

**COLUMBIA CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
PUBLIC HEARINGS & REGULAR SESSION**
CITY HALL – 1840 SECOND STREET
FEBRUARY 14, 2012, 7:00 P.M.

PLANNING

COMMISSIONERS: Glen Pritchard, Vice-Chair *Denotes Commissioner absent
Kelly Niles*
John Sachs
Lisa Bush
Nell Harrison
Kenneth Wieland

STAFF: Lisa Smith, Planner
Helen Johnson, Planning Administrative Assistant

OTHERS: Jean McBride, Columbia City OR
Marvin McBride, St. Helens OR
Peter Tassoni, Columbia City
(Above list reflects those who signed in)

MEETING TO ORDER:

Glen called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

Glen led the pledge of allegiance.

ELECTION OF NEW PLANNING COMMISSION CHAIR:

IT WAS MOVED (KEN) AND SECONDED (LISA B.) THAT GLEN PRITCHARD IS THE NEW PLANNING COMMISSION CHAIR. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY AND GLEN ACCEPTED.

IT WAS MOVED (JOHN) AND SECONDED (NELL) THAT KEN WIELAND BE THE NEW PLANNING COMMISSION VICE-CHAIR. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY AND KEN ACCEPTED.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

IT WAS MOVED (KEN) AND SECONDED (NELL) TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER 8, 2011 MEETING, AS PRESENTED. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

IT WAS MOVED (JOHN) AND SECONDED (LISA B.) TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER 29, 2011 MEETING, AS PRESENTED. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

CITIZEN INPUT AND REQUESTS:

Peter Tassoni introduced himself as a newer resident to Columbia City and he has applied for the open Planning Commissioner position.

PUBLIC HEARING:

REGULAR SESSION CLOSED AND PUBLIC HEARING OPENED.

Lisa S. read the legal statement for the hearing and stated the application is for a city-initiated annexation of three island properties.

Ex-parte contacts, bias or conflicts of interest

Lisa S. asked if there were any ex-parte contacts, bias or conflicts of interest related to the hearing. None were heard. She also asked if anyone in the audience had any objection to any of the Planning Commissioners hearing this application. None were heard.

Staff Report

Lisa explained the Planning Commissions role is to make a recommendation to the City Council as to what action they would like to see taken on the application.

Lisa S. confirmed with Commissioners that they were familiar with the properties locations.

Lisa S. read a memo from City Administrator, Leahnette Rivers outlining the City Council's concerns. The primary concern is that the islands currently benefit from city services without paying for them. They also fall under a different set of land use regulations, which can negative impact-neighboring properties within the City. Some examples of what has happened since the properties become County islands are burning regulations, weed abatement and leash law complaints and concerns. They also receive water service, but are exempt from tax related bond issues associated with the water system.

Lisa S. explained this annexation process is unusual in the fact that the City is initiating it. The statutes allow the City to do it, but it cannot be made effected for a minimum of three years. If a recommendation is made tonight and then a decision is made by the City Council, it cannot become local law under any circumstances until April 2015 at the soonest.

Lisa S. again stated that the properties receive city water and are on septic systems. The Wridge property has sewer available at Sixth Street. As for the Chimes Crest properties, large undeveloped lots surround them and upon development of those properties, the sewer would be extended. There is no requirement for the properties to connect to the City sewer system until such time as septic systems fail. At the time the system fails, if there is sewer within a certain distance the DEQ would require a property owner to connect whether or not the properties were in the City.

Lisa S. stated that a letter was received from Tommy Coleman, Cory Allen and Kara Sound in the City's drop box, but the letter was not signed. They are owners of property at 61265 Chimes Crest. Lisa S. read the letter for the record. The main concerns stated in the letter

were regarding overgrown blackberries, drainage concerns and no sewer hookups available to their property. Lisa S. explained that the City Administrator reviewed the letter and responded with a memo that Lisa S. read for the record. It stated that the City handle the complaints as outlined in the weed abatement record. The memo states ordinances do not apply to properties outside the City limits and technically berries crossing county lines, would not be in violation and the City's enforcement actions were not required by City statute. Regarding the drainage complaints, because the City has not issued any development permits; it would be a civil matter.

Input in Favor

None.

Input in Opposition

Jean McBride, property owner at 61269 Columbia River Hwy, asked if the City had any responsibility regarding drainage from one property to another. Lisa S. explained that the City has responsibility when a development permit has been issued to a property and there has not been one issued for the property next to her.

Jean explained she is having a real problem with water drainage damaging her property and the property owners have been asked to fix the problem and have not done so. Lisa S. explained to Jean that drainage issues would have to be addressed when the neighboring property owner wanted to develop his property.

