

City of St. Helens Planning Commission

Approved Minutes

July 14, 2020

Members Present: Chair Hubbard
Vice Chair Cary
Commissioner Cohen
Commissioner Semling
Commissioner Lawrence
Commissioner Webster
Commissioner Pugsley

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: City Planner Graichen
City Councilor Carlson
Community Development Admin Assistant Sullivan

Others: Mary Hubbard
Hawley Hubbard
Jillian Hubbard

- 1) **7:00 p.m. Call to Order and Flag Salute**
- 2) **Consent Agenda**
2.A Planning Commission Minutes dated June 9, 2020

Motion: Upon Commissioner Webster's motion and Commissioner Pugsley's second, the Planning Commission unanimously approved the Draft Minutes Dated June 9, 2020. [AYES: Vice Chair Cary, Commissioner Pugsley, Commissioner Cohen, Commissioner Lawrence, Commissioner Webster, Commissioner Semling; Nays: None]

2.B Planning Commission Minutes dated July 1, 2020

Motion: Upon Commissioner Webster's motion and Commissioner Semling's second, the Planning Commission unanimously approved the Draft Minutes Dated July 1, 2020. [AYES: Vice Chair Cary, Commissioner Pugsley, Commissioner Cohen, Commissioner Webster, Commissioner Semling; Nays: None]

- 3) **Topics from the Floor: Limited to 5 minutes per topic (not on Public Hearing Agenda)**

There were no topics from the floor.

- 4) **Public Hearings (times are earliest start time)**
4.A 7:00 p.m. Conditional Use Permit and (2) Variances at N 12th & Columbia Blvd. - Hubbard

Vice Chair Cary opened the Public Hearing at 7:02 p.m. Chair Hubbard, as the applicant, abstained from participating and Vice Chair Cary took over as the acting Chair, per the

Commission's operating rules. There were no ex-parte contacts, conflicts of interests, or bias in this matter.

City Planner Graichen entered the staff report dated July 7, 2020. This is a Conditional Use Permit and two variances. He showed the location of the property on a google map and gave an idea of the area that surrounds the property. The proposal is for a building with eight units. Seven of them are residential and one of them is commercial. Graichen mentioned that the Planning Commission had previously looked at this request back in July 2017. Due to lack of activity the application became void and so the applicant reapplied. Graichen mentioned the zoning was Mixed-use and when there Mixed-use zoning the Apartment Residential standards are considered for multi-family development. He also mentioned that the two variances were for decreased yard and increased density.

Graichen mentioned if the parking were combined for residential and commercial the normal off-street requirement would be 15 spaces. The current proposed is 12 off-street and a disabled parking spot on street, giving them 13 spaces. Graichen mentioned there is a provision in the code where if there are uses that have different parking demand patterns then shared parking can be justified.

Graichen also mentioned in multi-family standards have required private recreational space and community recreational space for the apartment units. There is an exception to those if you are within a quarter mile of public open space. He showed how there was a park about 500 feet away so this would exempt those.

Graichen said that 15 percent of the property is required for landscaping. This property is 10,000 square feet, so 1,500 square feet would be required landscaping. The site plan shows about 850 feet of landscaping. There is plenty of room to contribute more landscaping in the N. 12th Street right-of-way, which is proposed on the site plan. Because there were so many utilities in the landscape strip, to not create tree utility conflicts, the street tree are proposed behind the sidewalk.

Graichen mentioned the street improvements. He said the Columbia Blvd. sidewalk is in sound condition. He said the applicant does propose some modification for the disabled parking space.

Graichen mentioned the first variance is for reduced yards. He said if the lot were commercial use alone, it would not have a 20 foot setback. Instead the building could be placed at the street. He said 200 feet west of the property is the Houlton Business District, where the code requires the building to be close to the street. With this provision, it will make the property look like it is meant to be close to the street and not out of place. Also, when looking at the access and where it needs to be placed, it also makes sense to push the buildings closer to Columbia Blvd.

Graichen discussed the second variance for increased density. The square footage of the property is 10,000 square feet, which allows for five residential units. The applicant proposes seven residential units. He said there is extra area in the right-of-way on the N. 12th Street side which gives another 1,300 square feet of land, which would allow for six residential units.

