



PLANNING COMMISSION

Tuesday, January 11, 2022, at 7:00 PM

APPROVED MINUTES

Members Present: Chair Cary
Vice Chair Hubbard
Commissioner Webster
Commissioner Semling
Commissioner Pugsley
Commissioner Toschi

Members Absent: Commissioner Lawrence

Staff Present: City Planner Graichen
Associate Planner Dimsho
Community Development Admin Assistant Sullivan
Councilor Birkle

Others: Jeanne Morain
Vicky Njust
Cyndi Furseth
David Morm
Autumn Oliver
Rhonda Kirtland
Abigail Dawson

CALL TO ORDER & FLAG SALUTE

Vice Chair Hubbard stepped in as Chair for this meeting as Chair Cary was attending electronically through zoom. For purposes of clarity, Vice Chair Hubbard will be referred to as Chair Hubbard and Chair Cary will be referred to as Vice Chair Cary for this meeting only and in these meeting minutes only.

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

Commissioner Steve Toschi read a letter to the public about his excitement and goals that he had to be an active member of the Planning Commission.

CONSENT AGENDA

A. Planning Commission Minutes Dated December 14, 2021

Motion: Upon Commissioner Webster's motion and Commissioner Semling's second, the Planning Commission unanimously approved the Draft Minutes dated December 14, 2021. Commissioner Toschi abstained as he was not yet a member of the Commission at that time. [AYES: Vice Chair Cary, Commissioner Webster, Commissioner Semling, Commissioner Pugsley; NAYS: None]

PUBLIC HEARING AGENDA (times are earliest start time)

B. 7:00 p.m. Annexation at 2600 Pittsburg Road - Morain

Associate City Planner Jennifer Dimsho presented the staff report dated January 4, 2022. She mentioned there are additional letters or emails that were added into the record after the staff report was prepared, and that she had sent them electronically and gave hard copies to all the commissioners. She showed a map where the property was located and that both sides of the property abut City property. She mentioned there were opportunities to connect to the property from five different street connections including, a possible right-of-way dedication area.

She discussed that wetlands divide the property into three main sections for development. She showed the wetland delineation that the applicant had done to help determine what was developable. She showed the first wetland as the creek that runs on the northern end of the property with a 75-foot buffer zone. Then she also showed two other distinct wetland areas on the southern portion of the property with a 50-foot zone.

She said with all annexations, they send out comments to utilities. They received a comment from Columbia County Land Development services that they were support this annexation.

She said the property would need to meet compliance with the Comprehensive Plan which designates this property as Rural Suburban Unincorporated Residential. There are multiple zoning options to consider. With the Comprehensive Plan, there is an adopted Housing Needs Analysis (HNA) now to consider when determining the zoning of this property.

She said there was a Transportation Planning Rule, which requires that any amendment (in this case, zoning selection) that would significantly affect a transportation facility, conduct a traffic impact analysis (TIA).. They looked at the County zoning of R10 and the City zoning options range from R10 to Apartment Residential. If the Commission considered R10 or R7 zoning for the property, there would not be a significant impact for transportation services that would warrant a Traffic Impact Analysis to be done. She did say at the time of subdivision they would require it.

She said the utilities of water and sewer were available in multiple locations surrounding the property and there was significant capacity to serve the property.

She said the Statewide Planning Goals were also reviewed for this property and Goal 10 was the one she focused on. She said it involved the housing crisis in the state and the housing needs in our City. It also discusses the ability to support the broad spectrum of housing availability in both quantity and type. She mentioned this was important because the zoning has different types of houses that are allowed. She showed the Planning Commission a table from the HNA that summarized its findings. She showed that the City did not have a significant need for multi-family housing and that a lower density could be considered for this property. She also showed a zoning table that explained what type of residential development is permitted in all residential zones.

She discussed criterion "e" for annexation approval. Based on the size of the parcel (more than 10 acres), the City would have to show a need for the land if it is designated as residential. She gave a few examples of how the City had shown a need for this property, including housing need at urban densities and transportation needs.

