

**MINUTES**  
**COLUMBIA CITY PLAN COMMISSION**  
**REGULAR MEETING**  
**SEPTEMBER 13, 2021**  
**7:00 P.M.**

**WHITLEY COUNTY GOVERNMENT CENTER**  
**MEETING ROOM A/B, LOWER LEVEL**

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

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

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Dan Weigold

**STAFF**

Nathan Bilger

**ATTORNEY**

Dawn Boyd

(E)lectronic participant

**AUDIENCE MEMBERS**

Six visitors attended the meeting; the guest list is attached. 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 read the roll call with members present and absent listed above.

**CONSIDERATION OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES**

The August 17, 2021 special meeting minutes were presented for review. Mr. Warnick asked for clarification in the minutes about “sellers coming to view items” since it seemed like buyers would be coming to view items. Mr. Bilger stated that he recalled it being an odd thing as well, but he thought it was for sellers to verify their items. Buyers would not usually be on-site.

Mr. Bilger stated that the August 2, 2021 regular meeting minutes had not yet been completed. He suggested that rather than approve minutes out of order, the Commission could hold off the approval of the 17<sup>th</sup> minutes until the regular meeting minutes were available. The Commission agreed.

**ADMINISTRATION OF THE OATH TO WITNESSES**

Ms. Boyd administered the Oath to those wishing to speak.

**OLD BUSINESS**

There was no old business.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **1. 21-C-SUBD-3**

DOT America, Inc. requested primary plat approval for a 1-lot subdivision proposed to be called DOT America Campus. The subject property, totaling 7.54 acres, was located on the east side of Towerview Drive, about 1/3 mile north of Hanna Street and was more commonly known as 335 Towerview Drive.

Mr. Bilger summarized the staff report, stating the proposed replat would combine three existing parcels owned by DOT America into one in order to allow for future expansion of the business. He stated that the property had been granted a rezoning to I-1, Light Industrial, at the last City Council meeting, and the proposal would meet the standards of that district. He then presented an aerial view of the property and the proposal plat, noting that there was a legal drain easement located on the eastern part of the lot. He explained that the area outside of the drain easement would be sufficient for a sizable expansion, with potential for crossing the legal drain if necessary. He stated that comments from reviewing agencies were favorable, so he suggested the following condition of approval:

1. Secondary plat approval be delegated to staff.

Mr. Bilger asked the Commission for any questions. Hearing none, Mr. Weiss asked for the petitioner or their representative to speak.

Michael Venturini, president of DOT America, affirmed that the company was planning for expansion in what would likely be the next one to three years and this plat would set up the property for the expansion whenever it would occur.

Mr. Weiss asked if the Commission had any questions for the petitioner. Having no questions from the Commission, Mr. Weiss opened the public hearing. Hearing no public comment, he asked for any further comment or a motion. Mr. Hill made a motion to approve 21-C-SUBD-3 with the condition in the staff report; Mr. Kissinger seconded. Motion passed 8-0 by roll call vote.

### **2. 21-C-SUBD-4**

Glenn, Jr. and Patti Hogue requested primary plat approval for a 1-lot subdivision proposed to be called Hogue's Third Addition. The subject property, totaling 3.79 acres, was located on the west side of Airport Road, about 1/2 mile north of State Road 9, more commonly known as 1175 N. Airport Road.

Mr. Bilger summarized the staff report, stating the proposed replat would add acreage to an existing platted lot named Hogue's First Addition, platted in 1988, and rename it as the Third Addition. He noted that Hogue's Second Addition was nearby but otherwise unrelated to this proposal. The property was zoned R-1 in the extraterritorial jurisdiction, and the proposal would be meet the standards of that district. He then presented an aerial view of the property and the proposed plat, noting that there was a legal drain easement located on the southern part of the lot. He stated that comments from reviewing agencies were adequate, although there would need to be a second septic site be identified. He suggested the following conditions of approval:

1. Meet the requirements of the Health Department.

2. Secondary plat approval be delegated to staff.

Mr. Bilger asked the Commission for any questions. Hearing none, Mr. Weiss asked for the petitioner or their representative to speak.

