

City of St. Helens Planning Commission

Approved Minutes

February 11, 2020

Members Present: Chair Hubbard
Commissioner Cohen
Commissioner Lawrence
Commissioner Stenberg
Commissioner Webster
Vice Chair Cary

Members Absent: Commissioner Semling

Staff Present: City Planner Graichen
Associate Planner Dimsho
Councilor Carlson
Community Development Administrative Assistant Sullivan

Others: Jennifer Pugsley
Jane Garcia
Les Watters
Tammy Cinnera
Molly Matchak
Philip Stanton
Steven Jaby
Samantha & AJ Stansbury
Aaron Majors
Ken Stansbury

- 1) **7:00 p.m. - Call to Order and Flag Salute**
- 2) **Consent Agenda: Approval of Minutes**
2.A Planning Commission Minutes dated January 14, 2020

Motion: Upon Commissioner Webster's motion and Commissioner Lawrence's second, the Planning Commission unanimously approved minutes dated January 14, 2019. [AYES: Vice Chair Cary, Commissioner Cohen, Commissioner Stenberg, Commissioner Webster; Nays: None]

- 3) **Topics from the Floor: Limited to 5 minutes per topic (not on public hearing agenda)**

Pugsley, Jennifer. Pugsley spoke about the historic preservation of buildings in our Riverfront District. She mentioned the Vagt Building being remodeled and the windows that were replaced on 275 & 277 Strand Street. She expressed concern about the process of permitting the windows. She provided a packet of information on the history of the Vagt Building and why preserving it is important. She felt the use of materials was not historic and that the City should

be held to the standards that they set for everyone else in this same district. She requested that the City fix the windows with something more historically accurate.

Cohen said it should not be allowable for the City to do whatever they want if we are going to hold the public accountable.

Stanton, Philip. Stanton also spoke on the historic significance of this building. He mentioned the architecture and how it is important that we maintain the historic feeling throughout the whole Riverfront District. He mentioned he felt people come down and visit the Riverfront District for its historic features.

City Planner Jacob Graichen mentioned that after speaking with the Building Department, the permit was submitted and the work was done in two days. He said there were no plans submitted, but felt the window replacement met the intent. He mentioned that Matt Brown, Assistant City Administrator, was the head of this project.

The Commission had a discussion on the processes of permitting and how this particular permit was handled. There was also a small discussion about the historic significance of this particular building. They were not satisfied with the explanation and reasons that were provided on how it was handled and wanted to speak to the person in charge of the project at the next meeting.

Motion: Upon Commissioner Stenberg's motion and Commissioner Webster's second, the Planning Commission recommended that Matt Brown attend the next meeting to discuss the project. [Ayes: Commissioner Cohen, Commissioner Lawrence, Commissioner Stenberg, Commissioner Webster, Vice Chair Cary; Nays: None]

4) **Public Hearings (times reflect earliest start time)**

4.A 7:00 p.m. - Annexation at the north end of Windy Ridge Drive - Cinnera

Chair Hubbard opened the Public Hearing at 7:25 p.m. There were no ex-parte contacts, conflicts of interests, or bias in this matter. Associate Planner Jenny Dimsho entered the staff report dated January 22, 2020 into the record.

Dimsho introduced the proposal to the Commission, as presented in the staff report. She discussed the adjacent property's annexation about ten years ago and the similarities. The applicant wants to connect to city water. She said there is water available but no sewer. The applicant will likely set up a septic system. Dimsho discussed the zoning. The Comprehensive Plan allows for an R10 or R7 zoning, but the staff recommends the R10 zoning based on the zoning along Windy Ridge Drive.

There was a small discussion about the property not connecting to sewer.

In Favor

Majors, Aaron. Majors is representing the applicant. He spoke about how hard it has been for the applicant to get to this point in time. He said the applicant is excited to be a part of this community. He said the applicant has worked really hard to be able to get this property. He mentioned the septic system has been upgraded. He mentioned they are in the process of receiving the building permit through the County. He said there were advantages to getting permits through the County as it is a little cheaper.