Dimsho also discussed the options of how to zone the property. She said based on the Comprehensive Plan, it allows for the zones of R10, R7, or under special circumstances R5 or Apartment Residential. She said the staff did not recommend the property be zoned R5 or AR due to surrounding zoning and because of the need for a TIA. She said the recommended default zoning would follow the current zoning that surrounds the property of R10 for the northern portion of the property and R7 for the southern portion of the property. She said the Commission could consider the housing shortage, a more acceptable zoning would be to consider R7 for the entire property.

Morain, Jeanne. Applicant. The applicant was called to speak. She gave a history of the property, and the goal of her late family (Comstock), was to develop this site and create a great neighborhood for the community. She mentioned they did not want to see the property developed with high density or multi-family buildings which would create negative impacts to the neighbors of the property. She said she had been in contact with a Land Use Attorney to understand more how the property could be developed. She also researched the Urban Growth Boundary and the Housing Needs Analysis to determine what zoning they felt would best fit their goals for the property. She said she considered the economic impact of the area and wanted to be sure it was developed to where it would be reachable for those who had an average income. She said they have maintained the property for years and they have vested interest in the St. Helens community. She said they had spoken with several developers but turned many down, as the ideas they presented did not fit with the desire of her late family and their goal for this property. She expressed that they would like to see the whole property zoned R7.

In Favor

Njust, Vicky. Njust was called to speak. She is located at the corner of Westboro Way, a street that is proposed to provide access to the property. She said it made sense to be zoned R7 based on the area and surrounding properties. She said she loved the applicant's plan for the property, and she just wanted to be sure they were not discussing a denser zoning. She said the concern arises from a previous subdivision that was higher density that was causing some discomfort to neighbors.

Furseth, Cyndi. Furseth was called to speak. She is the president of the Homeowner's Association of Meadowbrook subdivision, which is the subdivision that abuts the subject property. She said she was in contact with the applicant and felt her idea was great. She said the HOA has maintained the Meadowbrook common space properties and the access easements and thought there could be a betterment of the whole area with this property being developed.

Neutral

Oliver, Autumn. Oliver was called to speak. She shared her concerns about the development of the property based on her experiences with the previous subdivision (Forest Trail) that had been developed adjacent to the subject property. It has created a traffic impact for the neighbors. She said she did not want to see another property developed in a disrespectful way to the neighbors.

Kirtland, Rhonda. Kirtland was called to speak. She expressed her concerns for the development of the property and the potential traffic it could cause for the neighbors. She expressed concern about the wetlands and all the critters that live on the property and that they will be preserved. She also mentioned that the property had flooding and her concern about where the houses would be placed. She shared that she had planted a garden a little bit on the property and hoped the developer would not build a house right up against her property creating no open space.

In Opposition

Dawson, Abigail. Dawson was called to speak. She had a concern about the ecosystems of the the property and how the development would impact the wetlands.. She mentioned that the new subdivision on Westboro Way (Forest Trail) was a disaster and she hoped that this applicant would consider developers that have regard for the neighbors.

Rebuttal

Morain, Jeanne. Applicant. Morain was called to speak. She shared again that they had met with many developers and turned down several as they want someone to carry on their legacy. She said the concerns mentioned above were things she has already considered when choosing a developer. They do not want this property to be developed and cause negative impacts to neighbors. They hope that

when people look at this property and what is developed, they think it is a valuable addition to the St. Helens community.

End of Oral Testimony

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

Close of Public Hearing & Record

The applicant waived the opportunity to submit final written argument after the close of the record.

Deliberations

Commissioner Toschi asked if they could remove the undevelopable wetlands as part of the property when considering the size of the property for annexation. This way, they could demonstrate "need" as required in criterion "e" without having to cite Oregon housing shortages.

There was a discussion about the zoning. The Commission was unanimous that R7 was the best zone to consider for the entire property.

