



## PLANNING COMMISSION

Tuesday, February 10, 2026 at 6:30 PM  
HYBRID: Council Chambers & Zoom (details below)

### AGENDA

- 1. 6:30 P.M. CALL TO ORDER**
- 2. TOPICS FROM THE FLOOR** (Not on Public Hearing Agenda): Limited to five minutes per topic
- 3. CONSENT AGENDA**
  - A.** Planning Commission Minutes Dated January 13, 2026
- 4. PLANNING DIRECTOR DECISIONS** (previously e-mailed to the Commission)
  - B. Extension of Time-EXT.1.26-305 S Columbia River Highway (Breslin)
  - C. Conditional Use Permit Minor-CUPm.1.26-2360 Gable Rd (Koelzer Construction)
  - D. Temporary Sign Permit-TS.1.26-2100 Columbia Blvd (Amani Center)
- 5. DISCUSSION ITEMS**
  - E.** Cost saving changes to new Police Station design
  - F.** Planning Commission policy, continued
- 6. PLANNING DEPARTMENT ACTIVITY REPORT**
- 7. PROACTIVE ITEMS**
- 8. CITY COUNCIL LIAISON REPORT**
- 9. FOR YOUR INFORMATION ITEMS**
- 10. ADJOURNMENT**

#### NEXT REGULAR MEETING:

#### VIRTUAL MEETING DETAILS

##### Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84901627700?pwd=tkA2iFrI4YLPSCUjtIlzLeh0yo65qq.1>

**Meeting ID: 849 0162 7700**

**Passcode: 874753**

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The meeting location is accessible to persons with disabilities. A request for an interpreter for the hearing impaired or for other accommodations for persons with disabilities should be made at least 48 hours before the meeting to City Hall at 503-397-6272.

Be a part of the vision and get involved...volunteer for a City Board or Commission! For more information or for an application, go to [www.sthelensoregon.gov](http://www.sthelensoregon.gov) or call 503-366-8217.





## PLANNING COMMISSION

Tuesday, January 13, 2026 at 6:30 PM

### DRAFT MINUTES

**Members Present:**

Vice Chair Brooke Sisco  
 Commissioner David B Rosengard  
 Commissioner Charles Castner  
 Commissioner Scott Jacobson  
 Commissioner Reid Herman  
 Commissioner Trina Kingsbury

**Members Absent:** None

**Staff Present:** City Planner Jacob Graichen  
 Communications Officer Crystal King  
 Community Development Administrative Assistant Angelica Artero

**Council Members:**

Councilor Mark Gundersen  
 Councilor Russ Hubbard

**Others:** Nick Hellmich (Zoom)  
 Jay Echternach (Zoom)

**1. 6:30 P.M. CALL TO ORDER**

**2. TOPICS FROM THE FLOOR** (Not on Public Hearing Agenda): Limited to five minutes per topic  
 None.

**3. CONSENT AGENDA**

A. Draft Minutes dated December 9, 2025

**Motion:** Upon Commissioner Rosengard motion and Commissioner Castner's second, the Planning Commission voted to approve the draft minutes dated December 9, 2025.

**AYES:** Commissioner Jacobson, Commissioner Kingsbury, Commissioner Rosengard

**ABSTAINS:** Vice Chair Sisco, Commissioner Herman, Commissioner Castner **NAYS:** None.

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

No discussion or questions.

#### 5. DISCUSSION ITEMS

##### Interview with Patrick Birkle

**Birkle, Patrick** introduced himself as a 33-year resident of St. Helens who previously served on the City Council as well as the liaison to the Planning Commission. He described his background, including his work at St. Frederick's Catholic Church, 25 years in public school teaching (now semi-retired and substituting), and service on various community boards including the St. Helens School Board, City Budget Committee, and City Council.

When asked about the impact he'd like to have on the Planning Commission, Mr. Birkle expressed interest in handling the business brought before the Commission by planning staff while also being more proactively involved in developing items. He noted his interest in environmental concerns related to development, particularly making the community more resilient to climate change and improving areas like the Holton Business District through better planning.