Neutral

None

In Opposition

No one spoke in opposition.

Rebuttal

None

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 felt this decision was a simple one.

Motion: Upon Commissioner Cohen's motion and Commissioner Webster's second, the Planning Commission unanimously recommended to City Council approval of the Annexation as written for R10 zoning. Commissioner Semling did not vote due to her absence from the meeting. [AYES: Commissioner Cohen, Commissioner Lawrence, Commissioner Webster, Vice Chair Cary; Nays: None]

4.B 7:30 p.m. - Variance at 2660 Gable Road - Stansbury

Chair Hubbard opened the Public Hearing at 7:43 p.m. There were no ex-parte contacts, conflicts of interests, or bias in this matter. Graichen entered the staff report dated February 4, 2020 into the record.

Graichen introduced the proposal to the Commission, as presented in the staff report. He said the applicant was applying for a variance for an accessory structure that exceeds the maximum size of 600 square feet. He mentioned the applicant's property is divided into multiple properties and that it could have more than one home. He discussed how the accessory structure was supposed to be a building addition attached to the existing home with a breezeway. He also mentioned that the breezeway was removed shortly after final inspection; this is why this variance is before the Commission.

Stansbury, Samantha. Applicant. Stansbury is the property owner. She mentioned they would like a variance to get rid of the need for a breezeway. She said she spoke with Jacob on how to build a shop of this size to work on their three different lots. She said they tried to make the shop aesthetically pleasing and match the house. She mentioned how the breezeway was more of an eyesore and many people asked them what it was for. She mentioned that after building the breezeway, it did not look like what they had hoped for. She brought in testimony from neighbors in written form that supported not having the breezeway.

In Favor

Stansbury, Ken. Stansbury was in support of the breezeway but after seeing the breezeway they installed, he didn't agree. He wanted to know what the meaning of a breezeway was. He didn't understand why a property as large as theirs required them to have a breezeway. He said the breezeway actually deterred from the property and did not look as nice as it does without it.

Neutral

None.

In Opposition

No one spoke in opposition.

Rebuttal

Stansbury, AJ. Applicant. Stansbury said they looked into connecting to sewer and water so the new shop could be a dwelling unit, and the cost was over \$15,000 which was way out of their budget. They hoped the breezeway would have worked.

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

There was deliberation between the commissioners about how the applicant did not follow procedures. They felt the applicants were intentional in not following the rules set before them.

Commissioner Cohen brought up the code and wanted to know what the next steps would be if they decided to not approve the variance. He was concerned that they did not meet the code and how do we hold them to the guidelines set before them.

Graichen said there were a few options for the applicant. If the variance is not approved, the applicant could make the structure a building addition and put in an appropriate breezeway. They could remove the building, or they could convert it into a dwelling unit.

Motion: Upon Vice Chair Cary's motion and Commissioner Cohen's second, the Planning Commission approved the Variance. [Ayes: Commissioner Cohen, Commissioner Lawrence, Commissioner Stenberg, Commissioner Webster, Vice Chair Cary; Nays: None]

5) Planning Director Decisions

- a. Sign Permit at 155 N. Columbia River Highway – New wall sign on an existing building
- b. Temporary Use Permit at 175 Bowling Alley Lane – five cart food truck pod

- c. Temporary Sign Permit (Banner) at 2100 block of Columbia Blvd – St. Helens
Booster Club's Annual Auction

6) **Planning Department Activity Report**

7.A January 27, 2020

7) **For Your Information Items**

Chair Hubbard wanted to know what came of the RFP for the Riverfront Property that was on the previous City Council Work Session agenda. Carlson was not at the meeting so could not provide an accurate answer.

8) **Next Regular Meeting - March 10, 2020**

9) **Adjournment**

There being no further business before the Planning Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 8:32 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Christina Sullivan
Community Development Administrative Assistant