

**MINUTES**  
**COLUMBIA CITY PLAN COMMISSION**  
**REGULAR MEETING**  
**MARCH 6, 2023**  
**7:00 P.M.**

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

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Walt Crowder  
Chip Hill  
Jon Kissinger  
Don Langeloh  
Nicki Venable  
Dennis Warnick  
Dan Weigold  
Larry Weiss, President  
Patrick Zickgraf, Vice President

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

**STAFF**

Nathan Bilger  
Amanda Thompson

**ATTORNEY**

Dawn Boyd  
(E)lectronic participant

**AUDIENCE MEMBERS**

The Guest List, attached, was signed by one visitor. There were no attendees on the webcast.

**CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL**

Mr. Weiss called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M. Ms. Thompson read the roll call with members present and absent listed above.

**CONSIDERATION OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES**

The minutes of the November and December 2022 and January and February 2023 meetings were presented.

Mr. Zickgraf made a motion to approve the November minutes as presented; Mr. Hill seconded. Motion passed, 9-0.

Mr. Langeloh asked about the process for ensuring that the conditions of approval for the Bowen Center Development Plan were met as stated in the December minutes. He discussed the crosswalk or the walk up to the Community Foundation property. Mr. Bilger reminded the Commission of the discussion that a crosswalk was not preferred and a connection up to the Community Foundation was required but it was conceptual. He said it would be checked prior to the final approval of the building. There was further discussion about the Development Plan and planning for US 30. Mr. Warnick made a motion to approve the December minutes as presented; Mr. Zickgraf seconded. Motion passed, 8-0-1, with Mr. Weigold abstaining due to not being present at the meeting.

Mr. Weiss discussed the Technical Review Committee members determined at the January meeting. He asked Ms. Venable if she would be interested in participating in the Tech Review since Mr. Hill would be part of the committee as an employee and not necessarily as a

Commission member. She replied that she would be interested. Mr. Bilger clarified that was not an amendment of the minutes, but a discussion resulting from the minutes. Mr. Weiss agreed. Mr. Warnick made a motion to approve the January minutes as presented; Mr. Hill seconded. Motion passed, 8-0-1, with Mr. Crowder abstaining due to not being present at the meeting.

Mr. Langeloh asked about the gravel parking allowance discussed at the February meeting; Mr. Weiss said that might be better discussed later as part of the parking discussion item. Mr. Zickgraf made a motion to approve the February minutes as presented; Mr. Warnick seconded. Motion passed, 8-0-1, with Mr. Hill abstaining due to not being present at the meeting.

### **ADMINISTRATION OF THE OATH TO WITNESSES**

There being no public hearing items, no oath was given.

### **OLD/NEW BUSINESS**

There were no items of old business or new business.

### **OTHER BUSINESS**

#### **1. Parking Code status**

Mr. Bilger stated that he would resume discussion of the parking code with the required parking schedule, which was where the Commission had left off in February. He stated that the schedule was a draft, based on comments from the committee that had met before. He distributed the current schedule and a revised draft for the Commission's review.

Mr. Crowder asked when the parking code revision was completed, if would it be a recommendation forwarded to the City's Ordinance Committee. Mr. Bilger replied that normally zoning code changes did not go through the Ordinance Committee since the Plan Commission was the advisory body to the Council on land use matters. He asked if Mr. Crowder wanted it to be routed through the Ordinance Committee. Mr. Crowder said that the Parking Committee and Ordinance Committee should review these. Mr. Warnick said that he thought the committees were all viewing different things: the Parking Committee dealt with on-street matters and the zoning code dealt with off-street parking. Mr. Crowder said that he felt that was not the case. Mr. Bilger suggested that since the Plan Commission and Parking Committee were equal-level boards, a recommendation from the Commission should still be made to the Council, but with input from the Committee, perhaps in a workshop meeting. Mr. Weigold said that he felt embarrassed since he was on the Parking Committee and did not know why the Commission would be talking about street parking. Mr. Crowder said that he felt a joint workshop might not be productive since there would be too many people with differing ideas, but it could be an introduction of these changes to the Ordinance Committee. There was further discussion on the authority of the City's general ordinances versus the parking code. Mr. Weigold thought that this night's discussion would be about on-street parking. Mr. Hill, Langeloh, and Warnick said the zoning code applies only to off-street parking. Mr. Bilger affirmed that the discussion that night would be only off-street parking; any overlaps between codes could be reviewed later in the process.

Mr. Bilger then described the draft changes to the parking schedule. He stated that he attempted to reduce the standards and revise them as much as possible based on performance rather than by a named use. He gave an example of parking for churches versus parking for

assembly uses. Another example would be drive-throughs, which would have stacking spaces based on points of interaction rather than based on “ATM” or “drive-through restaurant” or “manual car wash” and so on. Standards for employee parking would be another example that could apply to many uses. He said this method and revising the remaining use standards would reduce the length of the code and should make application to a wider variety of uses easier.

Mr. Weigold said that he appreciated this discussion, as he now saw that it would not overlap with the Parking Committee work. Mr. Crowder agreed but suggested that there would still be some gray areas that could be both in zoning and ordinance. Mr. Bilger acknowledged that having the Parking Committee involved was a good idea as part of the process.

