

City of St. Helens
Planning Commission Meeting
March 10, 2015
Minutes

Members Present: Al Petersen, Chair
Dan Cary, Vice Chair
Greg Cohen, Commissioner
Sheila Semling, Commissioner
Audrey Webster, Commissioner
Russell Hubbard, Commissioner

Members Absent: Kathryn Lawrence, Commissioner

Staff Present: Jacob Graichen, City Planner
Jennifer Dimsho, Assistant Planner & Planning Secretary

Councilors Present: Ginny Carlson, City Council Liaison

Others Present: None

The Planning Commission meeting was called to order by Chair Al Petersen at 7:00 p.m. Chair Petersen led the flag salute.

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Consent Agenda

Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Cohen's votes were accidentally omitted from the Reinan street vacation recommendation. He requested to be included as a no vote for the first motion and a yes vote for the second motion. His votes do not change the outcome of either motion.

Commissioner Cohen moved to approve the minutes of the February 10, 2015 Planning Commission meeting as corrected above. Commissioner Webster seconded the motion. Motion carried with all in favor. Chair Petersen did not vote as per operating rules.

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Topics From The Floor

There were no topics from the floor.

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Green Tree Acres Tract A Recommendation to Council

Graichen discussed history of the tract with the Commission. He was originally asked by the County Cartographer to look at this City-owned tract in October 2013. In 1998, the Green Tree Acres final plat was approved with a 1' wide spite strip (also called a street plug) in order for the City to control access to future development adjacent to the subdivision. A year later, the development occurred adjacent to the subdivision and the tract's purpose ceased. Vice Chair Cary asked what a spite strip is. Graichen said it is where a strip of property is created to control access. Commissioner Cohen asked how many spite strips or street plugs exist in St. Helens. Graichen said he didn't know exactly, but there are not many. Commissioner Cohen said if there are a number of them and they are not serving a purpose, we should attempt to clear them up too.

Commissioner Cohen moved to recommend to the City Council that the 1' Green Tree Acres Tract A be dedicated as public right-of-way. Commissioner Webster seconded. All in favor; none opposed; motion carries.

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SB 565 Historic Rehabilitation Fund: Letter of Support

Chair Petersen made a few changes to the letter of support included in the packet. Copies of his changes were passed around, reviewed by the Commission, and are included in the archive packet.

Commissioner Webster moved to allow Chair Petersen to sign the letter of support. Vice Chair Cary seconded. All in favor; none opposed; motion carries.

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Acceptance Agenda

- a. Site Design Review (Scenic Resource) at 391 N 1st St. – Garage addition
- b. Site Design Review (Minor) at 2295 Gable Rd. – New bale and pallet storage

Commissioner Cohen moved to approve the acceptance agenda. Commissioner Webster seconded. All in favor; none opposed; motion carries.

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Planning Director Decisions

- a. Sign Permit at 373 S. Columbia River Hwy – Dewey's Sign Service
- b. Sign Permit (Wall) at 500 N. Columbia River Hwy, Suite 505 – Sunrise Signs, Inc.
- c. Partition at 2625 Sykes Road – Stanton Wirta
- d. Sign Permit (Banner) at 2100 Block of Columbia Blvd. – Amani Center
- e. Sign Permit (Wall x5) at 2295 Gable Rd. – pb2 architecture + engineering
- f. Home Occupation (Type II) at 58989 Alexandra Ln – Garage home business

There were no comments.

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Planning Department Activity Reports

There was no discussion.

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For Your Information

Graichen said that the Oregon Court of Appeals will hear oral arguments for the earth removal case on April 14, 2015 at 1:30 p.m. in the Supreme Court Building in Salem. Commissioner Cohen asked how long until a decision will be made. Graichen said he did not know. Commissioner Cohen asked if we will still use the same law firm that we used for the previous hearing and Graichen said yes.

Since we have some extra time, Commissioner Cohen requested that Graichen briefly discuss upcoming land use discussions that may be brought to the Commission in the future. Graichen mentioned the two public hearings scheduled for the next meeting. He also discussed the following discussion items: potentially allowing residential uses on the first floor in the Houlton Business District (HBD) and Riverfront District (RD) zones, the possibility of adding a maximum grade for driveways because a house was recently built with a 39 percent grade driveway, updating the list of primary and secondary historic structures, adopting retaining wall regulations in the Development Code, addressing food service unit (food cart) regulations, and altering the Development Code to make Type I Home Occupations automatic.

Assistant Planner Dimsho mentioned the Parks & Trails Master Plan public hearing for adoption will be in May for the Planning Commission and June for the City Council. Dimsho asked the Commission if they want to see something in their packets about the Master Plan before the hearing. Commissioner Cohen said that would be a good idea. Dimsho also mentioned that the City was recently notified of a successful application to the EPA Brownfield Area-Wide Planning (AWP) Grant Program for \$200,000. Chair Petersen asked if this was related to the Waterfront Development Advisory Committee that formed with the Integrated Planning Grant (IPG). Dimsho said the IPG is a \$20,000 grant from Business Oregon and the Committee formed through that process will help set the framework and guide the process for the EPA AWP Grant.

Councilor Carlson mentioned that the process of street vacations going to the Planning Commission before going to City Council will be discussed at the next Council Work Session. She asked the Commission what they thought of this process. Chair Petersen said he was surprised when he originally discovered that street vacations do not automatically go to the Commission. He noted that the City Council has received a lot of grief for past street vacation decisions because the public felt that reviewing land use related topics is part of the Planning Commission's duties as laid out in the charter. The only reason street vacations had been going directly to the City Council is because it is not specifically mandated by ORS. Commissioner Cohen said that another set of eyes is important and he does not think street vacations should bypass the Commission. The Commission also has a better understanding of how land use decisions may affect other decisions. He also noted street vacation decisions may impact other land use decisions in the future. Councilor Carlson said it makes sense to her that anything related to land use goes through the same process. She is in favor of the Commission reviewing street vacations before the City Council. The Commission concurred. Chair Petersen recommended asking for legal counsel before street vacation decisions bypass the Commission, in case it might leave the City open to a lawsuit.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Dimsho
Planning Secretary

2015 Planning Commission Attendance Record

P=Present A=Absent Can=Cancelled

Date	Petersen	Hubbard	Lawrence	Cohen	Cary	Semling	Webster
01/13/15	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
02/10/15	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
03/10/15	P	P	A	P	P	P	P
04/14/15							
05/12/15							
06/09/15							
07/14/15							
08/11/15							
09/08/15							
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12/08/15							