

**COLUMBIA CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
PUBLIC HEARING / REGULAR SESSION
VIA "ZOOM MEETING"
AUGUST 18, 2020 - 6:30 P.M.**

PLANNING

COMMISSIONERS:

Kelly Niles, Chair
Barbara Gordon, Vice-Chair
Coralee Aho
Doug Calkins
George Fortier
Dana Marble (joined at approximately 7:05 p.m.)
Lee Anne Landenberger*

*Denotes Commissioner absent

STAFF:

Lauren Scott, City Planner
Helen Johnson, Planning Administrative Assistant

OTHERS:

Wayne Weigandt, Columbia City Commercial Property Owner
Wayde Elliott, Potential Columbia City Commercial Property Owner
Andrew Stamp, Land Use Attorney for Wayne Weigandt

MEETING TO ORDER:

Kelly called the meeting to order at 6:34 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

Not done as everyone was participating through Zoom and no flag.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

IT WAS MOVED (GEORGE) AND SECONDED (CORALEE) TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE JUNE 16, 2020 AND JULY 21, 2020 MEETINGS AS SUBMITTED. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

CITIZEN INPUT AND REQUESTS:

None.

PUBLIC HEARING:

Kelly stated the hearing is for a legislative text amendment to the Commercial Zone adding outdoor boat, recreational vehicle and other vehicle storage as a permitted use. He then turned the meeting over to Lauren, the City Planner. She explained the matter before the Commissioners would amend Chapter 7.60 Commercial Zone of the Columbia City Development Code adding outdoor boat, recreational vehicle and other vehicle storage as a permitted use in the zone. The Planning Commissioners if agreeable will be providing a recommendation to the City Council for approval.

Staff report:

Lauren stated the proposed change is would apply to all commercially zoned properties in Columbia City, not just the property owned by the applicant. She reviewed the staff report. Lauren stated, based on the

findings contained in the staff report and the application packet submitted, staff recommends the Planning Commission adopt a motion to recommend approval of the text amendment to the City Council.

Commission Chair Kelly asked about runoff concerns from items stored on the site related to spills or leaks. It was discussed that these concerns would either be addressed at the time of development or if there is a situation that becomes a nuisance, it could be addressed that way when and if appropriate.

Commissioner Barbara asked where the locations of the commercial properties were within the City. Helen was able to explain each of the locations. Commissioner Barbara also asked why the change couldn't be done as a variance. Lauren explained that a variance is usually a deviation from existing standards and typically the property would have unique factors or characteristics that would call for a variance. Lauren further explained that you couldn't deviate from an existing standard if the standard doesn't exist. Andrew Stamp, Land Use Attorney for the applicant, provided additional clarification that Oregon law doesn't allow variances to use, you can only get a variance to a development standard such as setback or building height.

Applicant Presentation:

Andrew Stamp, Land Use Attorney representing Wayne Weigandt, shared a Power Point presentation explaining the proposal is to add boat and RV storage as a complement use to the currently allowed mini-storage in the Commercial Zone. He explained the applicant's property has some constraints that make it undesirable for many commercial uses. Andrew stated the highest and best use they determined would either be a mini-storage & RV and boat storage or a nursing home. He explained the property is best suited for a destination use, not a pass-by use. For example, McDonald's is a pass-by use, you drive by see the golden arches and stop to get some French fries. A destination use is more like a Home Depot where you need something and you know where to go to get it.

Andrew explained the property is not desirable to a pass-by use because it has substandard access. For example if they placed a McDonald's there, people would see the golden arches, but it would not be clear, unless you live local, how to access the property. Direct access is very important and if it takes too long to figure out, consumers won't bother.

Andrew stated his client has determined there is an unmet need for this type of business in Columbia City. He also showed a preliminary site plan for the property.

Andrew also talked about the differences between a conditional use and a permitted use. A conditional use has a more intense land use process for approval. The proposal is to add the use as a permitted use.

Andrew ended his presentation with the many benefits to this proposed use.

