

**COLUMBIA CITY PLANNING COMMISSION  
PUBLIC HEARINGS & REGULAR SESSION  
CITY HALL – 1840 SECOND STREET  
MARCH 8, 2011, 7:00 P.M.**

**PLANNING**

**COMMISSIONERS:**

Deborah Jacob, Chair  
Glen Pritchard, Vice-Chair  
Kelly Niles  
John Sachs  
Lisa Bush  
Nell Harrison  
Kenneth Wieland

\*Denotes Commissioner absent

**STAFF:**

Lisa Smith, Planner

**OTHERS:**

Rick Williams, Portland OR  
Finos Lunsford, Columbia City OR  
Pete Castellanos, Columbia City OR  
Patrick Trapp, St. Helens OR  
Hal Fay, Columbia City OR  
(Above list reflects those who signed in)

**MEETING TO ORDER:**

Deborah called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:**

Deborah led the pledge of allegiance.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

None.

**CITIZEN INPUT AND REQUESTS:**

None.

**PUBLIC HEARING:**

**REGULAR SESSION CLOSED AND PUBLIC HEARING OPENED.**

Bias or Conflicts of Interest

Deborah asked if there were any conflicts of interest or bias related to the hearing. All Commissioners declared "No". She then asked if anyone had visited the site and again all Commissioners declared "No".

Staff Report

Lisa asked if anyone in the audience had any objection to any of the Planning Commissioners hearing this matter. No objections were heard from the audience.

Lisa stated the application is from Clearwater Paper Corporation who will be conducting an industrial use on the Port of St. Helens property at the far north end of the Columbia City. ProBuild/Dixieline Lumber currently occupies the site and they will continue to use portions of the site for lumber storage. The site currently contains an approved lumber reload operation and related improvements. The Commissioners were presented with numerous pictures that show the current improvements to the site. From Highway 30 the property slopes towards the river enough to put the Clearwater Paper's proposed site approximately 45' below Highway 30.

Lisa commented that the City's referral stated they had no objection to the proposal as submitted, but storage piles should be watered or covered as needed to prevent airborne particles. Noise should be monitored and additional requirements or restrictions made if it becomes a problem. Lisa stated she has included these concerns as conditions of approval in the staff report.

Lisa commented that the referral for Oregon Department of Transportation stated the applicant must apply for an approach permit. The existing approach is un-permitted. The applicant has been advised of that issue and is addressing it.

Lisa explained when the Development Code was redone back in 2003, instead of creating a long list of wood product type activities, the City stated the approved uses existing on April 1, 2003 on the Port of St. Helens site were permitted uses. Lists of permitted uses in industrial zone or in any zone are not necessarily complete because it is not possible to think of all the possible opportunities that someone might want to do with a piece of property, especially industrial and commercial.

Lisa explained there is a section in the code on how to deal with unlisted uses that are very similar to listed uses. If the situation is similar in impact, it can be authorized by the Planning Commission as a unlisted use and then added to a list. Wood fiber reloading operations are not listed, however existing on the site is lumber reloading, which brings in truckloads of logs, loads them on barges and ships them out. The applicant proposes to bring in truckloads of wood fiber, load it onto barges and ship it out.

Lisa stated this application requires a site development review because they anticipate receiving 20 trucks of wood fiber at the site daily and additionally they would have 3 employees on the site. She explained when you do something that increases traffic to a site by more than 20 vehicles a day you need to go through the review. It is considered a major modification to an existing site. The major modification consists the items shown on the big drawing and she reviewed the map briefly and to explain what the plan was for the site.

Lisa stated the applicant would be painting the equipment being placed on the site a color that will avoid hillside glare. She said the applicant also stated there is no vibration type devices on the truck dumping equipment that could cause noise complaints. Lisa explained the site is located several hundred feet from Highway 30 at a lower elevation and is hard to see it from the highway.

Staff recommends the Planning Commission adopt the findings in the staff report and approve the application. There are several conditions of approval, which Lisa read for the record.

Deborah asked if the property is in the 100-year flood plain. Lisa and the applicant confirmed, yes it is. The equipment is being engineered with this in mind and she clarified the material is stored on a temporary basis while waiting to ship out on barges.

Nell asked the applicant to clarify what is wood fiber. Howard from Clearwater stated it was sawdust primarily, but in the future they may bring in chips and possibly hog fuel, which is bark from trees.

Glen asked where the barges were going and Howard stated Lewiston Idaho.

#### Applicant's Presentation

Howard Ray introduced himself as the engineer for the project from Lewiston. Rick Williams also introduced himself as the fiber manager and will be managing the facility when it is up and running.

Howard offered a PowerPoint presentation explaining who they are and what they will be doing.

Clearwater Paper is a firm about two years old. The Lewiston complex, which this facility will serve, employs about 1600 people.

The pulp used creates packaging for things like cosmetics and pharmaceuticals. It is the fancy packaging with lots of print and color. The Lewiston area is short on sawdust, because of the closing of sawmills so this is why they have come to this location.

