

City of St. Helens

Planning Commission Meeting

December 12, 2017

Minutes

Members Present: Al Petersen, Chair
Dan Cary, Vice Chair
Greg Cohen, Commissioner
Sheila Semling, Commissioner
Audrey Webster, Commissioner
Kathryn Lawrence, Commissioner
Russell Hubbard, Commissioner

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: Jacob Graichen, City Planner
Jennifer Dimsho, Associate Planner

Councilors Present: Ginny Carlson, City Council Liaison

Others Present: Julie Stenberg

The Planning Commission meeting was called to order by Chair Al Petersen at 7:00 p.m. Chair Petersen led the flag salute.

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Consent Agenda

Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Webster moved to approve the minutes of the October 10, 2017 Planning Commission meeting. Vice Chair Cary seconded the motion. Motion carried with all in favor. Commissioner Semling did not vote due to her absence from that meeting. Chair Petersen did not vote as per operating rules.

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Topics From The Floor

Julie Stenberg was in the audience. She stated her interest in joining the Planning Commission. She interviewed last week for Chair Petersen's term, which ends on December 31, 2017.

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Commission Term Expiration Discussion

City Planner Graichen asked if anyone would like to end their term with the Commission guilt-free. He explained that Stenberg's background makes her a very good fit for the Commission, which is not always the case with incoming applicants. Commissioner Hubbard noted that Stenberg has a background in real estate law and development, which would be great with the upcoming waterfront redevelopment. Councilor Carlson wanted to see if any commissioners were planning on leaving in the next year because of life changes or any other reasons. None of the commissioners volunteered to end their term early.

Chair Petersen asked if the City asked Stenberg to be on the Advisory Committee for the upcoming Riverfront Connector planning process. Graichen said not yet. Stenberg agreed to be on this Committee. Associate Planner Dimsho said she would add her to the list.

Commissioner Cohen said he sat in on the interview with Stenberg. He thinks she is a qualified candidate, which is rare, but he does not feel comfortable removing Chair Petersen because of his experience and tenure on the Commission. Commissioner Cohen likes the idea of having an alternate member for when commissioners are absent. The Commission would like to pursue this as an option. Graichen said he could research the alternate member option for specific rules (depending on the City Council's decision). He said it would take a text amendment to make it happen.

Stenberg said if she is unable to join the Commission at this time, she would be fine with volunteering in other ways for a few years until there is an opening in the future.

MOTION₁

Commissioner Webster moved to recommend to City Council to appoint Commissioner Hubbard for another term. Commissioner Cohen seconded the motion. Motion carried with all in favor.

MOTION₂

Commissioner Cohen moved to recommend to City Council to appoint Chair Petersen for another term. Commissioner Webster seconded the motion. Motion carried with all in favor.

MOTION₃

Commissioner Cohen moved to recommend to City Council to have an alternate commissioner with Julie Stenberg serving this role. Commissioner Webster seconded the motion. Motion carried with all in favor.

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Dedication of Open Space Discussion

Graichen explained that this topic is a result of the recently approved Emerald Meadows subdivision. He said the testimony during the City Council public hearing revolved around the fact that it was high density residential lots with little open space. Graichen explained the proposed guidelines and pros and cons for requiring open space dedication with subdivisions, as presented in the memo.

Chair Petersen suggested a Local Improvement District to fund the maintenance of the park, instead of a Homeowner's Association (HOA). Graichen said typically LIDs are based on a specific project and then disband once complete.

Commissioner Cohen said he likes the idea, but he is concerned about the term "open space." That term makes him think of wetlands that are overgrown. He thinks it should be an amenity for recreation that people can actually use. Commissioner Cohen further explained that if the City is going to impose an open space requirement, then it should be well-defined what amenities are provided on the open space. Commissioner Cohen said he is also concerned that if it is only the people within the development paying for it, then it should only be the people who live there who can use it. He asked how that would be enforced.

Commissioner Hubbard said he does not think one lot would be sufficient. He thinks it should be a square footage requirement based on the size of the subdivision. He also noted that City Council approved a zone change to higher density for the Emerald Meadows subdivision. He feels that was part of the reason for the testimony about the lack of open space during the public hearing.

Commissioner Lawrence said she has experience with shared open space. Her HOA maintains the open space, a gazebo, and a ramp down to the river. It is entirely fenced in. She is not sure the shared maintenance would work on a larger scale.

