

City of St. Helens

Planning Commission Meeting

July 14, 2015

Minutes

Members Present:

Dan Cary, Vice Chair
Greg Cohen, Commissioner
Sheila Semling, Commissioner
Audrey Webster, Commissioner
Kathryn Lawrence, Commissioner
Russell Hubbard, Commissioner

Members Absent:

Al Petersen, Chair

Staff Present:

Jacob Graichen, City Planner
Crystal Farnsworth, Planning Secretary

Councilors Present:

Ginny Carlson, City Council Liaison

Others Present:

Carl Coffman
Oscar Nelson
Larry VanDolah
Joe Kessi
Cheryl VanDomelen
Kristy Bills
Jayne Brenneman
Jennifer Plahn

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

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Consent Agenda

Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Webster said she voted on the minutes from the last meeting, but her name is not listed as voting.

Commissioner Cohen moved to approve the minutes of the June 9, 2015 Planning Commission meeting with changes as noted above. Commissioner Webster seconded the motion. All in favor; none opposed; motion carries. Commissioner Hubbard did not vote, as he did not arrive until after the consent agenda.

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Topics From The Floor

There were no topics from the floor.

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Public Hearing

Tater Rental, LLC

Variance / V.3.15

31 Cowlitz St.

It is now 7:01 p.m. and Vice Chair Cary opened the public hearing. There were no ex-parte contacts, conflicts of interest or bias in this matter.

Jacob Graichen entered the following items into the record:

- Staff report packet dated July 7, 2015 with attachments

Graichen reviewed the staff report with the Commission. The staff report findings are divided into three parts: the variance, the site design review, and the architectural review. The variance request is for an exception to the height restriction in order to add a fourth floor to the existing building. The height restriction in the Riverfront District is 45 feet; the applicant is requesting a building height of approximately 55 feet. The Commission will also have to take the Riverfront District Architectural Design Guidelines into consideration when making a decision.

Commissioner Webster asked about the proposed siding of the building and if it was typical of historic structures in the area. Graichen said from an age standpoint, the siding meets the Architectural Design Guideline standards.

Commissioner Cohen asked if any neighbors commented on the additional height. Graichen said no. Commissioner Lawrence asked if neighbors on Nob Hill were notified of the application and had any comment. Graichen said the radius to receive a mailed notice for a variance is 100 feet, so they were only notified indirectly through advertisement in The Chronicle.

IN FAVOR

Coffman, Carl. Applicant. Property Owner. Coffman said he has been very nervous about putting money into the Muckle Building because the return on investment is risky. If he is going to restore the building, get people to come downtown, and increase economic vitality of the area, providing access to the view on top of the building is crucial. He said filling commercial space in other projects has been difficult, but he feels the Muckle Building will be more successful at filling the retail space if he can create a must-see viewpoint on top. He does not have a siding preference and will comply with the preference of the Planning Commission.

Commissioner Hubbard asked what the overhead doors will be made out of. Coffman's goal was to pick something subtle and non-reflective. Coffman said they are installing a black roof, so it will not be blinding. He wants to use muted colors to blend in with the existing building. He plans on using dark colors for the door.

Commissioner Lawrence said board and batten can be a risky choice because it can look very good or very bad. She hopes that it will be a good quality board and batten. Coffman says he has high expectations for the material and the look of the building. The exterior color of the building will match the brick exterior.

IN OPPOSITION

None spoke in opposition.

END OF ORAL TESTIMONY

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

CLOSE PUBLIC HEARING & RECORD

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

DELIBERATIONS

The Commission agreed that they liked the design of the building and that the materials appear to meet the Riverfront District's Architectural Design Guidelines.

MOTION

Commissioner Lawrence moved to approve the variance permit with the conditions as presented in the staff report. Commissioner Webster seconded.

Coffman noted that he would like three foot overhangs to be approved as part of the proposal instead of the two feet presented in the proposal.

The motion was withdrawn.

Commissioner Webster moved to approve the variance with the conditions as presented in the staff report, with the modification of an approved three foot overhang instead of a two foot overhang. Commissioner Semling seconded. All in favor; none opposed; motion carries.

Commissioner Cohen moved for Vice Chair Cary to sign the Findings and Conclusions once prepared. Commissioner Webster seconded. All in favor; none opposed; motion carries.

