

City of St. Helens Planning Commission

Approved Minutes

December 11, 2018

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

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: City Planner Graichen
Associate Planner Dimsho
Councilor Carlson

Others:	Jennifer Pugsley	Frank Robison
	Anne Marie Skinner	Josh Volk
	Buck Smith	Al Petersen
	Rich Bailey	Shauna Harrison

- 1) **7:00 p.m. Call to Order and Flag Salute**
- 2) **Consent Agenda: Approval of Minutes**
2.A Minutes Dated October 9, 2018

Motion: Upon Commissioner Webster's motion and Commissioner Stenberg's second, the Planning Commission unanimously approved Draft Minutes dated October 9, 2018. Commissioner Cohen did not vote due to his absence from that meeting. [AYES: Vice Chair Cary, Commissioner Semling, Commissioner Lawrence, Commissioner Stenberg, Commissioner Webster; Nays: None]

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

Harrison, Shauna. She would like the Commission to review the rules for a Tree Council. City Planner Jacob Graichen said there is some language about a Tree Commission in Volume 1 of the Municipal Code, but as far as he can tell, it has never existed. It was intended to be an advisory board to City Council. Harrison feels that with all of the building going on, the Tree Council should be enacted.

Bailey, Rich. Bailey said there are already rules for tree preservation and required planting. If there is another group to oversee the tree ordinance, it will just increase costs of development. Graichen described the process for preserving, maintaining, or removing public trees (e.g. trees

that are in the right-of-way). These trees are subject to public protection. Chair Hubbard agrees with Bailey. The already Development Code already addresses tree preservation and tree planting requirements. Councilor Ginny Carlson asked about preserving historic trees. Graichen said he does not think there is a formal list of historic trees to preserve, but he would have to look into it more.

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

4.A 7:00 p.m. - Conditional Use Permit at N. 14th Street & N. 15th Street between Columbia Blvd. & St. Helens Street - Frank Robison Veterinary Service

Chair Hubbard opened the Public Hearing at 7:10 p.m. There were no ex-parte contacts, conflicts of interests, or bias in this matter. Graichen entered the staff report dated December 4, 2018 into the record.

Graichen said the site was previously developed decades ago. He described the proposal and recommended conditions of approval, as presented in the staff report. The Corridor Master Plan (2015) identified this site as an opportunity area for a stormwater interpretive gathering place. However, it was a low-priority project, partly because of the high cost to purchase the property and construction costs. The City previously had the opportunity to purchase it, but decided against it. For these reasons, staff feels this recommendation from the Corridor Master Plan can be dismissed for now. Stormwater is a significant challenge for the site, given the topography. The applicant is proposing on-site infrastructure under the parking lot and in N. 15th Street to convey water to the existing stormwater system.

In Favor

Skinner, Anne Marie. Representing Applicant. Skinner thanked staff for assistance in this project. Skinner said Dr. Robison is very excited to bring this new building to this mixed-use area. She said this property has been unused for over 30 years. Skinner feels the application and plan set provide enough detail for approval of the conditional use permit tonight. It is the intent of Dr. Robison to own all three parcels, so lot consolidation or a deed restriction is not a problem. Skinner said they would like to begin construction as soon as possible. They are hoping to occupy the building by early summer 2019. Rich Bailey is the builder. She said there will be plans in the future to develop the remainder of the property. Skinner created a site plan with two additional buildings that utilize a shared parking lot, shared access and a shared drive aisle. Uses of the building is unknown at this point. She noted there is room for additional on-street parking for the other buildings to use. All unused area on the property will be seeded or landscaped so that it will look nice. They will also be planting street trees and replacing trees that are to be removed. Storm and sewer infrastructure are being investigated, as required by the staff report. A geotechnical study/soils study was performed. Skinner said the conditions, as presented in the staff report will be adhered to by the contractor. She would ask for approval, as recommended by staff. The project engineer is also present to answer any questions.

Smith, Buck. Representing Applicant. Smith is an engineer with PBS Engineering. Commissioner Cohen asked about the fill for the site. Smith said the fill will be structural fill compacted at a rate recommended by the geotechnical engineer. The removal of organic material (about two feet of excavation) will help with the previous conditions of the site. Vice Chair Cary asked where the previous buildings were on the site. Graichen said an old survey indicated the previous buildings were not located where the proposed building is planned.

Bailey, Rich. Bailey is the builder for the project. This is a great opportunity for the site to be cleaned up and be a benefit to the business district. With Community Action Team's development down the street, the Food Bank renovations across the street, and this project, the Houlton Business District is seeing lots of positive change.

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

Chair Hubbard is glad to see that ownership will be consolidated and that the applicant has future plans to develop the other lots further. Chair Hubbard asked if there will be overnight housing for the clients. Commissioner Stenberg said the application narrative says there will be overnight stays for hospitalized animals. Commissioner Semling asked about the east side of the parking lot. Graichen said it is a turn-around/maneuvering area to prevent backing motion onto N. 15th Street. Commissioner Semling asked if the site would have access off St. Helens Street in the future. Graichen said it would likely not.

