

City Council Meeting Minutes

THURSDAY, JANUARY 16, 2025 – 6:00 PM
COLUMBIA CITY, CITY HALL – 1840 SECOND STREET
CITY OF COLUMBIA CITY, COLUMBIA COUNTY, OREGON

AGENDA ITEM 1

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL:

CONVENED:

Council President Rob Forman called the Regular Meeting to order at 6:02 pm.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mayor Elect Alex Reed
Council President Rob Forman
Councilor Gordon Thistle
Councilor Connie Quick
Councilor Lyle Bluhm

COUNCIL MEMBERS ABSENT:

Mayor Katrina Claridge

ALSO PRESENT:

Kim Karber, City Administrator/Recorder
Jerry Bartolomucci, Chief of Police
Lauren Scott, City Planning Director
Helen Johnson, Office Supervisor

ATTORNEY PRESENT:

None

A quorum was present, and due notice had been published.

1.1 Inauguration of newly elected Mayor Alex Reed and newly elected Council Members Connie Quick and Lyle Bluhm.

Kim Karber administered the oath of office to Mayor Alex Reed, Councilor Connie Quick and Councilor Lyle Bluhm.

AGENDA ITEM 2

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

2.1 Public Hearing: To receive public input regarding proposed text amendments to the development code.

Public Hearing opened.

Lauren Scott introduced herself as the City's contracted planner. Lauren explained that she would be going over the Development Code text amendments that the Planning Commission has been working on for over a year making their way through and carefully looking at each page of the code. She said she would be going over the highlights of the staff report, but if there were any questions on any particular section that was amended or any other findings to let her know.

Lauren had a power point that she went over, which gave a brief overall summary of the changes. She stated this was a long overdue clean-up of the code and it is typically done every year, so there were a lot of inconsistencies and things that were out of date.

There were some definitions that were added, some very old administration pieces of the code talking about property lots in the 1970's that will be removed. There were updates to regulations related to accessory dwelling units and manufactured/prefabricated homes to be consistent with new state laws that have been passed. They also removed standards that are not clear and objective from the site development review chapter to also be consistent with state laws in a push to have all standards be clear and objective. There were some changes to the flood hazard overlay chapter due to an audit done by the DLCD national flood insurance program and they recommended some minor changes. Lauren stated that there are not any changes related to FEMA's endangered species act pre-implementation compliance measures at this time, those changes are to be determined at a later date. They also made some changes to accessory buildings and structures to update the square footage ranges and height limits to be consistent with building code. Lauren said there are some other edits throughout the code, which are in the red-line version included in the packet. Lauren went into a little deeper detail into some items, such as Manufactured Housing is now regulated by House Bill 4064 and the main purpose of that is to remove standards that are not applied to detached single family homes in the same zoning district.

Lauren moved on to discuss the site development review chapter, stating it is not typically applicable to the types of applications that we see coming through, which are for accessory structures and single-family homes on residential lots. This chapter usually applies to anything non-residential, larger multi-family developments, or subdivisions. The proposed changes remove criteria that was not clear and objective related to privacy, noise, crime prevention, and safety; along with unnecessary standards about demarcation of public spaces and public transit stops. They also added some exterior lighting fixture criteria about downward cast/fully shielded to reduce some of the light pollution. They added standards for housing plan variety for subdivisions so it would not be the same cookie cutter house replicated on multiple lots, there would be some variety to be required within it.

Councilor Forman asked for some clarification on the exterior lighting requirements. Lauren replied it would not normally apply to single family homes because they are exempt from site development review, so this would be for other developments such as a mini-mart, storage facility, etc.

Lauren went on to explain the flood hazard overlay chapter and DLCD's comments from the audit they conducted, which were pretty minor. They added some definitions, corrected a verbiage error, added some process things, and corrected another reference. DLCD also suggested some edits to the permit application form and asked the City to create a Standard Operating Procedures form, which has been done, so that has been closed out and DLCD gave a thumbs up on the flood hazard overlay.

Lauren said for accessory structures, the building code for building permit requirements changed the trigger from 10' to 15' and the City's current code regulates three different tiers of accessory structures, less than 200 square feet, 201 square feet to 599 square feet, and then over 600 square feet. The adjustment was made so that the building permit trigger aligned with the planning permit trigger. In doing that, it also resulted in an increase to the middle tier of accessory structure sizes because it was 14' and it would not make sense to allow smaller structures to be taller than the middle tier. The max was not changed from 24' or no higher than the primary structure on the lot. Some of the lot coverage standards and accessory structure projection call outs were removed since they are already included in another part of the code.

