

MINUTES
SOUTH WHITLEY PLAN COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
MONDAY, AUGUST 19, 2019
6:30 P.M.

SOUTH WHITLEY TOWN HALL
118 E. Front Street, South Whitley

MEMBERS PRESENT

Wendy Bills
Randy Cokl
Tom Dome
Les Hoffman
Anna Simmons
Wayne Swender
Brock Waterson

STAFF

Nathan Bilger

MEMBERS ABSENT

None

VISITORS

There were three visitors who signed the Guest List at the August 19, 2019, South Whitley Plan Commission meeting. The Guest List is included with the minutes of this meeting.

CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Bills called the meeting to order at 6:33 p.m.

ROLL CALL

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

CONSIDERATION AND ADOPTION OF THE APRIL 15, 2019, REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Ms. Bills asked if anyone had any changes to report for the April minutes. There were none, and Mr. Hoffman made a motion to accept the minutes as presented. Ms. Simmons gave the second, and the members voted unanimously to carry the motion.

ADMINISTRATION OF THE OATH TO WITNESSEES

Mr. Bilger administered the Oath to those present who wished to speak at the meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business.

NEW BUSINESS

19-SW-DEV-1

South Whitley Community Public Library requested Development Plan approval for an 8385 square foot addition and parking area on the north side of their building located at 201 E. Front Street, South Whitley. Mr. Bilger summarized the Staff Report and stated that the library had not had a Development Plan Review in the past so the Commission members should review all the library properties as a whole and not just the area of the proposed addition. With the addition, the library would have a total gross square footage of 22,900±, plus 5700± square feet of parking lot area. Mr. Bilger expressed concern regarding auditorium event traffic caused by limited off-street parking. The project did receive Variance approval for the parking provided. Mr. Bilger continued, saying that the Commission would need to decide what level of landscaping would be appropriate. Overall, Mr. Bilger stated the project mostly complied with the required standards after having received Variance approvals for parking, setback, and lot coverage. He suggested two conditions of approval in the Staff Report. There were no questions for Mr. Bilger.

Jeff Kumfer of SRKM Architecture was present and spoke on behalf of the library. Mr. Waterson asked how auditorium traffic would be managed to prevent event goers from parking east. Mr. Kumfer anticipated individuals would seek parking near the library from the park, the post office, and uptown, but some residential off-street parking could be utilized. Mr. Bilger asked what type of events would be held in the auditorium. Randy Holler was present from the library and explained the auditorium would be used to teach history to school age children in addition to the same events that are held currently. Vicki Builta was also present from the library and chimed in that events would entertain approximately 40 people. Mr. Dome asked if the library had ever had issues with parking with past events. Ms. Builta replied that they had received one complaint from someone who had wanted to visit the library during lunch time, but the adjacent parking was already used up by other lunch-time visitors. Mr. Bilger stated that conflicts between users can be common, and sometimes the Town Council needs to mediate. Mr. Swender requested details on the landscaping request. Mr. Kumfer replied that no details were provided because the code has no specifications to follow. He requested suggestions from the Commission.

Mr. Waterson felt the auditorium could be better used to help bring people to the community if more parking were available. Mr. Kumfer said the only opportunity the library would have for additional parking would be to consider demolishing the house they own at 207 E. Front Street. Several Commission members felt this house was too

nice to tear down. Mr. Waterson said if parking was a problem, he wanted to try to solve it, but he personally did not have concerns about library parking overflowing into the residential areas. The members continued to discuss potential options for downtown parking areas. With regard to the landscaping, Mr. Bilger suggested the replacement of trees removed for the addition and the previous house demolition. He also requested shrubbery along the proposed parking area. He offered that the petitioner could present a landscape plan for administrative approval if the Commission agreed. Mr. Waterson asked what the plans were for the existing garage. Mr. Kumfer and Ms. Builta replied the garage would not be removed, at least not at this time, and is being used for storage. Mr. Holler informed the Commission that the project would not require a tax increase and would be completed with existing funds and donations along with borrowed money that can be paid with revenue from the current tax rate. He asked the Commission to grant him 12 months to complete landscaping because he had not accounted for landscaping in his budget. Mr. Bilger suggested that the Commission grant delayed landscaping until the end of 2020. Mr. Waterson asked when the construction would be completed. Mr. Kumfer said they hoped to be finished in February; they'll begin construction after the air conditioning is turned off in mid-September. The air conditioning units will be relocated to allow for the addition.

Mr. Bilger asked the Council members their thoughts on the alley access proposal, although they could not make an official decision outside of a Council meeting. The Council members discussed quickly and indicated they had no issues with the proposal. Mr. Bilger recommended the Commission keep the Council approval as a condition. Mr. Hoffman confirmed the Council would discuss the alley access during their next Council meeting. Mr. Swender made a motion to approve the library addition with the conditions that the use of the alley as access to the parking area be approved by the Town Council and that a landscaping plan be in place by the end of 2020. Ms. Simmons gave the second, and the members voted unanimously to carry the motion.

OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no additional business to come before the Plan Commission, Ms. Simmons motioned to adjourn, Mr. Hoffman gave the second, and the members voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 7:03 P.M.

GUEST LIST

1. Vicki Builta ----- 201 E. Front Street, South Whitley
2. Jeff Kumfer ----- 7170 S. Washington Road, Columbia City
3. Randy Holler ----- 201 E. Front Street, South Whitley