Commissioner Semling said that when all of the lots surround the open space with fencing around the perimeter, it makes people who do not live there hesitant to use the space. She also feels that at least two lots should have been required for a development as big as Emerald Meadows. Commissioner Hubbard said it should be a square footage requirement, not just a number of lots.

Vice Chair Cary said the open space should not be at the edge of the subdivision in an area that is simply not developable, otherwise it will get overgrown and unusable. Chair Petersen agrees; the lot should be well designed. Commissioner Cohen said if the City had a Parks and Recreation District, the District could take maintenance responsibility, instead of an HOA.

Chair Petersen suggested 25 lots and/or dwelling units as the trigger for the open space requirement, since that is what triggers a Transportation Impact Analysis. There was no consensus about this number. The Commission would prefer a square footage requirement instead of requiring a single lot dedication. Commissioner Semling does not think the open space requirement should apply to R10 zoning, since they have large lots and yard requirements. The Commission agreed.

Commissioner Cohen asked how the open space dedication would not overlap with park SDCs. Graichen said he would look into it.

Commissioner Hubbard feels there are more cons than pros with the blanket open space dedication requirement idea. However, he suggested that if there are parks nearby to the development, perhaps the developer can build a better connection to the existing park. Commissioner Webster agreed.

Graichen explained the likely remaining areas to be developed in the City using the exhibit in the memo. He said there are not many large developments remaining. Commissioner Webster does not think it is worth the hassle to develop the open space dedication requirement. Commissioner Cohen said there is only land available to develop five to six more large subdivisions, so he agrees.

Councilor Carlson said the open space dedication requirement seemed like a good idea during the Council meeting, but after hearing this discussion, she feels it might make more sense to have a "livability mitigation" requirement that can be flexible depending on the context of the development. Vice Chair Cary agrees. The Commission likes having a flexible standard for subdivisions that gives the City more power to apply conditions related to parks and open space. Dimsho suggested tying the conditions to the needs of the Parks & Trails Master Plan, so they are tangible improvements. Graichen said ultimately any conditions will have to be clear and objective. The Commission agreed to pursue this option instead of the open space dedication requirement.

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Acceptance Agenda: Planning Administrator Site Design Review

- a. Site Design Review at 1400 Kaster Road - Use three existing buildings for marijuana production

Commissioner Cohen moved to accept the acceptance agenda. Commissioner Webster seconded. All in favor; none opposed; motion carries.

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Planning Director Decisions

- a. Sign Permit (3) at 354 N. 15th Street & 474 N. 16th Street - St. Helens School District
- b. Sign Permit (3) at 373 S. Columbia River Highway (Skinny's Texaco) - Dewey's Sign Service
- c. Sign Permit (Banner) at 2100 Block of Columbia Blvd. - Toy N' Joy Auction
- d. Conditional Use Permit (Minor Modification) at 197 N. River Street - Lower Columbia Engineering, LLC
- e. Home Occupation (Type I) at 59368 Alderwood St. - Home office for cleaning services
- f. Temporary Use Permit (Medical Hardship) at 364 N. 1st Street - Jana Brecht
- g. Sign Permits (2) at 124 Eilertson Street - Fast Boyz Automotive, LLC
- h. Sign Permit (Banner) at 2100 Block of Columbia Blvd. - Donut Day
- i. Home Occupation (Type I) at 2154 Oregon Street #90 - Home office for construction business
- j. Home Occupation (Type I) at 34701 Cascade Street - Home office for drywall business
- k. Sign Permit at 58555 McNulty Way - Columbia River Fire & Rescue

There were no comments.

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Planning Department Activity Reports

There were no comments.

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For Your Information Items

Graichen said the St. Helens Marina street vacation public hearing will not go before the Planning Commission per the City Council. He also said there will be three or four public hearings next month.

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There being no further business before the Planning Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 8:17 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Dimsho
Associate Planner

2017 Planning Commission Attendance Record

P=Present A=Absent Can=Cancelled

Date	Petersen	Hubbard	Lawrence	Cohen	Cary	Semling	Webster
01/10/17	P	P	A	P	P	P	P
02/14/17	P	P	P	P	A	P	P
03/14/17	P	P	A	P	P	P	P
04/11/17	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
05/09/17	P	P	P	A	P	P	P
06/13/17	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
07/11/17	A	P	P	P	P	P	P
08/08/17	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
09/12/17	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
10/10/17	P	P	P	P	P	A	P
11/14/17	CAN	CAN	CAN	CAN	CAN	CAN	CAN
12/12/17	P	P	P	P	P	P	P