Some of the other process changes were on neighborhood planning organizations and historic review boards, which the City doesn't have, so it was removed. There were some minor changes to the tentative and final plat process, one of which is to allow the Planning Director (Lauren) to approve extension requests without it going to the planning commission if there are no changes. An extension was made for the time a final plat to be turned in from one year to two years. For home occupations it used to be required that in order for the City to issue an 'order to cease' it would have to go to the planning

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commission first. Going forward the City Administrator or Planning Director could order a business to cease, this will help streamline the process.

Lauren said for the noticing and public involvement, the Planning Commission started holding workshops in December of 2023 and held seven of them. They were published on the City's calendar and were open to the public as part of the legislative amendment process. A Measure 56 notice, required by state law, was also sent out to all affected property owners whose land could potentially be affected by restricting uses or additional standards. There was a newspaper notice, and the State DLCD was noticed as well. Lauren said in terms of review criteria for legislative amendments its pretty short and looks at the applicable comprehensive plan goals and policies, applicable provisions of the implementing ordinance, which the existing ordinance followed along with other applicable state and federal laws, as well as Oregon's statewide planning goals. These items were specifically called out in the staff report, the other ones that were determined as not applicable are listed on the bottom. Staff did find that the amendments were consistent with all of the criteria.

The planning commission did recommend approval of the amendments to City Council but are happy to discuss any further changes and amendments or questions.

Councilor Forman asked that if the reviews were done on a 12 – 18 month basis would the list of amendments be shorter. Lauren replied yes they would and they would cover whatever happened in the legislative session and the associated bills that were passed, along with any other items that need to be fixed. Helen Johnson added that she keeps notes of things that need to be corrected as she comes across them in the code when she is using it so they can be fixed with the next update.

Julie Liddicoat of 3560 Fifth Street asked how this would affect the neighborhoods, zoning, where you are building, and what you are building. Lauren replied there was some discussion on changing lot size but that is not included in these changes. None of the allowed uses were changed in the residential zones. Food carts and food cart pods were added to the Industrial/Commercial zones as an allowed use, but they would still have to meet all current standards. Lauren did state that the height limit in Zone 1 was added back in after being mistakenly removed in a previous update, so that could be considered a change that might affect a property. Julie then wanted to confirm that these changes are mostly going to affect new construction and not current homeowners as she was wondering how it would affect property values. Lauren did acknowledge there is scary language in the Measure 56 notice about property values possibly being affected but the City cannot tell you how it would affect property values. Lauren reiterated that what she just went over in the presentation were the biggest changes along with the height change on the accessory structures being a little taller. Julie then wanted Lauren to tell her a little bit about the accessory dwelling units (ADU). Lauren explained that it is a secondary dwelling unit to a primary structure, and it can be attached or unattached and development of the ADU would need to be initiated by the property owner.

Mayor Reed asked if a person was allowed to come in and purchase a piece of property and place several ADU's on that property. Lauren replied the code only allows for one ADU and there must be a primary residence on the property and it would need to meet all the parameters in the code. The definition that was added matches what the state's definition is, but the City still has it owns standards chapter regulating ADU's.

Joe Liddicoat of 3560 Fifth Street asked if you had an ADU could you rent it out. Lauren said they can be rented out as the City does not regulate that. Joe then asked if the ADU has to have a separate address and it does not, but it does have to be labeled, such as 'A' unit or 'B' unit etc.

Julie then asked if the primary property owner is still responsible for taking care of it. Lauren stated the City has a nuisance code chapter for different violations such as noise or junk, but otherwise the City would not get involved with civil disputes. Helen added that the ADU is on the owner's property, and they are ultimately responsible for whoever is

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occupying it, so if there were ordinance violations the owner and person in the ADU would be notified.

Joe asked if manufactured homes could be considered as an ADU. Lauren replied that if it meets all the code requirements. Helen added there still needs to be a primary structure and the ADU size is limited to 750 square feet.

Julie asked if this has been tried in other areas nearby and how is it working out for them. Helen and Lauren replied they are all over the place – Scappoose, Saint Helens, and any community over 1000 people allows for ADU's. Mayor Reed agreed with Julie that people are not happy when a bunch of ADU's start coming in and there is a fear of people coming in and building multiple ADU's on a single lot and then rent them out.

Chief Bartolomucci asked if as a property owner you could rent both residences out. Helen and Lauren replied that they could. The land development code does not get into rental versus primary.

Public Hearing Closed.

Lauren explained that there were options for the Council to consider, they can continue the hearing to either a date and time certain or uncertain, approve as presented, approve with modifications, or deny.