Jean also asked about the connection to sewer and she had been told it would be to Sixth Street and why would they pump it uphill when there is a connection right across from her at the Takemoto's property. Lisa S. explained that when the annexation process happens, which is a movement of lines, not dirt, the engineers are allowed to use conceptual comments and this may have been what she was referring to. Lisa S. also said that the City is in the process of updating the water/sewer master plans.

Marvin McBride, Jean's son, asked about the driveway that provides access for his mother and Mr. Takemoto's properties, if that would become a through street someday. Lisa S. explained that anything that would change property for purpose of construction would have to go through a process of notification and nothing has been submitted at this time. Lisa S. again explained that the annexation process only changes the City's boundary and then in three years, if approved, the taxing structure would be different and the city ordinances would be applicable to the annexed properties.

Marvin McBride stated that he and his mother are opposed to being annexed into the City.

Nell asked if all three properties are opposed to being annexed. Lisa stated that is was her understanding from the City Administrator that the Wridge property is not in objection.

Lisa stated that when the Melchert property annexed to the City, the Chimes Crest properties were asked if they would like to join in the annexation and they chose not to. At that time, the

City could not initiate any application, because the surrounding properties were not in the City. Now circumstances have changed and that is why the City is making this application.

Glen closed the public hearing at 7:35 p.m.

Planning Commissioner Questions, Discussion and Decision

The Commissioners and staff discussed access to the Melchert, McBride's and Takemoto's property, but determined that access was not related to the annexation issue.

Nell commented that she felt the annexation seems to be advantageous to both the City and property owners. Lisa B. said it makes sense to her.

Commissioners discussed reasons property owners might oppose the annexation, one being that they might pay more taxes, but the Commissioners all agreed they are already getting all the amenities and services without paying for them.

IT WAS MOVED (KEN) AND SECONDED (JOHN) THAT THE PLANNING COMMISSION ADOPT THE FINDINGS CONTAINED IN THE STAFF REPORT AND APPROVE A MOTION RECOMMENDING CITY COUNCIL APPROVAL OF THE PROPOSED ANNEXATION AND RE-ZONING. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Lisa S. explained that the City is going through a visioning process, updating their previous vision statement from 2000 to reflect changes, mostly relating to economics. A committee has been formed and Lisa S. and Lisa B. are on the committee. They have been holding meetings and community workshops to gather information to determine what are the core values of the community. Lisa S. stated the process seems to be going very well with a good amount of quality feedback. Lisa B. commented that the vision statement looks as though it will not change much from ten years ago. She liked seeing that the community values haven't changed in ten years.

Lisa S. also mentioned that visioning processes tend to be the initial stages of economic development plans and the Port of St. Helens is looking at their strategic planning process for upcoming industrial recruitment.

NEW BUSINESS:

The Commissioners and staff discussed the question of chickens being allowed in front yards. Lisa S. explained that Columbia City has historically had a perspective that they didn't want much of anything to occur in front yards and there are a lot of ordinances in place to regulate them. Lisa S. asked the Commissioners if they felt it necessary for the City to regulate animals and their houses in the front setback.

Glen commented that he has seen that urban chickens are becoming popular. Glen also asked if we have received complaints. Staff stated no complaints have been made, it was

more the question of do we want to regulate it or not. Lisa S. stated that the consideration should not be limited to chickens, but include all urban type farming.

Lisa S. said the City could clarify some of these concerns through their animal nuisance ordinance. It might not necessarily have to be a Planning Commission issue unless the Commissioners feels they need to do something to regulate it.

Glenn stated that if there are no complaints, problems or issues, then why regulate it. Lisa B. stated she agreed. The Planning Commission agreed that they don't recommend and changes at this time.

The Commissioners and staff then discussed the concern about dogs and kennels. John clarified by stated that close to where he lives he is sure that the property owners are running a "puppy mill". They have a lot of poodles and let them out at 3:30 a.m. Lisa S. stated that the current code does not allow a kennel in residential zones. Using the term "profit" regulates it – you are not allowed to raise animals for profit purposes. She asked, does the City want to look at further enhancing of the ordinance. Lisa S. recommended doing some clarifying through the nuisance section of the ordinances as opposed to land use.

Commissioners and staff continued to discussed code enforcement issues.

REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS:

None.

ADJOURNMENT:

Meeting adjourned at approximately 8:10 p.m.

Glen Pritchard
Planning Commission Chair

Attest by:

Helen K Johnson
Planning, Building Administrative Assistant