Kevin Michel, engineer for the petitioner, came forward and distributed copies of the proposed plat for the Commission's reference. He explained that the replat would add acreage from the surrounding property owned by a family member to the existing lot. He stated that the deeds for the transfers had not yet been completed, so this plat would be contingent on recording those transfers first.

Mr. Weiss asked if the Commission had any questions for the petitioner. Mr. Crowder asked if the site for the new structure had been yet identified. Mr. Michel explained that there was no plan to construct anything new, just to add land to the property.

Having no more questions from the Commission, Mr. Weiss opened the public hearing. Hearing no public comment, he asked for any further comment or a motion. Mr. Warnick made a motion to approve 21-C-SUBD-4 with the two staff conditions; Mr. Hill seconded. Motion passed 8-0 by roll call vote.

**3. 21-C-DEV-3**

Batis Development Co. requested Development Plan approval for a 2,200 square foot commercial building and associated parking lot to be located on the north side of Walker Way, approximately 550 east of Line Street. The 1.37-acre property was zoned GB, General Business.

Mr. Bilger summarized the staff report. The subject property was comprised of Lot 4 of the Replat of Columbia Crossing, recorded in 2006. The proposed commercial building would be used for a coffee shop with a drive-through. He stated that there would be 11 stacking spaces for the drive-through and 32 spaces in the parking lot and noted that both would be compliant with the requirements of the zoning code. He pointed out that there was landscaping proposed, most of which exceeded the minimum of the code. A pylon sign would be installed along US 30, which could be problematic. He stated that the proposed plan indicated a footprint for a future building on the east side of the parking lot, but that was only conceptual and a future building would need to have its own Development Plan review.

He then presented aerial views of the property. He pointed out the existing pine trees in the US 30 right-of-way and noted that the Plan did not include parking landscaping along the northern property line because of them. He suggested that could be an acceptable alternative. He then displayed the submitted site development plan and landscape plan. He noted that the proposed dumpster enclosure should be opaque, that the sidewalk to Walker Way should have a corresponding ramp on the south side of the street to the existing sidewalk, and that there should be an additional parking lot tree. He then showed the proposed building elevations.

Mr. Bilger then explained the background of the freestanding signage for this property. He stated that when CVS was developed, they were granted business directory signage since the development would include multiple businesses, including the subject lot. Since a business directory sign would be in lieu of allowing multiple individual freestanding signs, the proposed pylon sign for this plan would exceed what would be allowed. He also noted that the existing trees along US 30 would likely block the sign anyway.

He concluded with the following suggested conditions of approval:

1. Address the comments from the SWCD/MS4.
2. Shift the proposed eastern street tree location to avoid the storm line.
3. Add a tree and landscaping at one end of the parking row nearest the building, likely the north end.
4. The existing trees along US 30 may substitute for street trees along that lot frontage.
5. Install a curb ramp and sidewalk connection on south side of Walker Way.
6. As may be applicable, any lighting must be directed and/or shielded to prevent glare onto public rights-of-way.
7. The refuse container (e.g. dumpster) enclosure and gates must be opaque.
8. The proposed pylon sign on this lot is not permitted unless a variance is granted.

Mr. Bilger asked the Commission for any questions. Mr. Langeloh asked about the drainage comments brought up by the SWCD. Mr. Bilger explained that normally drainage would flow to the regional detention area to the southeast of the site. However, in large rain events the northern part of the site could overflow to the north and drain east along US 30. Mr. Hill stated that he didn't have concern about it overflowing into the adjacent lift station.

Mr. Weiss then asked for the petitioner or their representative to speak. Joe Gabet, Foresight Engineering, engineer for the petitioner, came forward to speak. He provided more details on the project. He disclosed that the end user would be Starbucks and described the development and building process between Batis and Starbucks. This site was appealing for its accessibility and traffic flow for the drive-through.

He stated that Starbucks wants the proposed pylon sign, but due to the complex decision chain, there was not yet a decision if using the business directory sign would be acceptable. He discussed the landscaping and stated the proposed conditions would be acceptable. A rendering of the dumpster enclosure was distributed for reference. The sidewalk connection on the south side of the street would be acceptable.