Councilor Rob asked if the planning commission was split between the decisions or were they unanimous. Lauren said it was unanimous at the public hearing but there were discussions where different perspectives were shared on different items. Especially pertaining to lot size and that is why it was brought to the council at a previous meeting. Lauren said overall there was good discussion about site development review and other things. Lauren confirmed that there were no changes to lot sizes.

MOVED (FORMAN), SECONDED (GORDON) AND CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY TO APPROVE THE DEVELOPMENT CODE CHANGES WITHOUT DELAY AS PRESENTED IN THE STAFF REPORT.

AGENDA ITEM 3

CITIZEN INPUT:

3.1 Neal Shervey, Discuss FEMA recommendations to prevent wildfire spread.

Neal Shervey of 2010 Seventh Court discussed FEMA recommendations to prevent wildfire spread. He discussed his concern about the property by his house and others throughout the City that have overgrowth around trees and dead branches, these present a hazard to houses. He looked at FEMA's plan and they recommend a 50' radius of protection and realizes that with some lots in the City that 50' radius would be outside their property. He inquired if the City has a community wildfire plan or would look at the US Fire Administration and FEMA recommendations for this considering recent events in California. He discussed how both websites have useful information regarding wildfire prevention and awareness. Kim said the City does not have a community wildfire protection plan.

John Hansen of 2015 Eighth Court discussed how Kemper Insurance cancelled homeowners' insurance in all of Oregon due to the wildfires in Oregon and California. He also discussed the difficulty of finding new insurance because of the trees and higher risk of fire. He voiced his concern for fire throughout Columbia City because of overgrowth and if there is a wind event and trees blowing over.

Karen Shervey of 2010 Seventh Court added that the property that is behind her and John's houses causes the most concern because of the planted trees on the property, they are not indigenous. Neal added that he sent pictures to Helen of the trees and thinks the City should look at getting a community wildfire protection plan and that FEMA has a 16-

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page pamphlet available on their website. He thinks the City needs to start to make a wildfire protection plan and look at some of the more concerning areas.

Councilor Forman said that he hears their concerns since he lives right by Rivers' Walk and with the wind and trees it is a tinderbox. He asked what FEMA recommends in their plans and Neal went over the table of contents of what it covers. Neal also said there are other resources on the US Forest Service site, including grant opportunities. Neal said they go over maintaining, enhancing, and restoring a healthy forest, they do not want everything cleared out. They want it to be a safe environment for everyone.

Helen asked Neal about the information he was presenting and if FEMA was proposing that Cities put these guidelines in ordinances for implementation to prevent wildfires or if it was just information they put out to help to prevent wildfires. She also said the City has put information in past newsletters about defensible space and how to protect your home from wildfires. Neal replied it is more informational and that they do have those resources we could share. It will take everyone working together so that we do not end up in the wildfire situations we hear about on the news.

AGENDA ITEM 4

COUNCIL REPORTS:

- 4.1 **Audit Committee:** No report.
- 4.2 **Hazard Committee:** No report. The next scheduled meeting is January 29th.
- 4.3 **Parks Committee:** Kim reported that the committee discussed Bundy park. Next month's meeting will start the discussion on the Memorial Day event and budget planning.
- 4.4 **Streets Committee:** No report.
- 4.5 **Water & Sewer Committee:** No report.

AGENDA ITEM 5

CONSENT AGENDA:

- 5.1 **Bills paid with check numbers 35260 through 35302 during the month of December 2024.**
- 5.2 **Expense vs Budget Report for the month ending December 2024.**
- 5.3 **Combined balance sheet for the month ending December 2024.**
- 5.4 **Minutes of the December 19, 2024, Regular City Council Meeting.**
- 5.5 **Activity Report from the Chief of Police for the month of December 2024.**
- 5.6 **Activity Report from the Public Works Superintendent for the month of December 2024.**
- 5.7 **Activity Report from the City Administrator for the month of December 2024.**
- 5.8 **Revenue Analysis Report for the quarter ending December 2024.**
- 5.9 **Appoint City Administrator, Kim Karber, as Budget Officer for 2025 calendar year.**
- 5.10 **Reappoint Rebecca Pickering and Nell Harrison to the Audit Committee.**
- 5.11 **Reappoint Bill Amos and Chris Thurman to the Planning Committee.**
- 5.12 **Reappoint Rich Bailey, Durell Kearsley, Randy May, and Dave Sass to the Building Appeals Board.**
- 5.13 **Minutes of the September 17, 2024, Audit Committee Meeting.**
- 5.14 **Minutes of the April 16, 2024, Planning Commission Meeting.**
- 5.15 **Minutes of the May 13, 2024, Planning Commission Workshop Meeting.**
- 5.16 **Minutes of the May 16, 2024, Planning Commission Public Hearing.**
- 5.17 **Resignation of Planning Commissioner, John Hansen.**

THE COUNCIL APPROVED THE CONSENT AGENDA BY UNANIMOUS ROLL CALL VOTE.

