

**City of St. Helens**  
**Planning Commission Meeting**  
**December 13, 2016**  
**Minutes**

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

**Members Absent:** None

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

**Councilors Present:** Ginny Carlson, City Council Liaison

**Others Present:** Jeffrey Trinklein  
Terry McGittigan

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

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**Consent Agenda**

**Approval of Minutes**

Commissioner Semling moved to approve the minutes of the November 8, 2016 Planning Commission meeting. Vice Chair Petersen seconded the motion. Motion carried with all in favor. Chair Cary did not vote as per operating rules. Commissioner Cohen did not vote due to his absence from the meeting.

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**Topics From The Floor**

There were no topics from the floor.

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## **Public Hearing**

**Jeffrey Trinklein**

**Variance / V.9.16**

**325 N. 4<sup>th</sup> Street**

It is now 7:01 p.m. and Chair Cary opened the public hearing. There were no ex-parte contacts, conflicts of interest or bias in this matter. Commissioner Cohen said he viewed the site from the right-of-way. No one in the audience objected to any of the Commissioner's ability to make a fair decision.

City Planner Jacob Graichen entered the following items into the record:

- Staff report packet dated December 6, 2016 with attachments

Graichen said the applicant is proposing a setback reduction and an increase in lot coverage. He discussed the variance approval criteria and City Engineering's comments regarding sewer with the Commission, as presented in the staff report. He also mentioned SHMC 17.108.050 (4) which allows a 20 percent reduction in setback requirements and five percent increase in lot coverage for building additions without a variance. He explained that the applicant is proposing to connect the carport to the existing attached garage.

Commissioner Cohen asked how much of the lot would be left open with this proposal. Graichen explained that there will be approximately 53% not covered by structures. The R5 zoning district also requires 25% landscaping, which appears to be met.

Commissioner Lawrence asked if the existence of a new roofed structure will cause stormwater runoff issues for neighbors. Graichen said property owners were contacted about this proposal. He also noted that the proposal is still three feet from the property line. Commissioner Lawrence asked if the building department will also review the proposal. Graichen said yes, if the variance gets approval tonight.

### **IN FAVOR**

**Trinklein, Jeff, Applicant.** Trinklein said this variance is to help with his ability to get vehicles into the existing garage. He said there is a large fir tree adjacent to his driveway, which requires the vehicles to be tarped. Regarding the sewer, it is located on his neighbor's property beyond the fence. When the City has done maintenance in the past, they have used his neighbor's yard on 5<sup>th</sup> Street. Trinklein said if the City did need to use his side to access the line, the structure he is proposing will not impede access because it will be open in the back. Trinklein said he is proposing to enclose the structure with a wall between his property and his neighbor. Regarding stormwater runoff, Trinklein said the property is sloped towards his house, not his neighbor. He also developed an extensive drainage system when he moved in because it is a very problematic area. He installed grates and underground pipes which direct stormwater to the back. On the structure itself, Trinklein said he will have a small eave, so the water will run onto the existing concrete from the roof and towards the drains next to the garage.

Commissioner Hubbard asked if the structure proposed looks like the one in the staff report. Trinklein said no. The structure will match the features of the home. Trinklein said he will modify the siding to match the home, but it will be open on the front and the back.

Commissioner Webster asked if he was going to block the existing garage door with the new structure. Trinklein said it will not be blocked, but it will have a roof structure over it. Commissioner Cohen asked why he chose to attach the structure to the existing garage. Trinklein feels it will be structurally sounder and it will not impact the existing garage door access. Commissioner Cohen asked what the height of the garage will be. Trinklein said twelve feet so that he can store his ten-foot boat. There was discussion about

changing the direction of the gable. Trinklein said this proposal was the least impact to his neighbor that he could come up with. Commissioner Webster pointed out that you do not see the existing garage from the street.

Commissioner Cohen asked why he wanted to attach the structure to the existing garage. Trinklein said freestanding structures have more wind issues and are not as structurally sound. Vice Chair Petersen asked if he built the existing garage. Trinklein said no, every structure was built prior to when he bought the home 22 years ago. Trinklein also wanted to add that his neighbors are not in opposition to the project.

## **IN OPPOSITION**

No one 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**

Commissioner Cohen is concerned that this proposal squeezes too many structures onto a small lot. He would rather see a structure that is open on all sides and not attached to existing structures.

Vice Chair Petersen said that he has similar concerns. When the original garage was built, it was probably difficult to maneuver cars into. He feels this difficulty cannot now be used as a reason to enlarge it.

Commissioner Webster noted that the applicant is not proposing to increase impervious surface. Vice Chair Petersen said that the applicant is still increasing lot coverage beyond the standard. Commissioner Cohen wants to maintain ample open space on lots. Commissioner Lawrence agrees.

Chair Cary said the Commission should think of the attached garage as part of the house since it is unusable as a garage. He suggested that the Commission think of the proposal as just the addition of a carport on the side of a building.

Commissioner Hubbard and Vice Chair Petersen have concerns about how storm drainage would work with the addition of a new attached structure.