Howard stated there would be 3 employees for the site, plus incremental increases for trucking and barging companies.

Howard stated the investment they are putting into the site is roughly 2 million dollars, with the majority of that being equipment.

Howard said the Port of St. Helens owns the entire property. They will be subleasing a portion from ProBuild and directly leasing a portion from the Port of St. Helens. He stated ProBuild plans to continue to operate at current levels.

Howard explained the process on the site would consist of a truck entering the site, going across a truck scale, where there will be a small shack to house the scale equipment, the printers and electronics as well as the drying oven to dry the fiber to test for quality. After the trucks weigh out they proceed to a trailer tipper. The tractor will be disconnected and the tipper will elevate the trailer and dump the material onto the slab. The material will then be pushed into the storage piles. When it is time to load the barge, they will use a wheeled dozer to place material on the fixed conveyor to a portable conveyor that rolls out on the dock for barge loading. The reason for the portable conveyor is for ProBuild needs the conveyor can be out of the way. Howard explained that because the loading is such a short timeframe, they would probably have a tug there behind the barge. They will be loading 400 tons an hour into a 2500-ton barge. He stated that also around the piles will be eco blocks to contain the material.

Howard addressed the airborne dust concern by stating that whether they are handling sawdust, chips or hog fuel, all of them have a high moisture content. He explained the trouble with airborne particles typically comes when you are handling planer shavings or sander dust. Those materials are fine and do go into the air. Howard again stated the material they intend to use has very high moisture content and in addition to that we do locally get rain to assist with moisture content. The conveyors will be covered, so when moving the material the wind should not be an issue. The portable conveyor will also be covered and then there will be an enclosed spout where the material enters the barge, so that no material is dropped. They have discussed watering the piles down if it becomes necessary.

Kelly asked if the conveyors are electric or hydraulic. Howard stated they are electric, the only hydraulics they will have is the truck dumper. The electric stuff will be quiet and no issues of spill containment to deal with except for the truck dumper. Howard stated that in the event a line breaks there is a good buffer between them and the river, not only distance, but also material. He stated they would also have a spill kit onsite.

Howard stated as for odor, it would smell like sawdust, like clean processed wood. They anticipate moving a barge a week out, for no other reason than quality purposes they will not accept decomposing material, nor will it be onsite.

Howard addressed the noise concern favorably as the topography and the existing vegetation will serve very well as a buffer. The site is basically sitting down in a hole. He also stated there will not be any vibration devices on the dumpers and acknowledged the City Ordinance quiet time from 8:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. Howard said in talking with the operators, they expect minimal noise as the conveyors are electric and the truck dumpers are hydraulic. He stated the manufactures of the truck tipper have stated and idling diesel truck is much louder than the hydraulic unit used to tip the trailers. The wheeled dozers will have back up alarms and they are probably going to be the loudest thing on the site. Howard stated a straight back up alarm it reads at 95 decibels. He stated they have determined a couple of options if the back up beeper alarms become a concern, they could use close proximity detection, which means the alarm would only go off is if something behind the vehicle. Howard said whatever is done it will met OSHA standards.

John asked if the trailers dump out of the tailgate and what is the noise associated with the gate coming back down. Howard explained that the tipper is hydraulic and is so slow there is no tailgate banging noise. The Commissioners commented about hearing the noise associated with the tailgates hitting and how loud that can be. Howard stated it shouldn't be an issue with the tipper they will be using.

John asked if spontaneous combustion in the piles was a concern. Howard stated that at the rate they will be turning the piles over it wouldn't be a concern.

Howard stated there would be no processing of material and so there would be no smoke generation. He also commented the site has 3 fire hydrants available if the need ever arose.

Regarding lights and glare, Howard stated they are not planning to add to the lighting level. All equipment will be painted deep spring green to minimize glare and visual impacts. Howard stated again that the existing landscaping would also assist any glare issues.

Howard stated all the excavation work has been designed in compliance with City, County and State standards. They are also addressing storm run off. The excavated material will be moved to another location on the Port property that needs to be filled and they will reseed as necessary.

Howard commented that vehicle traffic would increase, but not significantly considering the regular amount of traffic on the highway. He stated that the Oregon Department of Transportation has requested an approach permit, which has been completed and given to Lisa. This access has existed for a long time, but there was no permit on file with ODOT.

Howard showed additional slides of the site. Rick talked about the elevation and how it works to their advantage. Howard presented some information regarding noise scales for what operations will be happening on the site for comparison.

Glen asked if the entrance was gated. Howard stated it was and the property is fenced.

An unidentified resident from Sixth and Pacific asked if valid noise complaints are received, what restrictions would be put in place. Rick stated that this operation wouldn't run 24/7 like Dyno Nobel, their hours would be 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Monday to Friday, daylight hours only.

A gentlemen from the audience spoke up to say he runs the dock at ProBuild (Hal Fay) and they have run two shifts loading barges, the second shift started at 6:00 p.m. at night and run until 2:00 a.m. and he would be surprised if anyone knew that. The location is so low. He stated they would run four forklifts and have the lights on. The natural buffer of the site is such that they have never received any complaints.