Mr. Bilger then summarized the draft parking schedule point by point. Highlights included:

- Residential standards would be mostly unchanged.
- Commercial standards would be revised to use gross floor area of a building. This would be comparable to many other communities and would make calculation easier. Future changes in the interior floor plan would not then affect parking numbers.
- Restaurant calculations would be simplified from the current standard. He provided an example of how seating area plus drive-through plus employees would create the parking number. Mr. Zickgraf asked what would happen if there were two drive-through lanes. Mr. Bilger said that it might be doubled or it might be a “zipper” where the two lanes were mingled. There was a discussion about Chick-fil-A or Culver’s designs and how the proposed “guideline” approach might allow the business to propose an adequate number of spaces.
- How the standards would be applied to gas stations, service stations, and convenience stores were discussed. Mr. Bilger suggested that they would be a mix-and-match of applicable standards, rather some explicit use required to have an explicit standard. He stated that the administration in review would be more complex, but it should be more flexible, which would be good for business.
- Mr. Bilger noted that medical office would be a new addition, although veterinary office was already in the code. He said that standard would probably need further research; the Bowen Center could be a reference example. Hospitals and nursing homes would also need more research.
- Industrial uses would be comparable to the current standards but would be revised to match formatting with the other standards.
- Recreational uses were in progress still. Those uses that were comparable to assembly uses would use that standard, but some were decidedly different.
- School uses would be not changed much from the current but would be primarily assembled from the different standards of assembly and employees, with students added for high schools. He stated that pickup/dropoff stacking would be required, though the amount would not be defined, to avoid impacts on surrounding streets. He noted that if it could be expected that multiple facilities would be used at once, the parking standards would be added together. For example, a high school could have simultaneous events in its auditorium and stadium, so the parking needs might be

multiplied. Events during school hours and afterhours would be another consideration—all of which could be reviewed and refined as part of a development plan review, similar to what was discussed when the new high school was reviewed a few years ago.

Mr. Warnick said that he liked what had been prepared so far. Mr. Bilger said he would continue working on revisions and refinements.

## **2. Extraterritorial Jurisdiction update**

Mr. Bilger provided the Commission with an update on the status of the proposed extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ) expansion filed with the County Plan Commission. He presented the comparisons of A-1 and AG zoning districts and an updated map showing the current, currently proposed, and revised proposed ETJ area as previously discussed. He asked for affirmation of the changes and asked if the Commission wished to formally amend the proposal, or to keep it in reserve as part of discussions.

Mr. Weigold asked if this was more acceptable to the County Plan Commission. Mr. Bilger replied that they had not seen the changes yet. Mr. Weiss added that the item was requested to be tabled to May due to the County's upcoming controversial and lengthy items on their March agenda, and Mr. Weiss's being out of town in April.

Mr. Weiss gave his interpretation of the changes to the map. Mr. Weigold said that the comparison table of the A-1 and AG districts was very informative and hopefully showed that the change was not really a big deal. The Commission again discussed the timing and need for the ETJ expansion. Mr. Weiss felt the changes should represent a reasonable response to the County's request; presenting no changes might make them disregard the entire proposal.

Ms. Venable asked for clarification on the notices to the property owners in the proposed area. Mr. Bilger stated that no mailed notices had yet gone out. Mr. Kissinger said the question was whether to send notice to all owners in the proposed ETJ area or amend the proposed area and send to a smaller number of owners.

Mr. Hill asked if it would make sense to push out the notices and hearing even further to avoid the solar and jail controversies that the County was currently dealing with.

Mr. Crowder agreed that distancing from the County's controversies would be good.

Mr. Langeloh made a motion to formally amend the proposed ETJ to reflect the reduced area; Mr. Warnick seconded. Motion passed, 7-2, with Ms. Venable and Mr. Kissinger voting against.

Mr. Bilger asked for confirmation that Ms. Venable and Mr. Kissinger did vote against the motion. They replied that they did. Mr. Weiss asked why they voted so. Mr. Kissinger replied that he felt that reducing the area would be choking and an invitation for the County to further reduce the proposed area. Ms. Venable said that she would prefer just to ask for what was desired; the County would agree or not. The City should be flexible, but the County should say what they would want instead. Other Commission members added that they agreed with the comments.

Mr. Weiss described a possible plan to accomplish some form of the current ETJ proposal in the immediate future. Then, as annexations may occur in the future, there would be regular ETJ expansions proposed to reflect the annexed area, perhaps every two or three years.

Doing this relatively frequently would indicate why expansions were requested, rather than facing the current questions. Mr. Bilger suggested that it could become a routine practice that would not be surprising to officials or property owners. The Commission members discussed the merits of this concept. Ms. Venable suggested that expressing this idea to the County might make the current proposal more favorable.

Mr. Weigold asked if there could be a meeting with the County Plan Commission to discuss to get more guidance. Mr. Weiss replied that the president and vice president were invited to discuss the purpose early in 2022, but they were not interested. Ms. Venable suggested that the whole Commissions could get together as a joint workshop. Mr. Weiss and Weigold expressed dismay in the historic lack of cooperation. Mr. Bilger said that he could propose the idea with the new County Plan Commission president. Mr. Warnick requested that the entire Commission come if a workshop is scheduled, not just two members. There was more discussion.

Mr. Weiss asked if the Commission wished to keep the proposed ETJ instead of the revised area based on this discussion. They took a straw poll, with one member preferring the revised area and the rest wanting to keep the original proposal. Mr. Weiss said that the proposed revision should be held back pending discussion with the County Plan Commission.

Mr. Weiss requested that staff arrange a special joint workshop with the County Plan Commission to discuss the ETJ. It was noted that the meeting, if one can be scheduled, it would likely be late April or May.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, Mr. Weiss asked for motion to adjourn. Mr. Zickgraf so moved; Mr. Warnick seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 8:24 P.M.

### **GUEST LIST**

1. Tom Maher ..... 365 W. Gates Road, Columbia City

### **GUEST LIST (WEBCAST)**

2. None.