## **MOTION**

Commissioner Cohen moved to deny the variance permit. Commissioner Lawrence seconded. Commissioner Hubbard, Commissioner Cohen, Commissioner Semling, Commissioner Lawrence, and Vice Chair Petersen voted in favor; Commissioner Webster opposed; motion carries.

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

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## **2017 Planning Commission Meeting Schedule**

Assistant Planner Dimsho asked if the Commission had any issue with meeting on February 14, 2017. The Commission decided that it would be fine to hold a meeting that day.

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## **Review of Code Amendments for Framework Plan & Historic Preservation**

Graichen said the Waterfront Framework Plan was adopted last week by City Council. There are a number of recommended next steps in that Plan, and adjusting the zoning code is one of them. Graichen said tonight is a general discussion about the upcoming code amendments. He is hoping that the first review of the text amendments will be next month with the public hearing and adoption the following month.

Graichen discussed the historic and current zoning of the waterfront, as presented in the memo. He discussed the proposed Riverfront District and the corresponding sub-districts on the zoning and comprehensive plan zoning map. Lastly, he asked the Commission if there are any standards to specifically call out in the Mill sub-district, aside from the three items listed in the memo.

Commissioner Lawrence asked about view corridors. Vice Chair Petersen said in his research of view corridor ordinances, he noticed that all view corridor ordinances benefit public views. However, St. Helens view protection code benefits only private views. Vice Chair Petersen feels that the City should quit regulating and protecting private views. He does not have a problem with the City protecting a public view, but not an imaginary right to a private view.

Commissioner Cohen asked for the Commission to be de-briefed on the Framework Plan during the next meeting. It was decided to mail out a hardcopy Framework Plan to the Commission.

Chair Cary said the Architectural Design Guidelines would make sense on the Veneer property. He thinks the historic nature of the Riverfront District is what makes St. Helens unique. Commissioner Hubbard agrees that there should be some architectural guidelines in place. Commissioner Cohen is worried that you cannot re-create new historic structures. Vice Chair Petersen said the guidelines may be limiting with certain uses (like a hotel), but it would be possible. He noted that Washington D.C. is a good example of a city that applies historic architectural guidelines to new structures. Vice Chair Petersen suggested that the Commission re-read the Architectural Design Guidelines with new development in mind. Graichen noted that we have never had to use the Architectural Design Guidelines for a new building.

Commissioner Cohen asked if we want to have a new identity for the Veneer property or if we want to continue the existing historic district. He would like time to think about the answer to this question.

Graichen briefly described two more code changes that will be included in the upcoming batch of code amendments for next month: 1) a policy in the Comprehensive Plan that encourages the adaptive reuse of historic structures, and 2) requiring archival photos or other documentation of historic buildings prior to moving the structure, major alterations, or demolition.

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## **Acceptance Agenda: Planning Administrator Site Design Review**

- a. Site Design Review at 1875 Old Portland Rd. - Mini storage facility

Vice Chair Petersen moved to accept the acceptance agenda. Commissioner Webster seconded. All in favor; none opposed; motion carries.

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### **Planning Director Decisions**

- a. Sign Permit (Banner) at 2100 Block of Columbia Blvd. - St. Helens Police Department Donut Day
- b. Sign Permit at 305 Strand Street - Big River Bistro
- c. Accessory Structure at 1421 Tualitan Street - New storage shed
- d. Site Design Review (Scenic Resource) at vacant lot east side of 134 N. 2nd Street - Wayne Weigandt
- e. Partition at 755 N. Columbia River Hwy - ICDC II, LLC
- f. Sign Permit (x2 Wall) at 2298 Gable Road Suite 110 - Tube Art Group (Mod Pizza)
- g. Temporary Use Permit (Renewal) at 1300 Kaster Rd. - Cascades Tissue Group
- h. Home Occupation (Type II) at 59041 Welches Ct. - Online firearm sales

There were no comments.

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### **Planning Department Activity Reports**

There were no comments.

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### **For Your Information Items**

Dimsho said the Columbia County Museum has a special exhibit to celebrate the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the opening of the St. Helens Pulp & Paper Mill. The museum is open Wednesdays and Thursdays from noon until 4 p.m. on the second floor of the old courthouse.

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There being no further business before the Planning Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 9:11 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Dimsho  
Planning Secretary

### 2016 Planning Commission Attendance Record

*P=Present A=Absent Can=Cancelled*

Date	Petersen	Hubbard	Lawrence	Cohen	Cary	Semling	Webster
01/12/16	P	P	P	A	A	P	P
02/09/16	A	P	P	P	P	P	P
03/08/16	P	P	P	A	P	P	P
04/12/16	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
05/10/16	P	P	A	P	P	P	P
06/14/16	P	P	P	P	P	A	P
07/12/16	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
08/09/16	CAN	CAN	CAN	CAN	CAN	CAN	CAN
09/13/16	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
10/11/16	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
11/08/16	P	P	P	A	P	P	P
12/13/16	P	P	P	P	P	P	P