Finos Lunsford, 2210 First Street, expressed his concern about the sawdust because he currently experiences a big problem with it. He stated when the wind comes from the North they get so much sawdust they can't use their deck in the summer and it has been a problem for 23 years. Finos expressed his concerns that the City would even consider another sawdust operation. He stated the worst time is from May to September. Finos stated that West Oregon Wood has promised to keep it wet and to put tarps on it. He stated that every time they dump a trailer and the wind is blowing, the dust is all over. He has pictures of his experiences. He stated there are people in the neighborhood with respiratory problems; there are lawsuits against West Oregon Wood and DEQ. Finos stated in the wintertime there not a problem or concern.

Pete Castillanos, 2225 First Street, confirms that when the wind is coming from the north the sawdust is a problem in the summer.

#### Input in Favor

Hal Fay, runs the dock at ProBuild and has stated they have been pretty good neighbors. He commented they did the landscaping and improvements. Hal stated when Beaver Bark had the lease before them the site was a mess. He suggested for people to come down and look at the elevation difference. Hal's operation had loaded gravel across this dock for Morse Brothers and he stated they had bad conveyors, noisy and poor containment for dust. He watched the operation closely and most of the dust was caught in the tree line. He sympathized with the concerns and stated that Morse Brothers ran their operation poorly. Hal stated Clearwater will have containment and he believes Clearwater's operation will be quieter and cleaner than any previous process. ProBuild is sub leasing to Clearwater. He stated they used to load approximately 32 trucks a day and now they are down to 2 to 8 trucks a day. The lumber market is slow and ProBuild needs this partnership and support.

Input in Opposition

Refer to Finos Lunsford and Pete Castillanos comments above.

John commented that when you get into the finer sanding waste, then it really becomes a problem. He asked if there was a difference in what West Oregon Wood is doing compared to what Clearwater will be doing. Howard stated he is not aware of the type of material that West Oregon Wood is using. Rick stated that they buy both sawdust and shavings for their process. He explained when it is in their pellet mill they do have equipment that are grinders because they deal with some larger material and they want it smaller to go through the mill. Rick also stated they do have some cyclones on their big mill also. He commented that shavings tend to be easy to fly and they come out of a planer. The material dealt with at West Oregon Wood behaves differently then the sawdust that would be used by Clearwater Paper.

Finos expressed concerns that if there does become a problem with airborne particles, who will handle the complaints. He stated that neither the City nor DEQ has with West Oregon Wood.

Lisa spoke up to say that the City didn't have approval authority over West Oregon Wood, the City wasn't doing land use planning the same way. She went on to say that at that time, under state law, all industries brought in on industrial properties were only subject to whatever the DEQ would enforce and whatever their standards were. DEQ were the ones who determined what defined dust. She is trying to get DEQ to do something about the concern at the time of year when it is appropriate.

Lisa stated because of the problems with West Oregon Wood, that is why the City is writing the conditions of approval that they will have authority as well as DEQ. She commented that the intention is to communicate the airborne particle concern loud and clear to Clearwater Paper that any particulates that might come off this site will be a problem. Lisa explained the City's authority with regard to complaints could include taking away approvals and pulling permits.

Input Neither in Favor Nor in Opposition

Patrick Trapp introduced himself as the new director of the Port of St. Helens. He referenced when Stimpson Lumber was on the property, they moved anywhere from 60 to 120 trucks a day, just to give a perspective of traffic increases.

Lisa made sure that Finos got Patrick's card stating that West Oregon Wood is located on Port of St. Helens property and the dust has been an ongoing issue that needs to be addressed.

Lisa stated with the ongoing problem of dust in this area, this particular development would be different because of the difference in elevation and should address the concern of product flying through the air.

The public hearing was closed at 8:20 p.m.

Planning Commissioner Questions, Discussion and Decision

John stated that the issue with West Oregon Wood seems to be pre-existing.

Planning Commissioners discussed the conditions of approval and whether or not they are sufficient. John stated that he would be concerned about punishing Clearwater Paper for a problem with West Oregon Wood. Nell asked if someone would be supervising or checking for compliance. Clearwater has management that would respond to any complaint. The City would also get involved if a complaint was received. Lisa explained that complaints could be made directly to Clearwater Paper, to the City, the property owner, Port of St. Helens and/or DEQ.

IT WAS MOVED (KEN) AND SECONDED (JOHN) TO ADOPT THE FINDINGS IN THE STAFF REPORT AND APPROVE THE PROPOSAL AS SUBMITTED WITH THE CONDITIONS ATTACHED. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Lisa stated that the decision has a seven-day appeal period in accordance to the Columbia City Development Code.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

None.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

None.

**REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS:**

None.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Meeting adjourned at approximately 8:45 p.m.

---

Deborah Jacob  
Planning Commission Chair

Attest by:

---

Helen K Johnson  
Planning, Building Administrative Assistant