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Commissioner Lawrence would like the ADA parking space standards to be reviewed by City Council and staff.

Commissioner Lawrence made a motion to recommend that at least one on-street ADA space be designated as part of the Muckle Building development. Commissioner Semling seconded.

Commissioner Webster thinks that an ADA parking space should not be a requirement of a specific development, but reviewed for the entire Riverfront District area.

All in favor; none opposed; motion carries.

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Public Hearing

Jennifer Plahn & Bing Theobald
Conditional Use Permit / CUP.3.15
365 S. Columbia River Hwy

It is now 7:51 p.m. and Vice Chair Cary opened the public hearing. There were no ex-parte contacts, conflicts of interest or bias in this matter.

Vice Chair Cary noted that he has known Jennifer Plahn for several years, but he does not feel that this will affect his ability to make a fair decision. He will also not be voting as he is chairing the meeting.

Jacob Graichen entered the following items into the record:

- Staff report packet dated July 7, 2015 with attachments

Graichen reviewed the staff report with the Commission. The application is to establish a medical marijuana establishment in an existing suite. There were comments from the City's Police Chief related to the business license rules. Graichen said that the business license is a separate matter for the City Council to decide. The Planning Commission is simply reviewing the Development Code aspect of the application.

Commissioner Cohen asked, since a new use is being created at this location, does the Commission take that into consideration when determining the number of required parking spaces? Graichen said yes. The **net** spaces for a new use is what would be required. If the Commission is concerned, they could require the applicant provide a detailed parking analysis, but Graichen thinks the current spaces at the site are adequate per the existing parking standards.

IN FAVOR

VanDolah, Larry. Applicant Representative. VanDolah entered a written packet into the record. VanDolah said that there is adequate parking on site for this new use and they plan on requiring employees to carpool to work in order to minimize parking impacts. They will have a dumpster on site for garbage that will have a bar used to lock and secure the dumpster. He has spoken with neighbors in the area, and they have not heard any complaints about parking. They expect one to two customers per hour. They would like to operate 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. if that is allowed.

Nelson, Oscar. He is a co-owner of Sweet Relief in Astoria. They have been very successful this past year and have zero off-street parking. They have been busy and have had no issues with parking. The transactions are very quick. He would like the Commission to consider that in regards to this proposal.

Kessi, Joe. He said he is neither in favor or opposition of the proposal. He owns rental properties behind Skinny's. He is not sure about the parking. He would like to see a new business go into the area, but he may have concerns with the lack of parking spaces. He would like the record to be left open for written testimony so that he can look further into the parking issue.

Councilor Carlson asked if he notices any lighting issues in the area. Kessi said that lighting is an issue.

IN OPPOSITION

None spoke in opposition.

REBUTTAL

VanDolah, Larry. Applicant Representative. VanDolah said he would like to work with Kessi and is willing to meet to discuss the parking issue further with him if he would like.

END OF ORAL TESTIMONY

There was a request to continue the hearing or leave the record open. Kessi requested the record be left open for seven days. Written testimony will be closed after July 21, 2015 at 5 p.m. The applicant agreed to the record being left open, and will have the opportunity to respond or rebut anything submitted into the record. The applicant's deadline for response or rebuttal is July 28, 2015 at 5 p.m.

CLOSE PUBLIC HEARING & RECORD

The applicant did not waive the opportunity to submit final written argument, since the record is left open for a period of time. The deadline for any final written argument will be 5 p.m. on July 28, 2015. Deliberations on the matter will commence at the regularly scheduled meeting on August 11, 2015 on or after 7 p.m.

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Planning Director Decisions

- a. Accessory Structure Permit at 75 River Way - David & Susan Branch
- b. Temporary Use Permit at 2295 Gable Rd. – TNT Fireworks/St. Helens Band Patrons
- c. Sign Permit (Banner) at 2100 Block of Columbia Blvd. – Columbia County Fairgrounds

There were no comments.

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Planning Department Activity Reports

There were no comments.

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For Your Information Items

There were no comments.

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There being no further business before the Planning Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 8:30 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	CAN	CAN	CAN	CAN	CAN	CAN	CAN
05/12/15	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
06/09/15	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
07/14/15	A	P	P	P	P	P	P
08/11/15							
09/08/15							
10/13/15							
11/10/15							
12/08/15							