



## PLANNING COMMISSION

Tuesday, June 13, 2023, at 6:00 PM

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### APPROVED MINUTES

**Members Present:** Chair Steve Toschi (present only during TOPICS FROM THE FLOOR)  
Vice Chair Dan Cary  
Commissioner 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 Topaz

Chair Steve Toschi was not present at the start of the meeting, so Vice Chair Dan Cary was the acting Chair.

#### 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 handed a letter of resignation to the secretary. He said he joined the Planning Commission to hopefully make some positive changes in the city. He said it had become clear that some of the projects that the Planning Commission had spearheaded, especially ones that he was leading, had resulted in a lot of negative things. He said at this time he was resigning to go in a different direction to help the public. He said the Resolution 1986 that the City Council had passed was not constitutional and since he had already been falsely accused of things, he felt it necessary to step away from the Commission to protect his reputation and support the public in a different way. He thanked the Commission for all the time and effort they put into the city and was thankful for the knowledge they had provided to him.

**Preheim, Brady.** Preheim was called to speak. He said he was glad that Steve Toschi had decided to resign, and he thought this would be good for the future of the Commission.

**Topaz, Steve.** Topaz was called to speak. He discussed his opinion about a tour held for the wastewater lagoon. He shared the City wants to turn it into a waste dump. He said there would be several legal problems if there were failures. He mentioned there was a meeting in December in 2018 about possible uses of the lagoon. He said in 2019 there was supposed to be a public meeting about

the lagoon being turned into a waste dump, but the meeting was cancelled because the State Representatives could not be present. He discussed some reasons why he was taken to the Ethics Board.

## **CONSENT AGENDA**

### **A. Planning Commission Minutes Dated May 9, 2023**

Chair Dan Cary asked for corrections to a portion of the minutes on page two.

**Motion:** Upon Commissioner Pugsley's motion and Commissioner Carlson's second, the Planning Commission unanimously approved the Draft Minutes dated May 9, 2023, with the suggested amendments. Commissioner Hubbard abstained as he was absent from the meeting. [AYES: Commissioner Carlson, Commissioner Castner, Commissioner Pugsley, Commissioner Low; NAYS: None]

## **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

### **B. Architectural Character Review Revision - 353 S. 1st Street (Crooked Creek Brewery)**

Associate Planner Jenny Dimsho shared the final draft of the doors planned to be installed at the new Crooked Creek Brewery building. She said the original door had a single light door with a kick plate, but after doing a little work, they realized the opening was wider than the original door. So Crooked Creek proposed to widen the door with side lights that were made of wood. The door would also be solid wood with a kick plate. She said this same door on the front would be what they used on the side door now as well. Dimsho said before approving the building permit with this design, she wanted to confirm the Planning Commission was okay with these changes.

The Planning Commission agreed they were okay with this final design.

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

### **C. Deliberations of appeal of Sensitive Lands Permit SL.2.23 at N. 15th Street**

City Planner Jacob Graichen confirmed with the commissioners who were absent from the public hearing if they had reviewed the video, minutes and record, and obtained enough information to make the same educated decision as those present at the hearing the previous month. Both commissioners said yes.

Graichen confirmed there were no ex-parte contacts, conflicts of interests, or bias in this matter.

No one from the audience objected to the ability of any of the commissioners to make a fair decision.

Graichen did a recap of the hearing, mentioned there was testimony, and information was obtained about the application during the hearing. He said the appellant requested the record to be left open. During the time the record was open, there was additional written testimony received and it was given to the Planning Commission prior to these deliberations for them to be able to review and provide feedback at deliberations.

He shared the information and conditions that were previously mentioned at the hearing. He felt the application was not fully complete and the conditions would need revised if the commission approved the decision.

There was a small discussion on a tree that was removed.

Commissioner Hubbard mentioned there were other ways to make the retaining wall sturdier and they could consult a designer to help them.

Commissioner Pugsley asked if these plans were deemed complete or what the process was to consider them a complete submittal. Graichen said they tried to condition it to make it more complete, but the appellant asked for a more complete plan to be provided with a new submittal.

There was a discussion about the Geotech Report for the soil on the property, but ultimately no additional geotech was provided by the applicant.

Commissioner Pugsley asked, if denied, what the enforcement would be for the illegal tree removal. Dimsho said it was still an enforcement case and would be addressed with a new application or through a building permit.

**Motion:** Upon Commissioner Carlson's motion and Commissioner Pugsley's second, the Planning Commission unanimously denied the application to minimize impact to neighboring properties and because it was an incomplete submittal. [AYES: Commissioner Carlson, Commissioner Castner, Commissioner Pugsley, Commissioner Low, Commissioner Hubbard; NAYS: None]

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

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

- D. Sign Permit (x2) at 465 S Columbia River Hwy - Portland Sign Co. (Pacific One Bank)
- E. Home Occupation at 58710 Noble Court - 1791 Armory, LLC
- F. Temporary Sign Permit at 2100 Block of Columbia Blvd - St. Helens Kiwanis Club

There was no discussion on the Planning Director Decisions.

#### **PLANNING DEPARTMENT ACTIVITY REPORT**

- G. Planning Department Activity Report - May

Graichen shared there were five first readings for ordinances at the last Council meeting, all of which were from Planning. Three were annexations, one was the street naming, and last was the HB 3115 ordinance.

Dimsho mentioned the design for the Gateway project was started and that the first phase of construction at the intersection of S. 1<sup>st</sup> Street and St. Helens Street could be through the end of the year. There was a small discussion on the construction timelines and the Riverfront Development.

#### **PROACTIVE ITEMS**

- H. Architectural Standards

Graichen said they planned to discuss this item at the Joint City Council Meeting, but it was cancelled. He encouraged the Commission to start thinking about different parts of the standards to tackle instead of taking on too large of a project.

He said they could look at implementing architectural standards by zoning districts and break it down by the area. He mentioned another way to do it was with an overlay zone which could allow the standards to crossover into multiple zoning districts. He also said a third way to approach these standards was looking at the Historic Landmarks list. He also said they could look at the use types of the different types of development (like multi-family).

He did say when considering residential uses, they need to be sure the standards are clear and objective to comply with state requirements.

Graichen mentioned the Commission should have a primary goal on how they want to move forward with the architectural standards for the next Joint Planning Commission/City Council meeting.

Dimsho suggested when the Commission was doing research on other towns that have architectural standards to consider the standards for the Riverfront District the City already has in place that are working. Instead of locating architectural standards for downtowns, she encouraged the Commission to locate standards for residential districts, since that is where the gap is.

### **FOR YOUR INFORMATION ITEMS**

Graichen mentioned the Joint Planning Commission and City Council meeting was cancelled because of such a busy month with activities. He said he was going to suggest cancelling the June meeting permanently in the future, but said it was better to leave them on the calendar for instances when there may not be a busy June and there is time to meet.

Chair Cary said he would like to see more joint decision making to cancel joint meetings and better communication about it in the future.

Dimsho congratulated Commissioner Hubbard for receiving a grant from the St. Helens Mainstreet Alliance for his project on N. 12<sup>th</sup> Street. Commissioner Hubbard shared some of the details of his project and how it was moving forward.

Graichen mentioned there was a vacancy and he asked who wanted to participate on the interview committee. Both Commissioner Pugsley and Commissioner Hubbard volunteered to be on the committee. Chair Cary also mentioned there should be a vote on the new Chair and Vice Chair positions at the next meeting.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

*There being no further business before the Planning Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 7:15 p.m.*

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Christina Sullivan  
Community Development Administrative Assistant*