Vice Chair Cary asked if the handicapped space would be shared or just commercial. Graichen said the number of handicapped spaces needed is based on how many parking spaces there are total. Since 13 spaces are proposed, the required handicapped space or van accessible is one. He said the handicapped spot is to serve the commercial and residential use. The building

code says the space must have the most direct route. Graichen said where the space is proposed, it is serving the commercial unit more.

Commissioner Cohen asked if there was a project recently that the Commission required the sidewalk along the road be improved to the corridor standard, even though it was in fair shape. Graichen said no, but they did review and discuss it quite a bit for the Haley Place Subdivision proposal.. After the discussion, the Commission found that the sidewalk for Haley Place did not need any improvements. Vice Chair Cary said they also talked about it with the new vet clinic located on Columbia Blvd. and N. 15th Street.

In Favor

Hubbard, Russ. Applicant. Hubbard was called to speak. Hubbard mentioned back in 2017 the plans were rough, but the current plans were ready to submit to the City. He mentioned they had an updated parking, sidewalk, and tree plan to meet required code. He said the reason they paused work on this project was because they were seeking and applying for grants. The grants did not work out, so they are ready to start back up and move forward.

Commissioner Webster asked if all the buildings were street level. Hubbard advised that all the bottom units were at sidewalk or street level. He also mentioned the commercial unit has a residential unit above it. Hubbard discussed a mixed-use project he did in Portland that received an award..

Commissioner Cohen asked why the handicapped parking was proposed on Columbia Blvd. instead of one of the parking spaces on the site. Hubbard mentioned if the handicapped space were included in the off-street parking it would take up two spots and he would be required to put in a wheelchair lift for accessibility. Hubbard said it would seem more efficient to move the space to the street, as it added more parking on site and re-doing the sidewalk, although still expensive, would be more affordable than the lift. Commissioner Semling asked about parking along N.12th Street.. Hubbard mentioned they cannot do parking along N.12th Street due to the guy wires, utilities and vision clearance.

There was a small discussion about parking and how it fits into the Corridor Plan. Another small discussion on the amount of parking available and where to place the handicapped space.

Neutral

No one spoke as neutral testimony.

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 of Public Hearing & Record

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

Deliberations

The Commission discussed more about the handicapped space, where it should be located, and how it coincides with the City's Corridor Plan and Building Code. There was some concern about this project not meeting the standard of the Corridor Plan. There was also a small discussion on the amount of parking allowed on Columbia Blvd.

Graichen said the Commission may want to consider in their findings that eleven spaces are adequate for the property so if the applicant needs to put the handicapped space on site, it can take up two spaces. Graichen also said they may want to consider the curb line as proposed if possible.

Motion: Upon Commissioner Cohen's motion and Commissioner Webster's second, the Planning Commission unanimously approved both Variance Permits as written with a finding that 11 off-street parking spaces would be acceptable if the disabled person space does not work along Columbia Blvd. Vice Chair Cary did not vote due to his role as acting Chair. [Ayes: Commissioner Semling, Commissioner Lawrence, Commissioner Webster, Commissioner Cohen, Commissioner Pugsley; Nays: None]

Motion: Upon Commissioner Cohen's motion and Commissioner Webster's second, the Planning Commission unanimously approved the Conditional Use Permit as written. [Ayes: Commissioner Semling, Commissioner Lawrence, Commissioner Webster, Commissioner Cohen, Commissioner Pugsley; Nays: None]

Motion: Upon Commissioner Cohen's motion and Commissioner Semling's second, the Commission unanimously approved Vice Chair Cary to sign the Findings when prepared. [Ayes: Commissioner Semling, Commissioner Cohen, Commissioner Lawrence, Commissioner Webster, Commissioner Pugsley; Nays: None]

5) **Riverfront District Architectural Guidelines Recommendation – Bennett Building Transom Windows at 275/277 the Strand**

Graichen presented the report dated July 6, 2020. Graichen mentioned everyone should be familiar with the project as there had been much discussion about it. He presented the standards as they relate to windows.. He said since the original windows were not maintained, the Commission needs to advise how to fix the windows. He started with asking the question if the Commission was willing to explore the idea of painting the windows to achieve appearance goals. The Commission was unanimously against this idea.

Graichen asked about the glass they should use and there was a small discussion on the types of glass that could be used.

Councilor Carlson expressed concern about applying the historic guidelines consistently. Graichen mentioned there is a standard process for all buildings subject to the Riverfront District Architectural Guidelines review process. He felt the Commission was following those processes.

