

MINUTES
COLUMBIA CITY PLAN COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING

January 4, 2021

7:00 p.m.

Whitley County Government Center
Meeting Room A/B

MEMBERS PRESENT

Walt Crowder (remote)
Doug Graft (remote)
Chip Hill
Jon Kissinger
Don Langeloh
Dennis Warnick (remote)
Dan Weigold
Larry Weiss
Patrick Zickgraf (remote)

MEMBERS ABSENT

STAFF

Nathan Bilger

ATTORNEY

Dawn Boyd (remote)

AUDIENCE MEMBERS

The list of attendees who signed in is at the end of these minutes. There were no attendees on the webcast.

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

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

Mr. Bilger recognized the reappointments of Mr. Weiss to the Commission and Mr. Warnick to the Board of Zoning Appeals.

Mr. Bilger read the roll call with members present and absent listed above.

ELECTION OF 2021 OFFICERS

Mr. Weiss reminded the Commission of the officers and appointments serving in 2020 and called for any nominations. Mr. Weigold made a motion to retain the same officers as in 2020; Mr. Kissinger seconded. There being no other nominations, Mr. Weiss called for a roll call vote. Motion passed, 9-0.

The officers and appointments for 2021: Larry Weiss, President; Patrick Zickgraf, Vice President; Jon Kissinger, BZA member; and Don Langeloh, Joint Advisory Board member.

CONSIDERATION OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES

The minutes for the December 2020 meeting were presented for consideration. Mr. Langeloh inquired about the 3,000 square foot development standard of the LB district that was brought up at that meeting. Mr. Bilger explained that his research indicated that the standard had not been applied in prior permits, and it did not align with many of the buildings in the current LB districts. He suggested discussing the matter further as Other Business.

Mr. Weigold made a motion to approve the minutes as presented; Mr. Kissinger seconded. Motion passed by roll call vote, 8-0-1, with Mr. Hill abstaining.

ADMINISTRATION OF OATH

Mr. Bilger administered the oath to the audience members and reminded that any on-line participants affirmed when registering.

OLD BUSINESS

20-C-SOA-2, Amendment to the Subdivision Control Ordinance, Updates and Modifications

Mr. Weiss stated that the proposed amendments would need to be considered at an upcoming meeting. Mr. Kissinger made a motion to continue 20-C-SOA-2; Mr. Langeloh seconded. Motion passed by roll call vote, 9-0.

20-C-SUBD-4, 1-lot plat, “Deer Chase, Phase IV, Section 8”

Deer Chase, LLC, requested primary plat approval of a 1-lot subdivision to be called Deer Chase, Phase IV, Section 8. The 0.43-acre property was zoned R-1, Single Family Residential, and located on the south side of Whitetail Drive, 100 feet west of Lexington Avenue.

Mr. Bilger stated that the item had been continued from the previous meeting to address questions raised by the Commission regarding the purpose and usability of the remainder parcel indicated to be transferred to the City. He reminded the Commission of the Staff Report, noting that the larger parcel split that was pending sale to a private owner had been transferred since the last meeting. He concluded by restating the Staff’s suggested conditions of approval:

1. The remainder parcel must be combined with adjacent property to total more than 5 acres in area, or else be platted (unless shown to be exempt from platting).
2. Secondary plat approval be delegated to staff, unless performance sureties are proposed or there are issues that require Commission approval.

With the Commission having no questions for the staff, Mr. Weiss requested the petitioner, or their representative, to speak with any updates. Kevin Michel, Walker & Associates, engineer for the petitioner, reminded the Commission that the proposal would plat the last remaining tract of Deer Chase, with the remainder being transferred to the City.

Mr. Langeloh asked what the area of the remainder piece would be after splitting the proposed lot. Mr. Michel stated it would be 0.50± acres.

Mr. Langeloh then asked what ideas the City had for utilizing the remainder parcel. Mayor Ryan Daniel reviewed several ideas that had been discussed for the parcel. He stated that his idea would be to use it to construct a trail connection between Deer Chase and Stickler Road, which would eventually connect to Westgate and be part of a city-wide trail network. He suggested that it might also be used for drainage and utility access or construction of small turnarounds for the streets.

Mr. Langeloh asked if there would be parking for the trail. Mayor Daniel stated that it would not be a trailhead but a through connection. On-street parking would be permissible if there would be any vehicles.

Mr. Langeloh asked if there would be a street. Mayor Daniel stated a street to Business 30 had been an idea years ago, but the residents of Deer Chase were adamantly opposed due to safety concerns, and residents of Stickler Road opposed increased traffic. So a street was no longer being considered.

There being no further questions of the petitioner, Mr. Weiss opened the public hearing. Hearing no one, Mr. Weiss closed the public hearing.

Mr. Weigold expressed that he had discussed the plans for the remainder parcel with the Mayor since the last meeting. He had concerns about the City paying for what might otherwise be a developer obligation, but he felt it could be useful for the City.

Mr. Langeloh stated that he appreciated the City having a plan to use the parcel. He was concerned that it could become a nuisance if it remained vacant.

Mr. Hill made a motion to approve 20-C-SUBD-4, with the recommended Staff conditions; Mr. Langeloh seconded. Mr. Langeloh asked how condition #1 would be enforced. Mr. Bilger stated that the remainder would be treated as unbuildable unless platted, combined with an adjoining parcel, or transferred under one of the platting exemptions, which would include transfer to the City for public purposes. Motion passed by roll call vote, 9-0.

NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business.

OTHER BUSINESS

The Commission further discussed the 3,000 square foot standard in the LB district. Mr. Bilger stated that the standard as applied to the current properties zoned LB would make buildings on several properties legal nonconforming as they already exceeded that floor area. Some were several times larger. He stated that it appeared that the Commission was more concerned about the application of use regulations than the primary building floor area when designating the LB districts. Mr. Langeloh concurred that several of the uses permitted in the LB district would normally exceed 3,000 square feet. Mr. Bilger stated that the simplest means to address the ambiguity would be to delete the standard, but he asked if there were any other ideas to discuss.

There were no other ideas proposed, and Mr. Warnick made a motion to proceed with amending the code to delete the 3,000 sq. ft. standard. Mr. Bilger suggested a consensus of the Commission would be sufficient instead, and there was no opposition to proceeding with preparation of a text amendment.

ADJOURNMENT

Being no further business, Mr. Kissinger made a motion to adjourn; Mr. Langeloh seconded. Mr. Weiss declared the meeting adjourned at 7:27 p.m.

GUEST LIST

1. Kevin Michel, Walker & Assoc.....4242 S. 700 East, Columbia City
2. Mayor Ryan Daniel.....112 S. Chauncey St., Columbia City

GUEST LIST (WEBCAST)

3. No attendees