

City of St. Helens Planning Commission

Approved Minutes

January 8, 2019

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

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: Associate Planner Dimsho
City Planner Graichen
Councilor Carlson

Others: Jeff Rauth
Dale Batement
Pebbles Stone

- 1) **7:00 p.m. Call to Order and Flag Salute**
- 2) **Consent Agenda: Approval of Minutes**
2.A Planning Commission Minutes Dated December 11, 2018

Motion: Upon Commissioner Webster's motion and Commissioner Stenberg's second, the Planning Commission unanimously approved Draft Planning Commission Minutes dated December 11, 2018 with the addition of Commissioner Lawrence in attendance and Commissioner Cohen added to the motion on page 3. [AYES: Commissioner Cohen, Commissioner Lawrence, Vice Chair Cary, Commissioner Semling, Commissioner Stenberg, Commissioner Webster; Nays: None]

2.B Housing Needs Advisory Committee Meeting #1 Minutes

Motion: Upon Commissioner Cohen's motion and Commissioner Webster's second, the Planning Commission unanimously approved Draft Housing Needs Advisory Committee Meeting #1 Minutes dated December 11, 2018. [AYES: Commissioner Cohen, Commissioner Lawrence, Vice Chair Cary, Commissioner Semling, 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. - Conditional Use Permit at 2353 & 2355 Columbia Blvd. - Pebbles Stone

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. City Planner Jacob Graichen entered the staff report dated January 2, 2019 into the record. Graichen described the proposal and recommended conditions of approval, as presented in the staff report. He said the existing buildings and pavement on the site are grandfathered, which is important given floodplain rules. The applicant would like to renovate the buildings in two phases. Graichen said the site seems like an ideal location for childcare because of the existing screening, paving, and other amenities, like the creek. A Sensitive Lands Permit was included in the proposal because of the floodplain. The Sensitive Lands conditions of approval have been combined with the conditions for the Conditional Use Permit. Another Sensitive Lands Permit will be needed for Phase Two renovations.

In Favor

Stone, Pebbles. Applicant. Stone owns Monkey Tree Learning Center (by the DMV). She is trying to expand because she has over 100 children on the waitlist. She is the largest childcare facility that accepts state vouchers. Forty-nine percent of parents cannot pay up front, and they are often declined services. She tried to purchase former the childcare facility on Old Portland Road, but the owner was not ready to sell. Stone said she was able to close on this property within 30 days. She employs 48 local staff, including high schoolers. She is highly connected with the community. She runs a preschool promise program through the Education Hub, which offers free preschool for those who cannot afford it. Their current center is at full capacity every day with 150 children. Stone said Jeff Rauth is the contractor and he is here to answer any questions about the development of the site.

Chairman Hubbard asked how many children she will serve with each phase. Stone said she will serve ten children with each phase. She said the state mandates a certain square footage per child. Stone said there will be one staff member for every four children. Commissioner Cohen asked about safety features around the creek. Stone said they will install a six-foot no-climb fence around the property. Vice Chair Cary asked about the deck railing. Stone said they will also install a net. Commissioner Cohen asked the ages of the children. Stone said for Phase One, it will be infants, which is her highest demand. Phase Two will include preschool age. Chair Hubbard asked about traffic impacts. Stone said parents travel to and from daycare before business hours. Children are dropped off before high-traffic hours in the morning (before 7 a.m.) and are picked up after businesses are closed (after 6 p.m.). Pick-up and drop-off times average between 12 and 14 minutes, which is very short. Parking is provided on-site for staff. Commissioner Cohen asked if the existing landscaping creates vision clearance issues. Graichen said it did not appear to. Vice Chair Cary asked if a 24-foot driveway was wide enough for two-way traffic. Graichen said it is likely just barely wide enough. He noted it would be a shame to widen the driveway and remove or damage the existing concrete planter and mature landscaping along Columbia Blvd.

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

Vice Chair Cary asked if the decision tonight is for Phase One, Phase Two, and the Sensitive Lands Permit. Graichen said yes. He said Phase Two work will require another Sensitive Lands Permit at the time that the work is applied for.

