

City of St. Helens Planning Commission

Approved Minutes

May 14, 2019

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

Members Absent: Chair Hubbard

Staff Present: Councilor Carlson
City Planner Graichen
Associate Planner Dimsho

Others: Paula Sheeley
Matt Hastie
Linda Bolen

- 1) **7:00 pm. - Call to Order and Flag Salute**
- 2) **Consent Agenda: Approval of Minutes**
2.A Planning Commission Draft Minutes Dated April 9, 2019

Motion: Upon Commissioner Semling's motion and Commissioner Webster's second, the Planning Commission unanimously approved the Draft Minutes Dated April 9, 2019. [AYES: Vice Chair Cary, Commissioner Cohen, Commissioner Lawrence, Commissioner Semling, Commissioner Stenberg, Commissioner Webster; Nays: None]

- 3) **Topics from the Floor: Limited to 5 minutes per topic (not on public hearing agenda)**
- 4) **Public Hearings (times reflect earliest start time)**
4.A 7:00 p.m. - Comprehensive Plan & Text Amendments - Riverfront Connector Plan

Vice Chair Cary 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 introduced Matt Hastie of Angelo Planning Group to summarize the Riverfront Connector Plan adoption process.

Hastie explained the small changes and additions made to the Plan since the Commission last saw it, as included in the packet. Hastie said cost estimates were prepared for each segment and intersection in the project area. Commissioner Cohen asked about the 30 percent contingency. Hastie explained they use a fairly large contingency when the estimation is at a planning-level detail, as opposed to an engineering-level detail. Hastie went through each text

amendment with the Commission, as included in the staff report. The Commission thanked Hastie and Graichen and Associate Planner Dimsho for their good work on this project.

In Favor

No one spoke in favor.

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

There were no other comments.

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

4.B 7:30 p.m. - Comprehensive Plan & Zone Amendments - Erickson & Lewis

Vice Chair Cary opened the Public Hearing at 7:35 p.m. Commissioner Lawrence declared she has a conflict of interest because she lives very close to the proposal. She recused herself from the hearing. There were no other ex-parte contacts, conflicts of interests, or bias in this matter.

Graichen described the proposal and recommended conditions of approval, as presented in the staff report. He said this application was prompted by the sale of one of the properties. The applicants would like to re-zone their properties from General Commercial (GC) to Apartment Residential (AR) so that if the existing detached single-family dwellings were destroyed, they could re-build. Detached single-family dwellings are an allowed use in AR. This will help with financing of the property.

Graichen said the preliminary findings from the Housing Needs Analysis support the re-zoning of this property to Apartment Residential, as opposed to General Residential (R5) or Moderate Residential (R7) or Suburban Residential (R10). Graichen also noted that 180 S. 1st Street is contributing to the nationally-registered historic district as a dwelling. He also said that the lots do not lend themselves well to commercial uses, given their size. Staff recommends approval of the zone change for these reasons. Commission Cohen asked if there is a limit on the size of the multi-dwellings that could be built. Graichen said yes, there are minimum lot sizes that would

limit the number of dwellings. He said it probably works out to be a triplex, if they could fit the parking requirements and prevent backward maneuvering onto S. 1st Street. [*Secretary's Note: After review of the code, each lot would only be individually eligible for two dwelling units. This would be either a duplex or detached single-family dwelling with an auxiliary dwelling unit on a single lot.*]

In Favor

Bolen, Linda. She works with John L. Scott Real Estate. She is the listing agent for 164 S. 1st Street. No lenders will loan on the property because it cannot be re-built if destroyed. It had to go for cash only. It did eventually sell, but without financing. She noted that 180 S. 1st Street does not have enough room for conversion to a commercial use. The best use is residential, especially given residential uses on both sides.

Sheeley, Paula. She is in support of the proposal. She is the new owner of 164 S. 1st Street.

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 feels that this request makes sense.

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

5) Discussion Items

5.A Annual Planning Commission Report to City Council on June 5, 1:15 p.m.