Mr. Birkle shared that his legacy would be helping make St. Helens better than when he arrived, specifically creating a welcoming community with a beautiful waterfront and inviting entrance from Highway 30. When asked about historic preservation, Mr. Birkle expressed strong support for preserving historic buildings and features in St. Helens, including potentially getting the city's staircases recognized as historic features. He noted the importance of supporting property owners of historic buildings through grants and other economic assistance.

##### Interview with Jay Echternach

**Echternach, Jay** introduced himself as a four-year resident of St. Helens with professional experience including 30 years in publishing as VP of sales. His community involvement included serving on the Gresham Barlow School Board, budget committee, curriculum committee, and foundation board for 10 years. He also ran youth baseball programs including Gresham Little League and currently serves as a high school baseball umpire.

When asked about his desired impact on the Planning Commission, Mr. Echternach discussed his interest in being part of a group solving community problems. He noted that he found the St. Helens Building Department to be cooperative and helpful when he built an Airbnb in town, contrasting this with the difficulties builders face in larger cities. He expressed his desire to contribute to maintaining this cooperative approach.

Mr. Echternach highlighted his sales background as bringing problem-solving skills to the Commission. He emphasized his experience dealing with complex information and working with the public to find common ground. He also mentioned his current service on the St. Helens Library Board.

##### Deliberations

All commissioners agreed both candidates were excellent choices. After discussion about the relative strengths of each candidate, some commissioners noting Mr. Echternach's professional background and others highlighting Mr. Birkle's institutional knowledge and experience, a vote was taken.

**Motion:** Upon Commissioner Jacobson's motion and Commissioner Rosengard's second, the Planning Commission moved to recommend Patrick Birkle to the City Council for appointment to the Planning Commission.

**AYES:** Commissioner Castner, Commissioner Rosengard, Commissioner Jacobson, Commissioner Reid, Commissioner Kingsbury **NAYS:** None.

### **Chair and Vice Chair Appointments**

**Motion:** Upon a motion by Commissioner Castner, seconded by Commissioner Rosengard, the Planning Commission appointed Vice Chair Brooke Sisco as Chair of the Planning Commission.

**AYES:** Commissioner Castner, Commissioner Rosengard, Commissioner Jacobson, Commissioner Reid, Commissioner Kingsbury **NAYS:** None.

**Motion:** Upon Commissioner Jacobson's motion, seconded by Commissioner Castner, the planning Commission to appoint Commissioner Rosengard to Vice Chair of the Planning Commission.

**AYES:** Commissioner Castner, Commissioner Jacobson, Commissioner Reid, Commissioner Kingsbury  
**NAYS:** None.

### **End of Year Summary Report**

City Planner Graichen presented the end of year report with numbers from the past 10 years. He noted that 2025 had seen fewer applications than typical, with only about 80 land-use files compared to the 96 per year average files over the past decade. The lower numbers were attributed to less development happening now, which Graichen suggested might be a good thing given current staffing levels.

### **Joint Planning Commission/City Council Meetings Update**

Graichen reported that when the Planning Commission's preference for annual joint meetings with the City Council was presented, Mayor Massey felt strongly that at least two meetings per year would be beneficial. The Council subsequently scheduled joint meetings for March and September for 2026.

## **6. PROACTIVE ITEMS**

F. Architectural Standards

No updates provided

G. Vacant and Underutilized Storefronts

Commissioner Jacobson reported that he had recently started working on this issue again and hoped to provide more information at the next meeting.

## **7. CITY COUNCIL LIAISON REPORT**

Councilor Hubbard reported on the waterfront development negotiations with Romano. He explained that while the process might take approximately five years to get something built, the developers were working on conceptual plans and would be providing more details in about three weeks.

Councilor Hubbard also provided an update on the police station project, reporting that the City now has a lease on the property which will turn into a purchase. The site has been cleaned and vacated, and it is ready for demolition this year with construction to follow.

