissioner Carlson's motion and Vice Chair Pugsley's second, the Planning Commission unanimously approved the Chair to sign the Findings. [AYES: Commissioner Carlson, Commissioner Castner, Vice Chair Pugsley, Commissioner Low, Commissioner Hubbard; NAYS: None]

#### **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

- C. Architectural Review for Gateway at intersection of S. 1<sup>st</sup> Street & St. Helens Street (City of St. Helens)

Associate Planner Jenny Dimsho presented the memo for the Gateway Project. She shared the Stakeholder Committee met 3 times to refine a gateway feature for the intersection. She talked about the wayfinding signage, landscaping planters with seat walls, and more details to give this intersection the feel of an actual gateway to the riverfront downtown.

She said the committee did not look at color for the arch itself or the text, and so she hoped the Planning Commission could give some feedback on those features.

There was a discussion on the idea of the structure staying low maintenance for upkeep of it in the future.

Vice Chair Pugsley asked about the stainless-steel "rope" and was curious why they did not consider a color that was more in line with the color of the pilings. Andrew Niemi said it was meant to be a standout feature. They talked about using galvanized steel instead. Dimsho said there were a lot of galvanized handrailing used in the district and could go along with the theme. Commissioner Low agreed that galvanized material would be better, as over time it would weather and look more appropriate.

There was also a small discussion about the pilings and how to keep the birds from landing on them and pooping. They discussed if the coloring of the sign would cause more bird poop to be visible. They also discussed ideas for keeping birds off the top of the pilings by leaving them hollow or putting jagged edges on the rim.

There was a discussion on what colors would be more appropriate for the arch and text. The commission liked the gold leaf lettering, but preferred a darker background, such as dark navy blue or black.

The Commission agreed they liked the feature and thought it was going to be a great addition to the Riverfront Downtown area.

Commissioner Russ Hubbard asked if this would go out for bid. He said he felt it should be a separate item to fabricate and install as it would require a specialized professional to make it. Dimsho, said she

was not sure if it would go out to bid. She said they would coordinate with the City's Public Works to make sure it was done correctly.

**Motion:** Upon Commissioner Castner's motion and Commissioner Hubbard's second, the Planning Commission unanimously agreed that this design meets the Architectural Standards and recommended for approval as discussed. [AYES: Commissioner Carlson, Commissioner Castner, Vice Chair Pugsley, Commissioner Low, Commissioner Hubbard; NAYS: None]

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

- D. Site Design Review (Minor) at 795 S Columbia River Hwy – Kendall Construction, Inc.
- E. Sensitive Lands Permit at 2760 Columbia Blvd – Columbia County
- F. Accessory Structure at 330 Tualatin Street – John Soares

There was no discussion on the Planning Director Decisions.

### **PLANNING DEPARTMENT ACTIVITY REPORT**

- G. Planning Department Activity Report – June

Graichen shared that the HB 3115 effort was completed. He had worked with the Police on the notices that needed posted, but all the work was done. He also shared that they updated the map on where camping was not allowed.

He also discussed the environmental impacts and legal issues for building in the floodplain in the Puget Sound area and that there will be a new round of floodplain amendments coming up.

Dimsho also discussed that she was working with the Engineering Department on a new grant for the Transportation Systems Plan and the Engineering Department asked for a letter of support in moving forward with this project. She shared the letter she prepared for them to submit as a group.

Chair Cary asked if this meant we were going to be updating corridor plans that were already in place.? Graichen said they would be updated to meet the new requirements (but TSP's ususaly do not go into detail as TSP refinement plans, like the corridor plans) .

**Motion:** Upon Commissioner Carlson's motion and Commissioner Castner's second, the Planning Commission approved that Chair Cary sign the letter of support for the TGM Grant. [AYES: Commissioner Carlson, Commissioner Castner, Vice Chair Pugsley, Commissioner Low, Commissioner Hubbard; NAYS: None]

### **PROACTIVE ITEMS**

- H. Architectural Standards

Vice Chair Pugsley shared she was able to dive into more research of different standards used in other communities. She was learning about human scale design and other terms she was not familiar with. She also said that she looked into the National Home Buyers association to get their feedback on it. She said that the sub-committee would be able to meet soon and be ready for a presentation to the City Council at the next joint meeting.

She mentioned she was struggling with how to create standards that would have longevity since there was not a lot of enforcement of the guidelines.

Commissioner Carlson also asked for feedback on enforcement for storefronts being used as residential. Graichen said the Mainstreet Alliance has talked about initiating discussion on with code changes that would be able to enforce this. Commissioner Hubbard did not agree that the government

should penalize an owner of a property on how they utilized their space, especially if they are maintaining the building correctly.

**FOR YOUR INFORMATION ITEMS**

Commissioner Carlson asked about the sidewalk project on Columbia Blvd between Gable and Sykes. She wanted to know when the project would be completed. Dimsho said they planned to have it done by November.

Vice Chair Pugsley asked if there were any applications for the CLG program. Dimsho said there were no applicants. She said there were some projects the City could take on if no one used it. Commissioner Carlson said she would like to see them look into improving the plaza area.

There was a small discussion on the plaza and other projects that could be considered.

**ADJOURNMENT**

*There being no further business before the Planning Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 7:54 p.m.*

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Christina Sullivan  
Community Development Administrative Assistant*