He felt the stormwater comments could be addressed and explained the overflow design elements mentioned in the SWCD/MS4 comments.

Mr. Warnick asked if the lighting would be shielded for glare. Mr. Gabet affirmed that the lights would be oriented to avoid glare.

Mr. Weiss asked if the Commission had any more questions for the petitioner. Having no more questions from the Commission, Mr. Weiss asked if there was anyone else with comments about the proposal. Hearing none, he asked for any further comment or a motion. Mr. Weiss asked for clarification about the pylon sign; Mr. Bilger stated that the proposed pylon sign would require a variance. There was a brief discussion about possible plans for signage along Walker Way, which would likely also require a variance.

Mr. Warnick made a motion to approve 21-C-DEV-3 with the staff's suggested conditions; Mr. Langeloh seconded. Motion passed 7-0-1 by roll call vote, with Mr. Zickgraf abstaining due to his professional relationship to the proposed end user.

#### **4. Review of CBD Setback, 127 North Main Street**

Mr. Bilger reminded the Commission that the setback standards of the Central Business District were the same as the GB, General Business, but they could be modified by the Executive Committee of the Plan Commission. He stated that such modifications were typically handled during a Development Plan review, such as for the Van Buren Flats project, or a limited Development Plan review, as was done for the Catholic Church's gazebo and parking lot earlier in the year.

He then described that a porch roof was proposed to be constructed on the northeast side of the current Urban Station location, with a setback of about 15' from Jackson Street. The code standard required 25', but again, the Committee could modify that being in the CBD. He provided aerial views, submitted elevations, and the proposed location of the porch roof.

He stated that since this was a small accessory structure/addition, it was not considered large enough to warrant a Development Plan, like but it would still need to have action taken.

Mr. Warnick asked about the effect of the proposed porch roof on the available parking spaces. Mr. Bilger stated that there have been picnic tables already located on the proposed site for several years without being detrimental to the parking, but he deferred to the applicant for any additional information.

Judi Huffman, property owner, provided additional details about the design of the porch roof. She stated that the new tenant requested the roof to complement their retail business. She did not feel this would take away from available parking, and even if it did, there was still a lot of parking spaces in the immediate area.

Mr. Weiss asked about whether the turn radius would be affected for those turning from Main Street. Ms. Huffman thought most vehicles entered from Jackson Street, so it likely would not be an issue. There was a brief discussion about other changes proposed to the building.

Mr. Hill made a motion to accept the requested setback of 15' from Jackson Street; Mr. Crowder seconded. Motion passed 8-0 by roll call vote.

#### **OTHER BUSINESS**

Mr. Bilger stated that the calendar for 2022 would be presented for the Commission's consideration at the next meeting.

Mr. Kissinger asked about the new employee. Mr. Bilger stated that Brent Bockelman had started that day as the new Planner I. He said that Mr. Bockelman would not typically attend City meetings, but since Amanda Thompson was now on maternity leave as of the previous week, it could be that he would attend future meetings.

Mr. Weiss asked Mr. Bilger to provide an update about the US 30 plan, which he did. An updated version of the plan document was made available in August, with revised and updated data and additional information about the events occurring since the original publication in 2017. Mr. Kissinger asked if the plan included Allen County; Mr. Bilger stated that it was Whitley County only. He further explained that since Allen and Whitley County have been proactive in their US 30 planning efforts, it could be that if funding became available, INDOT would start with these counties. The potential for funding of the project would be exciting.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Having no further business, Mr. Hill made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Kissinger gave the second, and the meeting was adjourned at 8:02 P.M.

## **GUEST LIST**

1. Kevin Michel .....4242 S. 700 East, Columbia City
2. Joe Gabet.....1910 St. Joe Center Road, Fort Wayne
3. Judi Huffman .....6995 N. 250 West, Columbia City
4. Michael Venturini .....335 Towerview Drive, Columbia City
5. Amy Maher .....365 W. Gates Road, Columbia City
6. Tom Maher.....365 W. Gates Road, Columbia City

## **GUEST LIST (WEBCAST)**

7. No electronic attendees