Wayne Weigandt, the applicant and property owner, spoke to say the property has been zoned commercial for the entire length of time he has owned it. Over the years they have tried a variety of different projects for the property and none have found a home. He stated when the present buyer expressed interest in expanding his inventory of mini storages and RV/boat storages, he thought this location would be workable for him. Wayne stated the property is a little bit smaller at 4 acres than what the buyer usually has at 5 acres. He says the project lays out pretty well and the potential owner is professional and former St. Helens business man and the facility would be very well kept.

Commissioner George stated he liked the project and would be in favor of it.

Commissioner Barbara asked if the property would be fenced. Wayne Weigandt stated the developer will present all of the improvements proposed as part of the Site Development Review. Wayne also outline the existing developments surrounding the property.

Wayde Elliott, potential buyer/developer of the property, spoke stating he has done 5 other properties similar to what is being proposed for this site. They all have between 20-30 cameras, security is always big deal and the property would be fully fenced with access control so everyone key pads to enter and key pads to exit. Wayde stated he is looking into some new technology that would go into the fence and detects pressure so if someone were to climb over the fence it would trigger the alarm. This site is a little smaller and would probably only have about 15 cameras.

Wayde also stated he practiced dentistry in St. Helens for 20 years, built the large car wash and storage facility in St. Helens and looks forward to coming back to the community. His kids live in Scappoose.

Commissioner Barbara asked about the market study mentioned in the applicant's presentation. Wayde explained he hires a feasibility specialist on all his projects and she determines the demand for both self-storage and RV/boat storage. If he recalled correctly, in this market, there was a demand for 400 boat and RV parking, which would include outdoor, covered and/or fully enclosed. Wayde stated they would not be able to fully meet that demand with this project.

Commissioner Barbara also asked where the closest place to launch a boat on the Columbia River would be to Columbia City. It was the consensus of the group that it would be in St. Helens. Commissioner Barbara continued by questioning would boat owners be attracted to this facility if it isn't close to St. Helens or the Scappoose marina to put their boat in. Wayde stated from his experience doing these types of projects, the location is good and plenty close to the water and it would also include RV's as well.

Andrew also explained that some people with boats that live out of the area might be interested in storage that is closer to the river so they don't have to haul the boat as long. In short Andrew stated he feels the location is desirable for boat owners.

Commissioner Dana asked if there were any down sides to the project, none were stated. He then asked how they plan to market the project. Wayde answered that they would have a sign confirming to code that could be seen from the highway and also through the internet.

Input in favor:

None.

Input in opposition:

None.

Written materials submitted:

None.

Commissioner Barbara asked the question about how this project fits into the City's unique boutique type atmosphere is has become. Commission Chair Kelly stated he felt that was more of feeling or opinion question and at this time we are looking at an amendment to the code. He said and all the goals have been satisfied.

Andrew stated if there are issues or concerns with the project, they could be addressed in design at the time of official application. He said it is his experience that an applicant is going to do whatever is needed to get their vision and the City's to match, so they can be good long-term steward of the community.

IT WAS MOVED (DOUG) AND SECONDED (DANA) TO ADOPT A MOTION TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF THE LEGISLATIVE TEXT AMENDMENT TO GO BEFORE THE CITY COUNCIL AND ADOPT THE FINDING WITHIN THE STAFF REPORT. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Helen discussed there would not be a September meeting, but definitely a meeting for Code Amendments discussed and reviewed at a previous meeting. Next meeting will be October 20, 2020.

NEW BUSINESS:

Helen stated she received correspondence from our newest Planning Commissioner, Lee Anne Landenberger, asking if she should step down from the Planning Commission. Lee Anne spends a lot of time in Montana and with that and all the recent developments with COVID has not been attending meetings. Helen stated she believed there is limited reception in the area of Montana that Lee Anne resides and is not able to participate via Zoom.

It was the agreement of the Commissioners to ask her to vacate the position and to advertise the opening.

ADJOURNMENT:

Meeting adjourned at 7:46 p.m.

Kelly Niles
Planning Commission Chair

Attest by:

Helen K Johnson
Planning Administrative Assistant