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

5) Discussion Items

5.A Term Expiration Discussion

Graichen said one application was received for Commissioner Webster and Commissioner Semling's terms prior to the deadline. The interview panel interviewed the applicant on December 28. The panel thought that he was a viable candidate, but a final recommendation was not reached by the end of the discussion. Graichen said the Commission needs to make a recommendation to the Council, who ultimately decides who to appoint.

Commissioner Cohen felt he could not recommend a change in membership on the Commission at this time. Commissioner Stenberg felt we have a good Commission now. Since both Commissioners said they would like to serve another term, Commissioner Stenberg also recommended no change in membership at this time. Commissioner Cohen noted that the applicant showed up 30 minutes late to the interview. Councilor Carlson noted the candidate did not display a lot of enthusiasm to serve on the Commission. Commissioner Cohen said the policy to serve two terms and re-advertise is flawed because it is too subjective. The policy should be black and white. He said if the Council wants turnover, there should be a policy for a maximum number of terms. Graichen said when the ordinance was first adopted, he thought it should not apply to the Planning Commission because experience is critical. Councilor Carlson said the Planning Commission benefits from a variety of backgrounds and experience. Commissioner Cohen asked Councilor Carlson to relay to Council that the requirement to force re-advertisement when an incumbent Planning Commissioner is willing to be re-appointed is flawed for the Planning Commission. Commissioner Cohen said the best commissioners bring experience to the table. Councilor Carlson suggested removing the policy for just the Planning Commission. She noted that Council already has the authority to re-appoint, so if there is an issue with a member, the Council can choose when to advertise for a position, rather than force advertisement for term expirations.

Motion: Upon Commissioner Stenberg's motion and Commissioner Lawrence's second, the Planning Commission unanimously recommended to City Council re-appointment of Commissioner Semling for another term. [Ayes: Commissioner Cohen, Commissioner Lawrence, Vice Chair Cary, Commissioner Stenberg, Commissioner Webster; Nays: None]

Motion: Upon Commissioner Lawrence's motion and Commissioner Cohen's second, the Planning Commission unanimously recommended to City Council re-appointment of Commissioner Webster for another term. [Ayes: Commissioner Cohen, Commissioner Lawrence, Vice Chair Cary, Commissioner Semling, Commissioner Stenberg; Nays: None]

5.B End of Year Summary Report

Graichen said the number of land use files processed increased from last year. Commissioner Cohen noted that the numbers are not incredibly higher, but the size and scope of projects have been larger. Graichen agreed. Commissioner Cohen asked how much time has been saved by removing Type One Home Occupations. Associate Planner Dimsho said it saves about two hours per application, from the initial over-the-counter discussion to issuing the permit.

5.C Chair/Vice Chair Selection

Vice Chair Cary offered the vice chair position to anyone if they were interested. Commissioner Stenberg expressed a willingness to run meetings if there are absences.

Motion: Upon Commissioner Cohen's motion and Commissioner Semling's second, the Planning Commission unanimously approved another year with Chair Hubbard as chair and Vice Chair Cary as vice chair. [AYES: Commissioner Cohen, Commissioner Lawrence, Vice Chair Cary, Commissioner Semling, Commissioner Stenberg, Commissioner Webster; Nays: None]

6) Planning Director Decisions

There were no comments.

7) Planning Department Activity Report

7.A December Planning Department Report

There were no comments.

8) For Your Information Items

Graichen said the next Housing Needs Analysis Advisory Committee meeting is at 6 p.m. before the Planning Commission meeting on February 12, 2019. There is also a Joint Planning Commission/City Council meeting for the Riverfront Connector Plan on February 20 from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Dimsho said there is a public meeting to kick off the EPA Community-Wide Assessment Grant Program before the regularly scheduled City Council meeting on February 6 at 6 p.m. Attendance is recommended for property owners with property where there is known or suspected contamination which needs environmental assessment work. There is funding available from the City to fund these assessments at no cost to the property owner.

Chair Hubbard asked about the St. Helens Marina lease agreement related to Sand Island. He asked where the additional parking will be provided. Graichen noted there are some potential areas for parking improvements, but none of these locations have been finalized. There was further discussion about the other alternative locations for parking improvements.

Vice Chair Cary shared an article from the Oregon Parks & Recreation Department regarding the updated Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) update.

9) **Next Regular Meeting - February 12, 2019**

10) **Adjournment**

There being no further business before the Planning Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Jennifer Dimsho
Associate Planner*