

# City of St. Helens Planning Commission

Approved Minutes

August 13, 2019

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

**Members Absent:** Commissioner Stenberg

**Staff Present:** Councilor Carlson  
City Planner Graichen  
Associate Planner Dimsho

**Others:** Craig Allison  
David Fix  
Mike Mangold  
Pam Rensch  
Molly Matchack

- 1) **7 p.m. - Call to Order and Flag Salute**
- 2) **Consent Agenda: Approval of Minutes**  
2.A Planning Commission Minutes dated July 9, 2019

**Motion:** Upon Commissioner Semling's motion and Commissioner Lawrence's second, the Planning Commission unanimously approved the Planning Commission Minutes dated July 9, 2019. Commissioner Cohen and Commissioner Webster did not vote due to their absences from that meeting. [Ayes: Commissioner Lawrence, Commissioner Semling, Vice Chair Cary; Nays: None]

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

There were no comments.

- 4) **Public Hearings (times reflect earliest start time)**  
4.A 7:00 p.m. - Variance at 214 N. 17th Street - Rensch Construction & Properties, Inc.

Chair Hubbard opened the Public Hearing at 7:01 p.m. There were no ex-parte contacts, conflicts of interests, or bias in this matter. City Planner Jacob Graichen entered the staff report dated August 2, 2019 into the record. Graichen described the proposal and recommended conditions of approval, as presented in the staff report. He said this variance request is the

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result of an unexpected storm line being discovered late in the process of a single-family dwelling building permit review. The applicant had already developed their housing plans, so in order for the same building plans to fit on the site, they are requesting a front yard (setback) variance. Commissioner Semling asked if the storm line functions. Graichen said yes, and noted the City Engineer's comments in the staff report.

### **In Favor**

**Rensch, Pam. Applicant.** Rensch said when they originally called for utility locates, the storm line was not identified. They called for locates again when the building permit was closer to approval. That was when the storm line was discovered. They would not have spent the money on these plans if they had seen the storm line earlier in the process. There was no easement on record when she went to the title company.

### **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**

Commissioner Lawrence asked if siting the building in its proposed location could be a hazard to public health or safety. Graichen said it is his job to be paranoid. He does not think this proposal threatens public safety. Commissioner Cohen said it seems like it was no one's intended fault.

**Motion:** Upon Commissioner Cohen's motion and Commissioner Webster's second, the Planning Commission unanimously approved the Variance Permit at 214 N. 17th Street as presented. [Ayes: Commissioner Cohen, Commissioner Lawrence, Commissioner Semling, Commissioner Webster, Vice Chair Cary; Nays: None]

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

### **4.B        7:45 p.m. - Lot Line Adjustment at 58144 Old Portland Road - Port of Columbia County**

Chair Hubbard opened the Public Hearing at 7:46 p.m. There were no ex-parte contacts, conflicts of interests, or bias in this matter. Graichen entered the staff report dated August 2, 2019 into the record. Graichen said there was vague dialogue leading up to the application, and

aspects of the application remained unclear. He showed the Commission the original submitted Lot Line Adjustment. This strange alignment was partly why he decided to send the decision to the Commission. Graichen said that in order for the Port of Columbia County to receive the financing they need, the state is requiring that they have the newest building on its own lot. Vice Chair Cary asked where the financing is from. Graichen said it is from Business Oregon (part of the Infrastructure Finance Authority).

Commissioner Cohen confirmed what allows them to do a lot line adjustment versus a partition. Graichen noted the two original lots of record are included in the attachments. Commissioner Cohen asked what would happen if the Port tried to sell the island parcel. Graichen said the purpose of land division is for transfer of ownership. Staff is recommending the conditions included in the staff report because his obligation is to view the proposal as if they were trying to sell the island parcel. Industrial zoned property is valuable from a tax base and from an employment standpoint, so we do not want to end up with a messy parcel. Commissioner Cohen asked if the buildings met required setbacks. Graichen said industrial setbacks are based on proximity to other zones. Building code setbacks have been addressed with a condition. Chair Hubbard asked what if Columbia River PUD wanted something different than the easements proposed. Graichen said some assumptions have to be made about existing and future uses. Since the island parcel is pretty built out, we can make some accurate assumptions about future use. Graichen said he has structured the recommended easements to be wide enough to accommodate access and utilities. Graichen also noted some recommended conditions that required changes to the proposed lot line to accommodate existing landscaping and parking.