Graichen asked if anyone would like to present the report to City Council or if anyone would like to add anything to the report. Commissioner Cohen asked about the violations in the Planning Department Activity Report for April. He said once a violation occurs, the damage cannot be undone. He felt that the violations on Sykes Road were inexcusable. He asked if there could be more teeth in the rules and regulations for violations. He suggested requiring a bond up front if they violate a planning decision. That way, if a decision is violated, the bond could be used to amend the violations. Commissioner Semling suggested a larger bond for larger projects. Commissioner Cohen thinks that St. Helens might be gaining a reputation for being loose with violators. The Commission agreed. Graichen said for the project on Sykes Road, there may be

finances imposed with the final plat, but he thinks the Sykes Road violations may have just been the incompetence of the project engineering and consulting firm.

5.B Millard Road Property Zoning Discussion

Graichen said we tried to discuss the zoning of the City-owned Millard Road property at previous Commission meetings in July 2018 and August 2018, but we ran out of time. Since then, the preliminary findings from the Housing Needs Analysis (HNA) have been developed. He said the City Council held a Public Forum and the Parks Commission weighed in on what the zoning of the property should be. Now it is time for the Planning Commission to weigh in. Graichen went through introductory slides that were included in the packet. He said a 50 foot wide access easement allows access from Chase Road to the property, but if a development proposal is not received by March 2020, the easement can be terminated by the owner. There are a number of wetlands with various classifications located on the property. The Transportation System Plan (TSP) identifies a north/south connection through the property. The Parks & Trails Master Plan indicates the need for a portion of the property to be set aside as parkland. The Comprehensive Plan map shows the property as mostly Public Lands (PL) with a small northern portion as Moderate Residential (R7).

Graichen said the preliminary findings of HNA support a zone change to something other than R10 and R7, since there are surpluses in those lands. Graichen noted, however, that neighbors testified in favor of R7 or R10 at the Public Forum. He said that there is interest in Mixed Use (MU), which would allow the market to decide the amount of residential and commercial. This could help with our shortage of commercial lands identified in the Economic Opportunity Analysis (EOA) from 2008. The Parks Commission and the Columbia County Board of Commissioners support MU. Commissioner Stenberg asked about the deed restriction. Vice Chair Cary said wetlands MC-15 and MC-17 both require a deed restriction since they are both mitigation areas. Dimsho said the Parks Commission's recommendation included a park on the northern area next to McNulty Creek (remaining PL zoning), with the lower portion changing to MU zoning. She said they were in support of a trail through the property to satisfy the TSP. The Commission likes the flexibility of MU zoning for the whole property, especially since parks are an allowed use in MU.

Commissioner Stenberg suggested senior housing, cluster housing, or memory care facilities. Vice Chair Cary said the property is kind of isolated, but if a mix of uses were developed, it could work. Commissioner Cohen hopes the property is planned and developed in its entirety, rather than in pieces.

6) Planning Director Decisions

Vice Chair Cary asked if there was anything special about the two-parcel partitions that were approved. Graichen said no, but he noted that there has been an increase in rowhomes being developed in St. Helens post-recession.

7) Planning Department Activity Report **7.A April Planning Department Report**

There were no comments.

8) For Your Information Items

Vice Chair Cary and Dimsho discussed the 5th Street trail project. She is writing a grant to help fund the implementation of an off-street urban trail through mostly undeveloped S. 5th Street right-of-way. Last week Dimsho, Vice Chair Cary, and Engineering Director Sue Nelson traversed the right-of-way to see if the project was feasible. It was decided to phase the project, with the first phase starting from Nob Hill Nature Park and ending at the existing Tualatin Street pedestrian path. If we are successful with the grant request, the project will be a partnership with the Columbia River Youth Corps, a group of St. Helens High School students who help clear invasive plants and develop trails.

9) **Next Regular Meeting - June 11, 2019**

10) **Adjournment**

There being no further business before the Planning Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 8:39 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Jennifer Dimsho
Associate Planner*