



PLANNING COMMISSION

Tuesday, September 10, 2024, at 6:00 PM

APPROVED MINUTES

- Members Present:** Chair Dan Cary
Commissioner Scott Jacobson
Commissioner Ginny Carlson
Commissioner Brooke Sisco
- Members Absent:** Vice Chair Jennifer Shoemaker
Commissioner David Rosengard
Commissioner Charles Castner
- Staff Present:** City Planner Jacob Graichen
Associate Planner Jenny Dimsho
Community Development Admin Assistant Christina Sullivan
City Councilor Mark Gunderson
- Others:** Steve Toschi
David Bonn
Sabrina Moore

CALL TO ORDER & FLAG SALUTE

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

Toschi, Steve. Toschi expressed concerns about land use planning that was happening outside of the public view and the Planning Commission's oversight. He said he believed there was a sub-committee meeting to discuss the zoning changes of different City properties, where they drafted a report to rezone Light Industrial land to Mixed-Use land. He said the company that was hired was to look at economic potential of the City land, and he felt their initial analysis was off in their data to support their conclusion to change these lands from their current zone type. He said the Planning Commission should add an agenda item about these items.

CONSENT AGENDA

A. **Planning Commission Minutes Dated August 13, 2024**

Motion: Upon Commissioner Jacobson's motion and Commissioner Sisco's second, the Planning Commission unanimously approved the Draft Minutes dated August 13, 2024, as written. [AYES: Commissioner Sisco, Commissioner Jacobson, Commissioner Carlson; NAYS: None]

PUBLIC HEARING AGENDA (times are earliest start time)

B. **6:05 p.m. Variance at 554 S 12th Street – Columbia County Habitat for Humanity**

Chair Dan Cary opened the Public Hearing at 6:06 p.m. There were no ex-parte contacts, conflicts of interests, or bias in this matter.

Commissioner Scott Jacobson mentioned he had volunteered for the Habitat for Humanity group, but it would not affect his decision in this matter.

Commissioner Ginny Carlson mentioned she was on the Board for the Oregon Habitat for Humanity, but did not have a bias or connection over this project. She felt it would not sway her decision for this public hearing.

There were no objections from the Planning Commission for these Commissioners to participate in the hearing.

Associate Planner Jenny Dimsho presented the staff report dated September 3, 2024. She shared where the property was located.

She mentioned in 2021, this property was a subject for a variance that has since expired. She said the previous owner never moved forward with construction. She said they have requested a two-foot front yard setback. She said there was a storm easement that ran diagonally through the property and a sewer easement on the south side of the property, which makes this property have a unique circumstance for buildable area on the lot. She said the City did not want to have any encroachment into the easement area, so there was a condition on this decision that said no portion of the home, including the eaves, would be allowed in the easement area. They would also be required to get a licensed surveyor to show they were not crossing the easement lines.

She said there were five main criteria for the approval. She shared there was an 80-foot wide right of way with the physical road skewed to the opposite side, so there is 45-feet between the roadway and the subject property's property line.. She said this reduced setback would not look any different because of this big right-of-way area.

She also said they looked at parking, since the reduced setback would affect the driveway space. They wanted to make sure there was adequate parking on site, and the applicant did provide a plan to make sure this was available and would not overflow onto the street.

She said the home would be single level. This would offer a home that would allow for age in place. It would be smaller, because of the issues with the easements, but also to maintain the one-level home on this specific lot.

Bonn, David. Applicant. Bonn is the past President of the Columbia County Habitat for Humanity and the architect of the drawings. He shared all the houses on the subject property's side of the street were single level. He also said this would be an ADA adaptable home to accommodate those with special needs. He said once a family has been selected for the property, they will build the home to fit their needs. There would be a good quality product built on the property to fit in with the neighborhood. He also mentioned if something came up with the survey, they would adjust to make it fit.

In Favor

Moore, Sabrina. Moore mentioned it was a good cause and she supported the application.

Petersen, Kannikar.. She said the Habitat for Humanity tried to purchase the property previously, but was denied by the previous owner, because of the price She mentioned it was a vacant lot and would now be a space to provide a family a home and everyone should be in support of that.

In Neutral

No one spoke in neutral of the application.

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

The Commission felt the staff report addressed the required criteria for approving the setback variance.

Motion: Upon Commissioner Carlson’s motion and Commissioner Sisco’s second, the Planning Commission unanimously approved the Variance as recommended by staff. [AYES: Commissioner Sisco, Commissioner Carlson, Commissioner Jacobson; NAYS: None]

Motion: Upon Commissioner Carlson’s motion and Commissioner Sisco’s second, the Planning Commission unanimously approved the Chair to sign the Findings. [AYES: Commissioner Sisco, Commissioner Carlson, Commissioner Jacobson; NAYS: None]

C. 6:30 p.m. Conditional Use Permit, Unlisted Use Permit, and Variance at 58646 McNulty Way – AKAAN Architecture Design, LLC

Chair Dan Cary opened the Public Hearing at 6:30 p.m. There were no ex-parte contacts, conflicts of interests, or bias in this matter.

Commissioner Sisco mentioned she was working on the power for this property as part of her job, but did not affect her ability to decide.

City Planner Jacob Graichen explained that Columbia Community Mental Health mentioned after this hearing was scheduled, the applicant requested to have the hearing postponed to a later date. Graichen mentioned it did not interfere with the 120-day requirement based on the applicant’s request.

The Commission agreed to continue the hearing to a date and time for certain; October 8, 2024, at 6:05 p.m.

