

City of St. Helens Planning Commission

Approved Minutes

July 9, 2019

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

Members Absent: Commissioner Cohen
Commissioner Webster

Staff Present: Councilor Carlson
City Planner Graichen
Associate Planner Dimsho

Others: Al Petersen
Steve Topaz

- 1) **7:00 p.m. - Call to Order and Flag Salute**
- 2) **Consent Agenda: Approval of Minutes**
2.A Planning Commission Minutes Dated June 11, 2019

Motion: Upon Vice Chair Cary's motion and Commissioner Lawrence's second, the Planning Commission unanimously approved Planning Commission Minutes Dated June 11, 2019. [Ayes: Commissioner Lawrence, Commissioner Semling, Commissioner Stenberg, Vice Chair Cary; 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. - Comprehensive Plan Amendment (Housing Needs Analysis) - City of St. Helens

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 July 2, 2019 into the record. Graichen reminded the Commission that the planning process to develop the Housing Needs Analysis (HNA) was paid for by the state, and it was a very condensed timeline. Associate Planner Dimsho summarized the findings of the HNA, as presented in the staff report. She described that the adoption of the HNA will put us in compliance with Statewide Planning Goal 10 - Housing. She said these findings will also support the housing code amendments to be developed in the future. Vice Chair Cary noted that

the availability of acreage may not be as high as anticipated because of the bedrock and cliffs in St. Helens. Graichen said there are inherently imperfections in the data, but overall conclusions remain the same. We have enough residential land to accommodate the various housing types needed for the next 20 years of growth within the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB). Vice Chair Cary said this also means our UGB does not need to expand to accommodate residential land. Graichen noted that House Bill 2001 may also require that the City adopt certain regulations that will affect our housing code amendments to be developed. Commissioner Lawrence asked the difference between a duplex and multi-family dwellings. Graichen said duplexes are two dwelling units in a single building and multi-family is a building with three or more units. Also, for duplexes only one principal building is allowed per parcel, but there is no such limit for multi-family development.

In Favor

No one spoke in favor.

Neutral

Petersen, Al. Petersen said since 2007, we have not been building enough housing nationally. A report on NPR said we need 1.6 million houses annually, but we have only been building about 1.3 million. We have a deficit, not just in Oregon. For financing real estate, a loan officer first asks how many units you are financing. If it is under four, it is considered a residential loan. If it is over four dwellings, it is considered a commercial loan. This is a well-established banking standard. He cited some examples from Tualatin's housing code changes, including cottage clusters, courtyard housing, quads, ADUs, and duplex rules. He explained a scenario where two duplexes are required to get a partition and another scenario where the County surveyor required removal of an encroaching fence before recording a subdivision plat. These are examples where government is getting in the way of development. If we are serious about building more housing, we need to change our interpretation of the code. He said that Avamere has two duplexes on the same lot. He also noted that one of the excuses from Oregon Department of Transportation to not signalize Bennett Road is that it is outside of the UGB.

Topaz, Steve. Topaz described the housing where he grew up in Baltimore, Maryland. He said their official lot size is 25 feet by 250 feet, but it changed over time. He thinks two duplexes should be allowed on a lot. He is worried about requiring mandatory low-income housing with development. He does not want to end up with a large unemployed population. He is worried about changing the character of the city.

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 City could expand the UGB with these HNA findings. Graichen said these findings do not support an expansion based on the need for residential land, so it would likely be a very time-consuming and complex process to expand it.

Motion: Upon Commissioner Stenberg's motion and Commissioner Semling's second, the Planning Commission unanimously recommended to the City Council approval of the Comprehensive Plan Amendment. [Ayes: Commissioner Lawrence, Commissioner Semling, Commissioner Stenberg, Vice Chair Cary; Nays: None]

4.B 7:30 p.m. - Conditional Use Permit at 1771 Columbia Blvd. - Establish religious assembly in an existing commercial building

Chair Hubbard opened the Public Hearing at 7:45 p.m. There were no ex-parte contacts, conflicts of interests, or bias in this matter. Graichen entered the staff report dated July 2, 2019 into the record. He described the proposal and recommended conditions of approval, as presented in the staff report. Graichen said the Commission has reviewed this building many times. He said religious assembly has a higher parking requirement than some other uses. He explained that this property is split-zoned. Houlton Business District (HBD) allows adjacent on-street parking to count for off-street parking, but General Commercial (GC) does not. If the entire property was zoned HBD, parking would not be an issue because there is ample on-street parking. Unfortunately, it is the same property owner who advocated for this split zoning when the HBD zone was created in 2008. Graichen also noted that outdoor storage is not allowed as a principal use, even though it is occurring on the site. Outdoor storage is only allowed as an incidental use to an approved use.

Graichen recommended a change to condition 2g to allow for an additional access off of a local-classified street. He also recommended adding a new condition in lieu of conditions 2a through 2h. The new condition would allow a zone change application to change the GC portion to HBD for the entire parcel, instead of conditions 2a through 2h. If the zone change fails, additional off-street parking would have to be addressed. Commissioner Lawrence asked if there would be any downside to the current tenant if a zone change was processed. Graichen did not think so.

In Favor

No one testified 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

The Commission wanted to incorporate Graichen's recommended changes to the conditions.

Motion: Upon Vice Chair Cary's motion and Commissioner Semling's second, the Planning Commission unanimously approved the Conditional Use Permit with an additional condition as modified by Graichen to allow for a zone change in lieu of conditions 2a through 2h and a modification to 2g to allow for additional access off of a local classified street. [Ayes: Commissioner Lawrence, Commissioner Semling, Commissioner Stenberg, Vice Chair Cary; Nays: None]

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

5) Planning Director Decisions

There were no comments.

6) Planning Department Activity Report 6.A June Planning Department Report

There were no comments.

7) For Your Information Items

Councilor Carlson asked the Commission for feedback on the 4th of July celebration. Commissioner Lawrence said her neighbor's grandchildren were able to camp on Sand Island and had a great time. Chair Hubbard said it was nice that the fireworks were on the island. He said it seemed orderly and there were lots of attendees. He suggested having a phone number that residents can call for more information or to complain. Commissioner Stenberg appreciated the police presence directing traffic after the show was over.

Chair Hubbard asked about the Millard Road property park design. Dimsho said Mackenzie, a landscape architect consultant, has been hired to determine where the park boundary should be based on the park amenities and design. This will inform the zone change application. There was a discussion on the status of the Graystone Estates preliminary subdivision.

8) Next Regular Meeting - August 13, 2019

9) 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*