



PLANNING COMMISSION

Regular Meeting Minutes
February 8, 2023

Chairman Saylor called the regular meeting to order at 7:00PM. Present were Commissioners Doherty, Sargent, Burns, Kirkpatrick, Fialka, and Caplinger. Commissioners Hamm and Collins were excused. Staff in attendance included Planning Director Clint Spencer, City Attorney Richard Tovey, and Heather La Beau. Youth Advisory Member Elizabeth Doherty was absent.

Minutes

Commissioner Burns moved and Commissioner Fialka seconded to approve the minutes of the January 11, 2023, regular meeting. Motion passed unanimously.

Highland Meadows Phase 2 4N2814AA Tax Lot 102 - 942 E Highland Ave Request to Amend Conditions of Approval

Planning Director Spencer presented the staff report. The developer is unable to secure the pedestrian access easement on property in Highland Meadows Phase 1. The plat was recorded with a utility easement on the property, not a utility and pedestrian easement. The developer requests Condition of Approval #9 be modified to remove the pedestrian portion so the final plat can be approved.

Testimony

Tyler Brandt 469 SW Cottonwood Dr- Mr. Brandt, the developer, stated there was no intention to not fulfill the condition as written. He relied on professionals, such as the surveyor, to do their job correctly. The error was not realized until installing the improvements in Phase 2. The current property owner will not provide the pedestrian easement for any price as he feels it will devalue the property. Per staff's suggestion, he is requesting waiving the pedestrian portion of the easement and has provided a letter from the current property owner.

Commissioners discussed the city's requirements for cul-de-sacs and suggestions for preventing this scenario in the future. While commissioners are disappointed in the process, they expressed appreciation of Mr. Brandt's efforts to comply. Reading the conditions of approval at the time of approving the final plat may help, however the possibility of human error will continue to be present.

Commissioner Burns moved and Commissioner Caplinger seconded to amend Conditions of Approval #9 of Highland Meadows Phase 2 to waive the pedestrian easement requirement. Motion passed.

Façade Grant Revisions

Revisions to the scoring criteria and increasing the match for façade grants are proposed. The purpose of the revisions is to align the verbiage with the intent. Commissioners reviewed each criteria question to discuss alternative wording that would more clearly communicate the desired intent of the questions while still allowing subjective review of the grant application. The following criteria is proposed:

1. Are the proposed improvements designed to contribute to the long-term health of the site and district? For example, landscape improvements are not as durable as masonry.
2. Does the proposal add new aesthetic elements beyond the existing site conditions?



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3. Will the proposed improvements enhance the economic well-being of the downtown as well as the site?
4. Are the proposed elements scaled properly for the site and of compatible color and materials for properties within 300 feet?
5. Will the proposed improvements enhance the value of the property and provide a good return on investment for the district?

Commissioner Caplinger moved and Commissioner Burns seconded to adopt the revised criteria for the Hermiston Urban Renewal Area’s façade grants. Motion passed.

An increase in the maximum amount of the grant match is proposed. Due in part to the increase in the cost of building materials, Commissioners wish to raise the maximum match (50%) to \$20,000. Increasing the amount will require the program to either sunset sooner than anticipated or move funds from other projects to the façade grant program. Staff is comfortable the program will be able to continue with the increased amount.

Commissioner Fialka moved and Commissioner Kirkpatrick seconded to increase the matching cap of Hermiston Urban Renewal Area’s façade grants to \$20,000. Motion passed.

Planner Comments and Unscheduled Communication

A façade grant for a new coffee shop is anticipated next month.

Staff will be applying for a Transportation and Growth Management grant to update the City’s Transportation System Plan. A technical advisory committee will be created to guide the approximately 18-month process.

A strip mall is a potential idea for the area north of E Highland Ave and west of NE 4th Street where houses have recently been demolished. The developer has not submitted any plans.

The Prairie Meadows project continues to move forward. The urban renewal district has been formed, engineering has begun on the infrastructure, and staff continues to work with the developer to make the necessary code changes to allow for the overall development. The goal is to start building homes in 2025.

Adjournment

Chairman Saylor adjourned the meeting at 8:04PM.