Motion: Upon Commissioner Jacobson’s motion and Commissioner Sisco’s second, the Planning Commission unanimously approved to continue the hearing to October 8, 2024, at 6:05 p.m. [AYES: Commissioner Sisco, Commissioner Carlson, Commissioner Jacobson; NAYS: None]

DISCUSSION ITEMS

D. Architectural Review at 325 Strand Street – Uebelecker

Dimsho shared the new proposal from the applicant for the property. She said there would be a subsequent Site Design Review that would incorporate all the recommendations they made during this Architectural Review.

She shared where the property was located and was recently a subject of a variance. She said they recently received an application for a remodel of the building on the site. She said they want to remodel the entire building in phases, so that the building always remains intact. She said the reason for this is because they want to use the City’s parking exemption for lawfully existing buildings

She said they planned to divide the building into two commercial suites. She said the plan was to take the current storefront, make a few changes it to it, and then replicate that for the other suite to be identical.

She gave some history on the building. She mentioned there was some remodeling done, that did not get finished which left the building open to the elements and caused some serious decay to the facility. She mentioned that once the City projects started, the contractors mentioned they saw some buckling in the building and they did not want it to collapse from the work being done around the area, so the Building Official required demolition of shoring to make sure the building was safe. The applicant decided to shore the building, which was allowed to exist for one year, and now are at that point in time, so they are working to retain the building.

She said there was a question about this application on whether it was new construction, or a restoration of an existing building. Restoration would mean there always needed to be three walls and a roof. She said the applicant does show the three walls and a roof in their phased approach of restoration. However, Dimsho did say the building would be very different after the restoration and very little, if any, left of the original building. The Architectural Guidelines focus on compatibility with the surrounding buildings for new construction and preservation of existing features or the original features for restoration.

There was a discussion on whether this was considered new construction or a restoration of a building.

Uebelacker, Will. Applicant. He shared that the construction means and methods of how they plan to do this was not the first choice for them, but they had been working with the Building Official and City Planner to keep the parking exemption. He said they wanted to have a building that was in compliance with Building and Development Code along with safety standards which is why they want to replace all the walls and roof one by one.

The Commission agreed they considered this as a restoration of a building that would also use the new construction Architectural Guidelines, sort of like a hybrid of both.

There was a discussion about the windows on the storefront. Commissioner Carlson mentioned all the buildings in the Riverfront District had a space between the ground and the window itself for a kickplate. She said there were no buildings with floor to ceiling windows. She said she would like to see some of the core elements be maintained in the design. She would like the style to match the other buildings in the district. The Commission agreed they would like to see a more traditional panel of windows with a panel plate and bulkhead. Chair Cary mentioned that it might be possible for the applicant to have folding storefront windows which are floor-to-ceiling but designed with a kickplate. The Commission was supportive of this approach as well.

Dimsho said they were also going to use a wood siding, or a wood grain texture for the building walls. She also said the door was proposed with a kickplate.

There was a discussion about the transom windows and how they would have a metal awning over them instead of fabric, which was supported by the Guidelines

They also discussed the lighting and wall sconces and how the lighting would be directed downwards towards the sidewalks.

Motion: Upon Commissioner Sisco's motion and Commissioner Carlson's second, the Planning Commission unanimously agreed that this exterior design was compatible with the Architectural Guidelines as discussed. [AYES: Commissioner Sisco, Commissioner Carlson, Commissioner Jacobson; NAYS: None]

E. **Planning Commission Term Expirations**

Graichen said there were two people, Commissioner David Rosengard and Chair Dan Cary, who would have a term expiration this year.

Commissioner Rosengard was absent, so Graichen mentioned they would ask him offline.

Chair Dan Cary said he planned to retire from the Planning Commission after this year.

Graichen mentioned there were several applicants already in the pool, but they would re-advertise for the open position.

F. Sub-Committee Technicalities

Graichen discussed that there was some research done by some other Commissions on the ability to have sub-committees. He said the current law mentions that any government officials who get together, even if less than quorum, to discuss city business, is considered something that should be treated as a public meeting. Public meetings require minutes, notices to the public, staff present, and to be open for viewing to the public both in person and online.

He said, going forward, they would need to research the items independently and then when there is time at the meetings to discuss them with the group in a public meeting.

PLANNING DEPARTMENT ACTIVITY REPORT

G. Planning Department Activity Report – September

There was no discussion on the Planning Department Activity Report.

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

- H. Sensitive Lands Permit at 58640 McNulty Way – Alderwood Properties, LLC
- I. Site Design Review (Minor) at 134 N River Street & 104 S River Street – St. Helens Marina, LLC
- J. Temporary Sign Permit at 2100 Block of Columbia Blvd - Liewer
- K. Home Occupation at 265 S 12th Street – Angulo

There was no discussion on the Planning Director Decisions.

PROACTIVE ITEMS

- L. Architectural Standards
- M. Vacant Storefronts
- N. The Plaza Square

There was no discussion on the Proactive Items.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION ITEMS

Graichen clarified that the group that the public comment given by Steve Toschi, was not a committee meeting in secret. He said it was the team hired to help the City and City Council with their Economic Opportunity Analysis that would be discussed in public meetings to determine how to move forward with the items discussed.

Commissioner Carlson asked about the construction going on around the City and when the office doors would be back open. Dimsho gave a timeline of the construction and shared they should be open at the end of this week.

There was a discussion about the design of the Riverwalk and structural changes happening on the waterfront.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the Planning Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 7:41 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Christina Sullivan
Community Development Administrative Assistant