

# City of St. Helens Planning Commission

Approved Minutes

January 14, 2020

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**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  
Ruby Feather  
Ryan Patrick  
Windy Patrick  
Jennifer Godsey  
Les Waters

- 1) **7:00 p.m. - Call to Order and Flag Salute**
- 2) **Consent Agenda: Approval of Minutes**  
2.A Planning Commission Minutes dated December 10, 2019

**Motion:** Upon Commissioner Webster's motion and Commissioner Lawrence's second, the Planning Commission unanimously approved Minutes Dated December 10, 2019. [AYES: Commissioner Cohen, Commissioner Stenberg, Commissioner Webster; 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 reflect earliest start time)**  
4.A 7:00 p.m. - Comprehensive Plan Amendment (Add property to the Historic Designated Landmarks Register) at 260 S. 2<sup>nd</sup> Street - Feather

Chair Hubbard opened the Public Hearing at 7:03 p.m. There were no ex-parte contacts, conflicts of interests, or bias in this matter. Dimsho entered the staff report dated January 7, 2020 into the record.

Dimsho introduced the proposal to the Commission, as presented in the staff report. The applicant is requesting to have her property added to the Historic Designated Landmarks Register. Dimsho discussed her research on when the aforementioned list was made in the early 1980s. No properties have been added to it since the list was developed. The Planning Department of 1982 effort included review of 800 structures that were built before 1930 and narrowed it down to 34 primary historic structures and then from that list narrowed it down to 22. This is the list we have now. This list has remained untouched since 1982. This property is zoned Riverfront District, which doesn't allow for residential use on the bottom floor. This is the main reason the applicant wishes to add the property to the list. Dimsho discussed the criteria that is required to be added to the list. One, it must be at least 50 years old. Two, is the actual location. Dimsho mentioned the property was located near a barn where the original Henry Knighton house was first built. Three, the structure needs to be related to local history. Four, the architectural style is significant with the structure. She mentioned that it is the only remaining Italianate structure in the district. Dimsho said it also has pop culture reference because it was used in the Twilight 2008 movie.

Graichen discussed the non-conforming use rules and zoning of the property. He mentioned that moving the property to the historic list allows the applicant to follow rules and still use their property as a dwelling. In return, adding it to the historic list also allows the Commission to make sure the architecture stays true to its original design.

Dimsho went through the recommended conditions of approval, as identified in the staff report.

**Feather, Ruby. Applicant.** Feather is the property owner. She purchased the house at an auction and is excited about the inside of the home. She would like to bring it back to its original condition and make it a beautiful addition to the historic list.

### **In Favor**

**Waters, Les.** Waters is a member of the Columbia County Museum Association. He mentioned the group who put together the Historic Designated Landmarks list was a group of volunteers who worked very hard but felt they missed a few properties. He mentioned the applicant's property was part of a walking tour of the district with thousands of viewers. He also mentioned it was part of a movie sites tour where thousands of people view it. He says the house is unusual and should be preserved. His group created a website for the property with all the historic information they found during their research of the property.

**Pugsley, Jennifer.** Pugsley is the owner of 50 Plaza Square. She restored the building to its historic design. She hopes to create a movement to restore homes and structures. She says by adding this home to the list, it is saving a landmark that could have so easily been destroyed.

### **Neutral**

No one spoke.

### **In Opposition**

No one spoke in opposition.

### **Rebuttal**

No one spoke in rebuttal.

### **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**

Chair Hubbard agreed it was important to add these types of structures to the historic list. Commissioner Cohen also agreed. Hubbard mentioned that it is a huge financial commitment. There was a small discussion about different grants and funding that may work as incentives for historic resources.

**Motion:** Upon Commissioner Stenberg's motion and Commissioner Webster's second, the Planning Commission unanimously recommended to City Council approval of the Comprehensive Plan Amendment as written. [AYES: Commissioner Cohen, Commissioner Lawrence, Commissioner Stenberg, Commissioner Webster, Vice Chair Cary; Nays: None]

4.A        7:30 p.m. – Annexation at 58865 Firlok Park Street – OHM Equity Partners LLC

Chair Hubbard opened the Public Hearing at 7:45 p.m. There were no ex-parte contacts, conflicts of interests, or bias in this matter. Graichen entered the staff report dated January 7, 2020 into the record.