Vice Chair Cary mentioned he was uncomfortable giving recommendations before deciding the shape or design of the windows. There was a small discussion about divided light and the type of framing on the exterior of the windows.

There was also a discussion on maintaining the original design, texture, and materials, not just appearance. Graichen asked the Commission if the size, division, and shape of the new windows should relate to the previous as much as possible. The Commission said yes.

Commissioner Pugsley said she looked at the cost of the windows provided in the document. She said the cost to purchase actual true divided windows or to build them was about the same. She expressed that she would want the City to make sure the project was done right and not look for the easy way out. Commissioner Cohen said he would recommend finding someone who is a glass professional that can give a recommendation on period replacement windows or glass to uphold the architectural integrity. There was another small discussion about materials to be used for these windows.

Commissioner Pugsley asked if the remaining work aside from the windows would be brought to the Commission. Graichen mentioned that the individuals in charge of this project understands that once there is a building permit, it comes before the Commission for review.

Assistant City Administrator Matt Brown spoke about the color of the windows and asked what scheme they preferred. The Commission said they would refer to the historic guidelines. Brown also mentioned the process they took and how they stopped work when it was discovered it was not done correctly. Chair Hubbard advised Brown that they should come up with a scope of work and find an appropriate professional who can do the work correctly. There was a small discussion about the amount of work that may be entailed to redo the windows.

Chair Hubbard asked about the architect and who the City planned on hiring for that. Brown said they have not decided on the architect yet as it will have to go through the City Council because of the cost. Brown also asked if Commissioner Pugsley would be willing to discuss more options on how to repair or where to go to retrieve the appropriate materials for staying true to the architectural integrity. He said having a commissioner present on the project team for this project would be a benefit to the restoration. Commissioner Pugsley agreed.

6) Planning Director Decisions

- a. Sign Permit at 104 N Vernonia Rd – Bethel Fellowship
- b. Temporary Use Permit for Model Home – Chad E Davis Construction
- c. Extension of Variance V.10.19 for Lot 54 – Emerald Meadows
- d. Extension of Variance V.11.19 for Lot 56 – Emerald Meadows
- e. Extension of Variance V.13.19 for Lot 63 – Emerald Meadows
- f. Temporary Use Permit at 735 S Columbia River Hwy – Bethel Fellowship
- g. Auxiliary Dwelling Unit at 300 N. 3rd Street – Conversion of an existing basement
- h. Sign Permit at 795 S Columbia River Hwy – Ramsay Signs (Safeway)

There were no comments.

7) Planning Department Activity Report

- a. June Planning Department Report

There were no comments.

8) For Your Information Items

Graichen mentioned the Grocery Outlet proposal was approved minus the drive-thru portion they had included. Vice Chair Cary asked questions about the trees they cut down on the undeveloped property. Graichen mentioned it was a grading needs issue, but in working with these builders over the last years, they have been forthright about trying to preserve the trees as much as possible. He also mentioned with the subdivision, there is a still a tree inventory and they will be able to make sure the replace what is necessary.

Commissioner Cohen said he thinks the City and the County and whoever else was involved did a fabulous job on the Gable Road Project. He said it came out perfect and wanted to acknowledge the work that went into it. Commissioner Cohen also asked about how long ago they had given out a Beautification Award. Graichen said they used to do it every year when he worked for the City of Klamath Falls, but he did not feel that was the right way to do. He said it should be on a case-by-case basis when there is a project that just has the wow factor. Commissioner Cohen said if he could choose a project, it would be the new veterinary clinic on N 15th Street. He said for so many years, this site has been unusable.. He felt this clinic was perfect for the site.

Graichen mentioned the proposed residential units across from Wal-Mart received funding for their project.

Councilor Carlson also asked what was being built over by Legacy Health off Highway 30.. Graichen said Graystone Estates Subdivision includes 78 residential lots and two commercial lots with a builder who is anxious to get started. Vice Chair Cary asked about the southeast corner access. Graichen said they had talked about extending the street but were not currently proposing to do that. He said they are planning on having a secondary emergency access off the main highway.

Councilor Carlson also asked about the Millard Road crossing. Graichen said Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) was working on final design which prompted the Planning Department to discuss the entry sign.

9) **Next Regular Meeting: August 11, 2020**

10) **Adjournment**

There being no further business before the Planning Commission, the meeting was adjourned 9:17 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Christina Sullivan
Community Development Administrative Assistant*