## **8. FOR YOUR INFORMATION ITEMS**

## **9. ADJOURNMENT**

*There being no further business before the Planning Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 8:04p.m.*

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Angelica Artero*

*Community Development Administrative Assistant*



# CITY OF ST. HELENS PLANNING DEPARTMENT

# M E M O R A N D U M

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**TO:** Planning Commission  
**FROM:** Jacob A. Graichen, AICP, City Planner  
**RE:** Proposed design modification for the new Police Station at 1771 Columbia Boulevard  
**Conditional Use Permit CUP.2.25**  
**DATE:** January 27, 2026

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The Planning Commission approved the above referenced Conditional Use Permit for a new police station in the Houlton Business District in December 2025. The decision was not appealed and was final as of December 30, 2025.

Since then, Mackenzie (the city's design consultant team) has proposed some modifications as cost saving measures. Please see [attached](#) memo from Mackenzie and notated site plan.

Given the Commission's recent review and to maximize transparency, I wanted you to see these to provide an opportunity to express concern, support, input, etc.

My comments about the four proposed modifications:

1. **Reduction of east planter area.** The planter at the corner of Columbia Boulevard and S. 17<sup>th</sup> Street is being reduced in size along S. 17<sup>th</sup> Street. The Conditional Use Permit approval was not dependent on this feature, and it is still a planting area. It just reduces raised planting area in favor of at grade planting area.

As such, it is an acceptable change from my perspective.

2. **Omission of concrete surface areas for gravel.** There are paving requirements for areas used by vehicles and for placement of conex boxes (shipping containers) to be used as buildings.

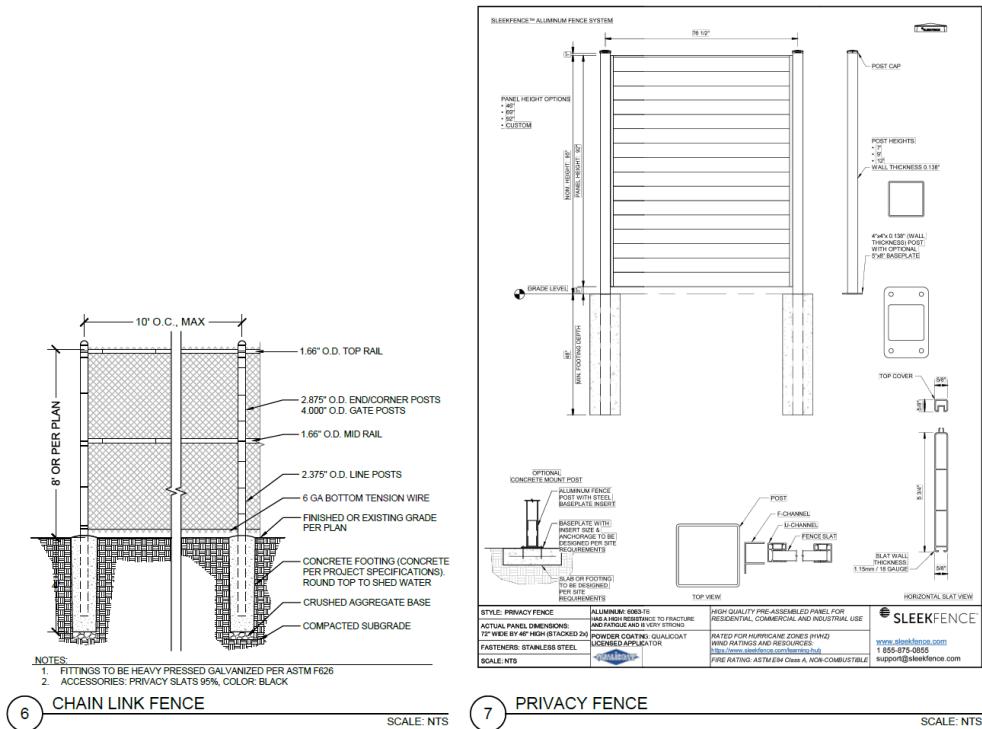
The concrete areas were not intended for vehicle travel, storage or parking and as Mackenzie notes, will still be curb protected, so that avoids the surface area type debate.\* Also, because these are not planter areas to now be gravel, this avoids the bait-and-switch tactic concern.