Vice Chair Cary asked when the Corridor Master Plan recommended frontage improvements would be initiated, if not now. Graichen said they will be developed with large-scale, City-initiated projects. Graichen said in the past, the Commission decided to not require applicants to tear out already-built sidewalks in order to re-build them to the newer Corridor Master Plan standards. Graichen said that the required frontage improvements have to be proportional to the scale of the project. Vice Chair Cary noted they will be putting in street trees, but they will be behind the sidewalk, instead of in front of the sidewalk like the Corridor Master Plan recommends. Commissioner Cohen asked if the sidewalks will meet ADA requirements. Graichen said he thinks the existing sidewalks have ramps already.

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

5) Discussion Items

5.A 50 Plaza Square Riverfront District Architectural Guidelines Recommendation

Graichen said the Commission is reviewing this proposal as the Historic Landmarks Commission (HLC). Graichen said a few months ago, the applicant applied to remove the cedar awning/canopy to restore the historic transom windows. Graichen went through the memo, as included in the packet. Commissioner Semling noted that having a window on the side might encourage an area to break in. Graichen said there may be challenges to install a new window on the side of the building, due to the proximity of the property line. Graichen said if they are able to get through building code challenges of window placement, there are recommended conditions regarding the design, as included in the memo.

Pugsley, Jennifer. Applicant. Pugsley noted that most businesses have wooden doors with a wooden kickplate on the bottom. That is her intention, even though the drawing does not reflect that. The only reason she may not install these doors is if they will not meet ADA requirements. Her overall goal is to renovate the building back to how it was when it was built in 1928, or as close as possible. She is excited about restoring the transom windows on the front. The window on the side will help bring in more natural light and to open up a view of the courthouse and river. Chair Hubbard asked about a skylight. Pugsley said it is a consideration, but may be too costly. Commissioner Cohen asked if putting a window on the side would affect the historic nature of the building. She said that side of the building used to be another building. Pugsley said the new window will match the rest of the building. Pugsley confirmed the use will be a real estate office.

Petersen, Al. Petersen asked if the doors would be wooden with kickplates. Graichen said it is the applicant's intention if ADA requirements can be met. Petersen made suggestions about the specifications of the door to solve the ADA issue. Regarding the window on the side, Petersen said there could be a deed restriction that states if something were to be built on the County's vacant property, the window would have to be removed. An easement may also make the window possible. The fact that the adjacent property is a County-owned "park" may also help. Petersen said the main façade restoration is the most important. Graichen said the applicant will have future discussions with the Building Official about the various options for the window.

Chair Hubbard noted that the font size seems large for the sign. Pugsley said she was scaling the text to the size of the glazed brick. Graichen said the sign can be up to eight percent of the facade of the building. The Architectural Guidelines state the sign should be proportional to the scale of the building. Graichen said the HLC could recommend a smaller font size.

Motion: Upon Commissioner Cohen's motion and Commissioner Webster's second, the Planning Commission unanimously recommended approval of the building permit with the three conditions as presented in the memo and recommended approval of the sign permit with the addition that staff consider the proportionality of the sign letters to the negative space surrounding the letters. [AYES: Vice Chair Cary, Commissioner Cohen, Commissioner Semling, Commissioner Stenberg, Commissioner Webster; Nays: None]

5.B Commission Term Expirations Update

Graichen said there have been no applications submitted for the two commissioner terms that are expiring. The deadline for submitting an application is Friday, December 14. Graichen would like a motion to recommend to Council renewal of Commissioner Semling and Commissioner Webster's terms, assuming no other applications are received by December 14. If an application is received, the interview committee will be convened, and this motion will become invalid.

Motion: Upon Commissioner Stenberg's motion and Commissioner Webster's second, the Planning Commission unanimously recommended to Council renewal of Commissioner Semling and Commissioner Webster's terms, if no applications are received by December 14, 2018. [AYES: Vice Chair Cary, Commissioner Cohen, Commissioner Lawrence, Commissioner Semling, Commissioner Stenberg, Commissioner Webster; Nays: None]

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: Vice Chair Cary, Commissioner Cohen, Commissioner Lawrence, Commissioner Semling, Commissioner Stenberg, Commissioner Webster; Nays: None]

7) **Planning Director Decisions**

Vice Chair Cary asked where 175 Bowling Alley is. Graichen said it used to have a Sykes Road address, but was changed to Bowling Alley at the request of the Fire Marshall for emergency response. It is property located behind the Bowling Alley. Graichen said the Temporary Use Permit process is being used for food truck pods, in addition to singular food trucks. Commissioner Lawrence clarified the term limits for food trucks. Commissioner Webster clarified parking requirements. Chair Stenberg likes the idea of food truck and food truck pods because it offers an opportunity for businesses to get started.

8) **Planning Department Activity Report**

8.A **October Planning Department Report**

8.B **November Planning Department Report**

There were no comments.

9) **For Your Information Items**

Graichen said there is a tentatively scheduled Planning Commission/City Council Joint Work Session meeting scheduled for February 20, 2019, at 6 p.m. for the Riverfront Connector Plan. Vice Chair Cary asked about the wetland delineation for the City-owned former Boise site. Vice Chair Cary wanted to make sure the consultant would include wetlands that may not be identified in the Local Wetland Inventory. Councilor Carlson asked about tree preservation for the trees outside of the wetlands. Graichen said a tree plan would be required for tree harvesting. The tree plan would be in place to prevent clear cutting and to make sure the tree canopy is not reduced.

10) **Next Regular Meeting - January 8, 2019**

11) **Adjournment**

There being no further business before the Planning Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 9:48 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Jennifer Dimsho
Associate Planner*