

**COLUMBIA CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR SESSION / WORK SESSION
CITY HALL – 1840 SECOND STREET
JULY 24, 2018 - 6:30 P.M.**

PLANNING

COMMISSIONERS: Kelly Niles, Chair *Denotes Commissioner absent
Barbara Gordon, Vice-Chair
Coralee Aho
Doug Calkins
George Fortier
Dana Marble
Lee Anne Landenberger

STAFF: Stacey Goldstein, City Planner
Helen Johnson, Planning Administrative Assistant

OTHERS: Molly Hruska, Columbia City Resident & Columbia County Realtor
Al Petersen, St. Helens Resident & Architect

MEETING TO ORDER:

Kelly called the meeting to order at 6:33 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

Kelly led the pledge of allegiance.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

IT WAS MOVED (DANA) AND SECONDED (BARBARA) TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 26, 2018 AND MAY 15, 2018 MEETINGS AS SUBMITTED. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

CITIZEN INPUT AND REQUESTS:

None.

PUBLIC HEARING:

None.

INTRODUCTION OF NEW PLANNING COMMISSIONER:

Lee Anne Landenberger was introduced and she provided a brief description of her background.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS/WORK SESSION:

Stacey introduced Molly Hruska, resident and local realtor. Molly presented Commissioners with current market information for St. Helens, Columbia City and Scappoose showing what is currently for sale and what has been sold in the last six months. It was surprising to discover that Columbia City only has 7 properties currently available for sale. Molly shared the traditional high and low seasons of the market. She agreed there is a need for low income housing and properties with ADU's is a draw to buyers.

Molly commented in the past she hasn't seen a lot of demand for attached housing. People when they come out to this area are typically looking for their own piece of property. She again stated ADU's are very desirable and provided multiple examples of why.

Kelly brought up Columbia City's low inventory of buildable lots and limited ability to expand. Helen shared she could see in lower Columbia City the demolition of older/smaller homes being rebuilt to newer/larger ones, if the lot size allowed. Stacey commented demo and rebuild situations can be more economically attractive because a large amount of the fees have already been paid with original construction.

Stacey asked Al Petersen to introduce himself. Al is an architect from St. Helens and grew up in Columbia County. He is also the managing director of Columbia Harbour LLC developing property near River Club Estates.

Al discussed and provided the following suggestions:

- Densities within zones can be inconsistent with lot sizes.
 - *He explained the example in the R-3 zone, where his property is located, is supposed to be the highest density zone. It is limited to 10 dwelling units per acre and the minimum lot size is 2500 square feet. In his development he has 1.3 acres and was able to create 13 units easily, he showed Commissioners a copy of his development's site plan. The square footage of his lots range from as low as 3100 sq. ft. to as high as 6400 sq. ft. and there was even a street included in the configuration. This shows the density of 10 units per acre is too low.*
- Allowing height of 35 feet (3 stories) in residential zones, consistent with building code.
 - *Al stated if the city doesn't have additional land to grow out, allowing it to grow up by extending the height restrictions is an option.*
- Re-zone lower Columbia City back to its original platting of 5000 sq. ft. allowing for higher density.
- ADU's no longer required to be owner occupied.
- Allowing an option for a larger home being built on property and the smaller unit being converted to the ADU.
- Change the maximum size of ADU's to 1200 sq. ft.
 - *Al researched ADA ADU designs and the smallest plan he was able to find was 1100 sq. ft.*
- Adding an Apartment Zone

Al also stated if he had kept his property zoned R-2 he would have only been able to develop 4 lots.

Stacey asked the question to Al if St. Helens required additional dedicated off street parking for ADU's. Al stated that yes they did, but only in the less dense zones. For the more dense zones it was not a requirement.

Both Al and Molly were commenting that current developers are not interesting in building low income housing at this time because it doesn't current make sense when they can build the big fancy expensive houses and make the larger profit.

Staff, Commissioners and attendees discussed all types of options and scenarios for consideration. It was stated the less restrictions allows for more options and choices. It was also determined with new requirements that our code will need cleanup.

Al recommended a joint work session putting the City Council and Planning Commissioners together to discuss housing affordability and availability and possibly a public forum for residents and interested persons. Stacey agreed to get the approval of the City Council prior to the making official recommended changes in an attempt to save time and resources.

Dana did state that we do need to remember who we are, we are not St. Helens, Scappoose or Portland. We are Columbia City. Stacey did agree, that what works for one community might not work for another, for many reasons.

Kelly raised the question of tiny homes to both Molly and Al. Neither have seen or heard of any in our area. Stacey stated Building Codes are working on how to address them. It was agreed that Columbia City is not ready to look at those yet.

NEW BUSINESS:

Helen shared that interest has been raised from resident interested in vacation short term rentals. She further explained that it had been discussed a couple of years ago, but tabled for lack of interest from the community. Stacey suggested to start with City Council to see if it is of interest to them, Commissioners agreed.

Barbara and Coralee recently attended an ethics meeting in St. Helens.

ADJOURNMENT:

Meeting adjourned at 7:54 p.m.

Kelly Niles
Planning Commission Chair

Attest by:

Helen K Johnson
Planning Administrative Assistant