### **In Favor**

**Allison, Craig, Applicant.** Allison is the Port of Columbia County's Operations Manager and Deputy Director. He has been in this position for about ten years. He is the developer, architect, and executor of the Multnomah Industrial Park. When he came on board in 2010, the site was vastly underutilized. In 2008, the biggest building on the site collapsed. ORPET replaced that building. Since then, they've been replacing, renovating, and adding buildings. Scott Jensen has been the primary planner with the Port for this Lot Line Adjustment. The Port's reason for doing the Lot Line Adjustment is to utilize the state's financing program. The state also financed, in part, renovations to Building B, which was roughly \$1.6 million. Last year, they expanded with a new \$1.1 million facility (Building E). They are servicing this debt. Business Oregon has had transitions in the last year, and these changes necessitated new conditions to their lending practices. For the Building E financing, a new bonding requirement was sprung on the Port for the parcels related to the project's financing. This Lot Line Adjustment is to satisfy the requirements of the state to complete the loan process. The strange parcel dimensions Graichen mentioned initially reflected the lease hold. He can understand Graichen's conditions to tweak the boundaries to accommodate parking and landscaping. The Port has no intention to sell. They have always wanted to develop, maintain, and rent this industrial park. They are close to achieving the final vision, except for this lending stumbling block. He would like to ask that the easements be kept to a minimum. The process of easement creation takes time and money. He would ask that this process is streamlined. November, which is the deadline for them to get the financing, will come very quickly. Allison said one difficulty of adjusting the lot line to include the parking to the northeast of Building E is that then they need an additional access easement with themselves. Graichen said the parking needs to be included in the property, since it is associated with the development.

Allison asked about a blanket easement between the two properties. This would make the process a lot simpler and faster. Graichen said our legal counsel has recommended against utilizing blanket easements when the location of utilities and access is known. Allison said with a blanket easement, they would be codifying what occurs on the property today. Allison said it could be a reciprocal blanket access and utility easement. Graichen said the conditions, as written, do not explicitly deny blanket easements. Graichen said a shared road maintenance agreement is also required. Allison said for common areas and roads, the Port is moving towards adopting fee assessments to charge their tenants on a lease. Graichen said leases are not tied to the land. Allison proposed requiring a joint maintenance agreement at the time of the sale of the property. Graichen said he thought of that, but is not entirely comfortable with delaying the requirement until the property sells. However, he noted the conditions do not explicitly prohibit that method. Any proposal will be subject to review.

### **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**

Commissioner Cohen said this Lot Line Adjustment is complicated because it is already developed. He thinks staff adequately addressed the issues. The easements are necessary to address potential disparate ownership. Commissioner Lawrence agreed.

**Motion:** Upon Commissioner Cohen's motion and Commissioner Webster's second, the Planning Commission unanimously approved the Lot Line Adjustment at 58144 Old Portland Road as presented. [Ayes: Commissioner Cohen, Commissioner Lawrence, Commissioner Semling, Commissioner Webster, Vice Chair Cary; Nays: None]

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

### **5) Discussion Items**

#### **5.A Riverfront District Architectural Guidelines Recommendation - New Sign at 290 S. 1st Street**

Associate Planner Dimsho introduced the Commission to the proposal, as presented in the memo. The applicant is proposing a new neon projecting sign adjacent to the Plymouth Pub. The Commission is to make a recommendation to staff for compliance with the Riverfront District Architectural Guidelines.

**Molly Matchack, Applicant.** Matchack said she is opening Molly's Market at this location. Commissioner Webster asked if their sign was a similar size to the Plymouth Pub sign. She said she thinks it is smaller. Chair Hubbard asked if there is another suite to be located between the pub and the market. Plymouth Pub will be occupying the suite in between the new market and pub. Chair Hubbard asked if the design was hers. Matchack said her son designed it. Vice Chair Cary asked what Molly's Market will carry. Matchack said it will be packaged food to-go, like cheese, crackers, and bread. Chair Hubbard clarified the amount of neon on the sign. Commissioner Cohen asked if it blinks. Matchack said no.

**Motion:** Upon Commissioner Cohen's motion and Vice Chair Cary's second, the Planning Commission unanimously recommended approval of the Sign Permit at 290 S. 1st Street as presented. [Ayes: Commissioner Cohen, Commissioner Lawrence, Commissioner Semling, Commissioner Webster, Vice Chair Cary; Nays: None]

## 5.B Certified Local Government - Historic Preservation Grant Scoring

Commissioner Cohen asked why we score side facades. Dimsho said the idea is that we score projects with front-facing façade work higher than just side-facing façade work. Graichen said sometimes side façade work can keep the entire historic structure in good shape. Dimsho said even though she is not in attendance tonight, she received Commissioner Stenberg's scores via email earlier today. Commissioner Cohen asked about the financial resources category. Dimsho said the Columbia Theatre is using another grant through the state to match this one. She confirmed with the state that matching a grant with another grant is acceptable.

After tallying the scores from the Commission, Dimsho said the Columbia Theatre was the highest scoring applicant. Dimsho said she will work with the State Historic Preservation Office to get an approved work plan for the theater. If something does not work with their work plan, the second place applicant, Elliot Michael, will be next in line for receiving the funds.

## 6) Acceptance Agenda: Planning Administrator Site Design Review

**Motion:** Upon Commissioner Cohen's motion and Commissioner Webster's second, the Planning Commission unanimously approved the Acceptance Agenda: Planning Administrator Site Design Review. [Ayes: Commissioner Cohen, Commissioner Lawrence, Commissioner Semling, Commissioner Webster, Vice Chair Cary; Nays: None]

## 7) Planning Director Decisions

There were no comments.

## 8) Planning Department Activity Report

### 8.A Planning Department Activity Report dated July 29, 2019

There were no comments.

## 9) For Your Information Items

There were no comments.

## 10) Next Regular Meeting - September 10, 2019

11) **Adjournment**

*There being no further business before the Planning Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 8:53 p.m.*

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Jennifer Dimsho  
Associate Planner*