\*The plans for the concrete slab for a future conex box did not show any curb protection. [As such, staff recommends wheel stops for the parking spaces fronting the future conex box slab.](#)

3. **Use of chain link fence instead of a fancy fence behind the plaza at the Columbia Boulevard / S. 18<sup>th</sup> Street intersection.** The original plans showed two fence types, a privacy fence (i.e., the "fancy fence) and chain link with sight obscuring slats. Now the proposal is to just go with chain link with sight obscuring slats.

The Commission approved the extra tall fence, but it was not necessarily based on fence type, and there are no architectural standards in the Houlton Business District. As such, this is an acceptable change from my perspective.

Two fence types originally proposed:



January 19, 2026

City of St. Helens  
Attention: Jacob Graichen, City Planner  
265 Strand Street  
St. Helens, OR 97051

Re: **St. Helens Police**  
*Conditional Use Permit (CUP 2.25) design modifications*  
Project Number 2210310.11

Dear Jacob:

The purpose of this letter and attachment is to memorialize proposed design modifications to the approved St. Helens Police Station (CUP 2.25) to be located at 1771 Columbia Boulevard. Included with this letter is an updated site plan which graphically represents the proposed design modifications.

## PROPOSED DESIGN MODIFICATIONS

### 1. *East planter area*

The approved design included a planter wrapping around the northeastern corner of the building. The proposed modification maintains the planter but will reduce the length of the planter on S 17th Street by approximately 50 lineal feet. The area of the approved planter wall and approved plant material will be replaced by ground cover or low-level plantings at the recommendation of a Landscape Architect.

### 2. *Surfacing*

The approved design included a concrete pad in the location of a future Conex box (subject of a future application) and a few areas of the secure storage area as concrete. As shown in the attached annotated site plan, four (4) of these areas will be graveled instead of hardscaped. These areas will remain curb protected.

### 3. *North fence*

The approved design included an 8' high decorative privacy fence between the secure outdoor storage area and the pedestrian plaza. The proposed modification will replace this with an 8' high chain link fence with slats to match the fence around the perimeter of the secure outdoor storage area. Landscape screening between the pedestrian plaza and chain link fence will be provided. Utilizing a consistent fence material is intended to create a more cohesive screening and security element.

City of St. Helens  
St. Helens Police  
Project Number 2210310.11  
January 19, 2026  
Page 2

4. *Seat walls*

The approved design included seat walls with integrated benches in the pedestrian plaza. The proposed modification includes replacing the seat walls with ground level landscaping and providing standalone benches in the pedestrian plaza.

Please contact me at 971.346.3700 or [sh@mcknze.com](mailto:sh@mcknze.com) if you have any questions for the proposed design modifications.

Sincerely,



Sid Hariharan Godt

Enclosure(s): Attachment A – Annotated Site Plan

c: John Walsh – City of St. Helens  
David Lintz – OTAK  
Adrienne Linton, Jeff Humphreys, Bailey Currier, Nicole Ferreira – Mackenzie





# CITY OF ST. HELENS PLANNING DEPARTMENT

# MEMORANDUM

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**TO:** Planning Commission  
**FROM:** Jacob A. Graichen, AICP, City Planner  
**RE:** Absenteeism, etc. discussion  
**DATE:** January 27, 2026

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We started this discussion at the July 2025 meeting. At the October 2025 meeting we discussed this further based on draft ideas from Commissioner Rosengard. Based on that discussion and some other things, I have prepared a more refined draft for discussion at the February 2026 meeting.

My hope is we can discuss this as a Commission at the February Commission meeting, followed by a discussion with the Commission and City Council at the March 2026 joint meeting.

## **Changes to SHMC 2.08.020**

This is not something we discussed but is based on recent changes in state law.

## **Changes to SHMC 2.08.040**

Filling vacancies has been beefed up a bit.

For removal it is appropriate that a hearing be initiated by the City Council, as they are the governing and appointing body.

There is a provision to allow the Commission to request a removal hearing. In October we discussed having two consecutive meetings or one meeting with notice to the Commissioner of concern, but I'm hesitant to make things excessively complex. So that language has not been included.