Motion: Upon Commissioner Webster's motion and Vice Chair Cary's second, the Planning Commission unanimously recommended approval of the Annexation to Council R7 on the whole property with the findings of only considering the net acreage for the "need" findings and that R7 in combination with the open space (due to wetlands and their protection zone) would feel comparable to R10 when the property is developed as a residential subdivision. [Ayes: Vice Chair Cary, Commissioner Semling, Commissioner Webster, Commissioner Toschi, Commissioner Pugsley; Nays: None]

RIGHT-OF-WAY DEDICATION OF PROPERTY BETWEEN 2600 PITTSBURG ROAD & BARR AVE

Graichen showed on a map the lower portion of the property which was separated by a wetland. If the property was to be subdivided, the southern portion would need access. He said there are two ways to bring Barr Avenue to the property. He said they could do a Lot Line Adjustment to bring the property to Barr Avenue. They could also do a right-of-way dedication in advance of the subdivision, which is the matter at hand.

He showed the 50-foot-wide easement where the dedication could take place. He discussed the street access standards and showed that the access through this dedication would meet the spacing standards between streets. He gave more explanation as to why this was a logical location to create access to this property.

He mentioned the Meadowbrook Homeowners Association (HOA) President had been approached and was supportive this route.

There was a discussion about the width of Barr Avenue and whether this location could handle the amount of traffic.

Graichen mentioned this decision would be up to the City Council, but he wanted to bring it to them for discussion and to give feedback on the location.

Jeanne Morain, property owner, gave testimony about the easement that was already in place for the property to have access to the property. It is exclusive.

Cyndi Furseth, president of the Meadowbrook HOA, gave testimony that for an access road to go in at the proposed location would be a benefit to the current traffic impact on the subdivision located there.

Vicky Njust, neighbor of the property being discussed, gave testimony that she was concerned about the traffic that could be added to the area and the line of cars that lines up to turn onto Sykes Road.

Chair Cary asked the property owner if they planned to maintain the access for pedestrian access as well as vehicle access. Morain said yes, she did.

There was some discussion about a turn lane being installed and if it might help the traffic impact.

The Commission was supportive of the idea of this property being a right-of-way dedication.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

D. Annual Summary Report

Graichen shared the numbers over the last few years and how busy the Planning Department has been. He said this past year felt that it was back to a more average number of decisions and applications. He said he was thankful for the smaller numbers since there were several large City-initiated projects they have been working on.

E. Chair/Vice Chair Selection

Chair Hubbard nominated Vice Chair Cary to remain Chair for the next term. Chair Hubbard will remain Vice Chair.

Motion: Upon Commissioner Webster's motion and Commissioner Pugsley's second, the Planning Commission unanimously approved both Chair Hubbard to remain Vice Chair another term and for Vice Chair Cary to remain Chair another term. [AYES: Commissioner Toschi, Commissioner Pugsley, Vice Chair Cary, Commissioner Webster, Commissioner Semling; Nays: None]

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

- F. Sign Permit at 495 S Columbia River Hwy – Popeye's (5 Signs)
- G. Lot Line Adjustment at 35005 Sykes Road – KLS Surveying, Inc.
- H. Site Design Review (Minor) at 354 N 15th Street – SHMS/Gillis

PLANNING DEPARTMENT ACTIVITY REPORT

I. Planning Department Activity Report – December

Graichen mentioned there would be an update to the city's Geographical Information System (GIS) data to have more accurate aerial images and information to use. He said they would be performing the aerial photo capture portion of the project in spring during the optimum time for no leaves on trees and angle of the sun.

Commissioner Toschi asked about the Planning Commission being more involved in the planning stages of the Riverfront Development, the Urban Renewal Agency, and more. There was a discussion amongst the Commission about the possibility of more meetings or doing work sessions. Graichen mentioned there were several logistics that would have to be considered before these could be scheduled, but they could start more discussion of these projects by adding them to the agendas of upcoming meetings. The Commission asked staff to add a discussion item of the Riverfront Development to the next agenda. Dimsho agreed that she would present the timeline of the project at the next meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the Planning Commission, the meeting was adjourned 10:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Christina Sullivan
Community Development Administrative Assistant*