AGENDA ITEM 6

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

None.

AGENDA ITEM 7

NEW BUSINESS:

- 7.1 **Election of City Council President.**

MOVED (THISTLE), SECONDED (BLUHM) AND CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY TO RE-ELECT COUNCIL MEMBER ROB FORMAN AS CITY COUNCIL PRESIDENT FOR THE FOR THE 2025 CALENDAR YEAR. COUNCILOR FORMAN ABSTAINED.

7.2 Committee Appointments.

MAYOR REED ASSIGNED CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEES AS FOLLOWS: COUNCILOR FORMAN AS A MEMBER OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE, COUNCILOR BLUHM TO CHAIR THE PARKS COMMITTEE, COUNCILOR FORMAN TO CHAIR THE STREETS COMMITTEE, COUNCILOR THISTLE TO CHAIR THE WATER AND SEWER COMMITTEE, AND COUNCILOR QUICK AS A MEMBER OF THE HAZARD COMMITTEE.

Kim added that Katrina Claridge did express interest in wanting to stay involved in the parks and would like to be a committee member.

MOVED (REED), SECONDED (BLUHM) AND CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY TO APPOINT KATRINA CLARIDGE TO THE PARKS COMMITTEE.

7.3 Pixie Park Deed.

Kim reported that the City received the deed and is now officially the owner of Pixie Park.

7.4 First Reading of Council Bill No. 25-992: An Ordinance amending Ordinance 35-586-O, the Columbia City Development Code. Amendments Affect Multiple Chapters of the Development Code.

The Council completed the first reading of Council Bill No. 25-992.

7.5 Informational presentation by Lauren on the Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD).

Lauren gave a PowerPoint briefing on legislative changes in housing and land use law that Oregon has done. She also touched on some items that are being discussed in the 2025 Oregon Legislative Session.

- Cities can only apply clear and objective standards, conditions, or procedures regulating the development of needed housing on buildable land. Cities cannot discourage needed housing by causing unreasonable cost or delay.
 - Manufactured and Prefabricated Homes, Middle Housing Bill and Oregon Housing Needs Analysis, and Housing production strategy / housing capacity analysis
- Housing Accountability & Production Office (HAPO) – goes into effect July 1, 2025
 - Provides financial and technical support. Reviews of complaints from housing developers, general public, DLCD, and Department of Consumer and Business Services (DCBS). Their focus is on compliance and remedying violations.
 - Effective January 1, 2025, it requires all local governments to grant adjustments to specific development and design standards applied to the development of housing if the application meets certain conditions. No more than ten distinct adjustments may be requested per property.
- Model Ordinances
 - Deadline for development of these ordinances is January 1, 2026. They need to provide clear and objective standards for development within a UGB. Three model ordinances will be created, including one for cities with a population under 2500.
 - The Model Development Code for Small Cities, population under 10,000, is also undergoing an update through 2025. They do not have an identified completion date.

AGENDA ITEM 8 OTHER BUSINESS:

9.1 Kit Gardes with the Columbia City Library wanted to welcome Mayor Reed and announced that they will be having a Meet the Mayor at the library on Saturday from 1-3.

9.2 Kim provided a handout about the Elected Essentials Workshops that the LOC is putting on and pointed out that the one scheduled for February 5th has a virtual option and encouraged council members to register.

9.3 Mayor Reed inquired about whether the people on The Strand have mail delivered to them or do they need to get a PO box. Councilor Forman explained this has been brought up before and the City was told it is up to USPS.

9.4 Mayor Reed inquired about the section on 3rd Street that is not paved. Kim explained that is the last section in the City that is not an alleyway that is not paved, and it is on the Streets CIP list.

9.5 Mayor Reed inquired about the property on 2nd near Spinnaker. Kim said the City is still waiting for the land developer to move forward. They have all the streets and utilities done and they just need to take the next step.

AGENDA ITEM 9 ADJOURNMENT:

9.1 There being no further business to come before the Council, the meeting adjourned at 7:10 pm.

APPROVED:

Alexander Reed
Mayor

ATTEST:

Kim Karber
City Administrator/Recorder