We discussed "nonperformance of duty" much in October. Currently, it can mean missing three consecutive meetings without an excuse. In this draft I have two examples of this for consideration:

1. A Commissioner is inexcusably absent twice in a calendar year for the monthly regularly scheduled meetings. This means they don't provide at least 48 hours' notice of an anticipated missed meeting to staff. I don't like that this becomes another thing for staff to track and felt it should just be two. The first time is the warning.
2. A Commissioner is absent for any reason for four regularly scheduled meetings in a calendar year. The Commission expressed concern about attendance availability overall and four out of twelve meetings is 1/3 of the total possible regularly scheduled meetings. People have their lives to live so wanted this to be reasonable, especially because filling vacancies is time consuming.

Note that this only includes regularly scheduled monthly meetings and not joint meetings with the Council or special meetings that may occur. The Commission seemed to agree with this at the October 2025 meeting.

## **Changes to SHMC 2.08.040**

At the October 2025 meeting, there was a discussion about keeping the chair and vice chair roles rotating from year to year. I've included that language including an "out," if the Commission felt that there shouldn't be a change. This at least will prompt more discussion when it comes time to selected the chair and vice chair.

I also made the chair and vice chair titles gender neutral. The world was different when these provisions were originally adopted in 1978!

underlined words are added  
words stricken are deleted

[...] means skipping text as it reads in the code (e.g., to focus on text being edited in this document)

**Jan. 27, 2026 DRAFT**

## CHAPTER 2.08 PLANNING COMMISSION

[...]

### **2.08.020 Membership.**

The commission may consist of up to seven members. The councilmember(s) in charge of planning shall be entitled to sit with the commission and take part in its discussions, but shall not have the right to vote. The following regulations shall also apply to the planning commission:

[...]

(2) ~~No more than two voting members shall be engaged principally in the buying, selling, or developing of real estate for profit as individuals, or by members of any partnership, or officers or employees of any corporation that is engaged principally in the buying, selling, or developing of real estate for profit.~~ No more than two voting members shall be engaged in the same kind of occupation, business, trade or profession.

*[Editor's note: Oregon HB 3136 (2025) eliminates the "real estate" member provision as long as the Commission has more than five members. Because St. Helens has a seven-member Commission we can strike this provision (assuming all agree).]*

[...]

### **2.08.040 Vacancies and removal.**

~~Appointments to fill vacancies shall be for the remainder of the unexpired term. A member may be removed by the city council after a hearing for misconduct or nonperformance of duty. A member who is absent from three consecutive meetings without an excuse as approved by the planning commission is rebuttably presumed to be in nonperformance of duty, and the city council shall declare the position vacant unless finding otherwise following the hearing.~~

#### (1) Filling vacancies.

(a) Appointments of a Commissioner shall follow the guidelines and procedures adopted by the City Council; and

(b) Appointments to fill vacancies shall be for the remainder of the unexpired term.

#### (2) Removal. An appointed Commissioner may be removed from their position by the City

Council if at a hearing the Council finds the Commissioner has engaged in misconduct and/or nonperformance of duty.

- (a) A hearing may be initiated by the City Council;
- (b) The Commission may request a hearing be initiated by the City Council by an approved motion for such;
- (c) If the City Council removes a Commissioner, that position shall become vacant immediately; and
- (d) For the purpose of this Section, nonperformance of duty includes but is not limited to:
  - (i) A Commissioner being inexcusably absent for a regularly scheduled monthly meeting pursuant to SHMC 2.08.070(1) at least two times in a one-calendar-year period. A Commission is inexcusably absent if they did not provide at least 48-hours notice to Planning Department staff of the anticipated absenteeism; or
  - (ii) A Commissioner being absent for a regularly scheduled monthly meeting pursuant to SHMC 2.08.070(1) at least four times in a one-calendar-year period.

## **2.08.050 Presiding members.**

At its first meeting of each calendar year, the commission shall elect a ~~chairman~~ chairperson and ~~vice-chairman~~ vice-chairperson to serve one-year terms. The chair and vice-chair shall not hold consecutive yearly terms unless the Commission finds it is in the public interest to do so.