Graichen introduced the proposal to the Commission, as presented in the staff report. The applicant wants to annex to connect to City sewer. The property is already connected to City water. He mentioned they are on a STEP system or a pressured private line because it was developed on a property that has septic challenges. It may have been uninhabitable because of no sanitary service. He said the property is contiguous to city limits, which is a criteria for annexation. He said the zoning code says it is a high-density area. It will have a changed zone once it is annexed in.

Graichen went through the recommended conditions of approval, as identified in the staff report.

### **In Favor**

No one spoke in favor

### **Neutral**

**Patrick, Ryan.** Patrick lives across street from the applicant property. He is already set up to build a sand filter, but he is worried it will fail. He said the engineer said there was nothing to connect to and that the sewer was full. He was hoping they could answer how he would be able to connect.

Graichen said they could talk to Sue Nelson or the Public Works Department about using to the STEP system. But, historically STEP systems have only been allowed for already developed sites with failing on-site systems and not vacant properties. He also said they would need to go to the Council with the same request. Commissioner Cohen recommended building their sand filter system.

**Godsey, Jennifer.** Godsey lives in Parkwood Estates behind the applicant's property. She wants more information on what will take place after the applicant's property is annexed in. She does not want the property to be cleared. Graichen said that the property is a wetland area and is protected. He said since it is a protected area, there are rules for building over it. Godsey said she didn't want to interfere with the applicant's request, just wanted to be aware.

### **In Opposition**

No one spoke in opposition.

### **Rebuttal**

No one spoke in rebuttal.

### **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 were no deliberations.

**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. [AYES: Commissioner Cohen, Commissioner Lawrence, Commissioner Webster, Vice Chair Cary; Nays: None]

### **5) Chair/Vice Chair Selection**

**Motion:** Upon Commissioner Cohen's motion and Commissioner Lawrence's second, the Planning Commission unanimously recommended approval of another term for Chair Hubbard and Vice Chair Cary. [AYES: Commissioner Cohen, Commissioner Stenberg, Commissioner Webster, Vice Chair Cary; Nays: None]

### **6) End of Year Summary Report**

Graichen opened the discussion on the End of Year summary report. There was a small discussion about the different types of land use permits and how they have fluctuated.

### **7) Accessory Structure Breezeway Attachment Discussion**

Graichen presented the accessory structure attachment. He discussed what an accessory structure is and the guidelines to have one. He also discussed the different type of breezeways that can be added. He mentioned the 70-foot breezeway that was now an enforcement issue because they took it down immediately after finalizing the building permit. Graichen said this made him think they need to have clearer guidelines in the code on what defines a breezeway. He mentioned a roof or a man door on each end of the breezeway. He also mentioned adding some clear and objective dimensional standards. There was more discussion on suggestions to add to the code for breezeways. Commissioner Cohen questioned how many standards you add before it becomes overkill. There was more discussion about structural standards and what they would allow before needing a variance. The Commission was divided on changing the standards and the possibility of adding clearer guidelines to the code. They did not come to a conclusion and decided this topic should be discussed at a later date.

**8) Planning Director Decisions**

There were no comments.

**9) Planning Department Activity Report**

Graichen confirmed the Planning Commission's view on the proposed. Floodplan rules were discussed at their December meeting.

**10) For Your Information Items**

Vice Chair Cary asked for an update on the Fifth Street Trail. Dimsho said a notice was sent out that they will have some high school students working to pull out invasives. Dimsho brought up the City Community survey and invited everyone to fill it out. She said they will be using the data to determine how our different departments are doing. She said the goal was 1,000 completed surveys. Chair Hubbard asked about the police station. Graichen said they are working on different sites. He said they have narrowed it down to two sites. He said they are putting some extra effort into examining how those locations will work for them.

**11) Next Regular Meeting: February 11, 2020**

**12) Adjournment**

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

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Christina Sullivan  
Community Development Administrative Assistant*