

**MINUTES**  
**COLUMBIA CITY PLAN COMMISSION**  
**REGULAR MEETING**  
**AUGUST 7, 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 – absent)*  
  
(E)lectronic participant

**AUDIENCE MEMBERS**

The Guest List, attached, was signed by six visitors. 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 October 3, 2022, meeting minutes were considered. Ms. Thompson explained that because the October meeting was lengthy, the minutes for this meeting were delayed while other, shorter, minutes were completed. Mr. Langeloh made a motion to approve the October minutes as presented. Mr. Zickgraf gave the second. Motion passed, 8-0-1, with Ms. Veneable in abstention due to not having been a Commission member at the time of the October meeting.

**ADMINISTRATION OF THE OATH TO WITNESSES**

Mr. Bilger administered the Oath to those present who intended to speak during the meeting.

**OLD BUSINESS**

**1. Findings of Fact for 23-C-SUBD-2 waivers**

The Commission considered Findings of Fact for the waivers approved as part of 23-C-SUBD-02. Mr. Warnick made a motion to approve the Findings as presented. Mr. Hill gave the second. Motion passed, 9-0.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **2. 23-C-DEV-3**

MKW, LLC, requested Development Plan Review for a 6,000 square foot commercial storage building proposed to be located at 814 N. Opportunity Drive. The property, zoned I-1, Light-Industrial District was located on the east side of Opportunity Drive, ½ mile north of Connexion Way.

Mr. Bilger provided a summary of the staff report. He stated that the building would be for storage only, but that because it was the first building on the property, it triggered the need for Development Plan review. He said that this property already had a special exception approval for outdoor storage in 2022, and this building would reduce the amount of items stored outdoors. He then presented aerial views of the property and the proposed site and building plans.

He concluded with the following suggested conditions:

1. The conditions of 22-C-SE-2 are included.
2. Address any comments received from reviewing agencies.
3. Any exterior refuse storage (e.g. dumpster) must be enclosed with an opaque screen.
4. The property is to be replatted as a single lot within one year of this approval.

Having no questions for staff, Mr. Weiss asked the petitioner to speak.

Andy More, petitioner, said the purpose of the proposed building would be to reduce the number of items stored on the main More Farm Store property on Connexion Way. He said that there would be a dumpster, so that would be enclosed. He described further plans for the property.

Mr. Zickgraf asked if there would be any outdoor storage. Mr. More responded there already is, and that would continue, with the proposed building to help bring more items inside.

Mr. Weiss asked if the developer had discussed making a cul-de-sac at the end of Opportunity since the street now ended at the solar park. Mr. More said that trucks had turned around on their property, but the installation of a cul-de-sac would be very difficult due to the deep drainage swale. There was discussion about the feasibility of a turn-around. Ms. Venable asked how delivery trucks could turn around on the property; Mr. More described the loop route on the property. He said that they were okay with a few other trucks turning around on their property as well. Mr. Langeloh said that there should be a “no outlet” notice sign near the Connexion Way intersection. That idea was briefly discussed by the Commission. Mr. Crowder and Mr. Hill would look into getting signage installed.

Mr. Weigold asked about the ingress/egress easement on the north side of the property and to clarify who it would benefit. Mr. Bilger replied that it was an existing easement created to access the Armstrong property to the east and the details would be in that easement document.

Mr. More asked about the condition to replat the property. Mr. Bilger replied that replatting would combine the parcels as one lot.

Mr. Zickgraf asked about the six parking spaces mentioned in the staff report. Mr. Bilger stated that the spaces would be required for a warehouse use, but this use was more

accessory, with employees parking at the main store. Ms. Venable asked if a new building were constructed in front, whether additional parking would be required. Mr. Bilger replied that a new parking calculation would be required; the currently proposed building would then be considered accessory to that new building.

Ms. Venable asked if the proposed building would have enough space to house all of the equipment stored outside. Mr. More said that it would not enclose all of the equipment, but only certain items such as higher value or more weather sensitive. Things like stacked crates would remain. Ms. Venable asked if the crates looked nice; Mr. More replied that they did and said that they blocked the view of the other stored items.

Mr. Langeloh asked if the drive would stay gravel. Mr. More said it would be paved within five years because of the special exception condition, maybe sooner if they build the main building.

Having no further questions for the petitioner, Mr. Weiss asked for any comments from the public. Hearing no public comment, he asked for a motion. Mr. Warnick made a motion to approve 23-C-DEV-3 as presented, with the staff conditions. Mr. Zickgraf seconded. Motion passed, 9-0.

### **3. 23-C-DEV-4**

Mission 25 requested Development Plan Review for a 20,350± square foot multi-family recovery residence proposed to be located on lots 32 and 33 in Armstrong Corporate Park, Section 12. The property, zoned GB, General Business District, was located on the southwest corner of Connexion Way and Opportunity Drive.

Mr. Bilger summarized the staff report. He stated that the BZA had received special exception approval for the proposed apartment use, with some conditions. He explained that there were a few changes made to the plans since the BZA approval, and this proposal was the current version. A major change was to provide one primary access onto Opportunity Drive, with a back access driveway onto Connexion. He then displayed aerial views and the proposed site, building, and landscape plans. He described the landscaping and the deviations from the letter of the code. He also discussed the concept of proactively allowing two main entrances in case that were ever proposed in the future, which was a proposed condition.

He concluded by explaining the following suggested conditions:

1. Add landscaped areas to the eastern tier of parking.
2. Address any remaining comments received from reviewing agencies.
3. Freestanding lighting fixtures to be maximum 25' in height.
4. Exterior lighting must directed and/or shielded to prevent glare onto public rights-of-way.
5. Signage to conform to sign code requirements.
6. A second primary entrance to Connexion Way may be installed in the future without review of an amended Development Plan. If done, the secondary driveway access would need to be removed and redirected to the main parking lot.

Mr. Crowder asked about the access to the attached garage. It was noted that there would be only one door, with a driveway to Connexion. There was a clarification about the number of proposed accesses to the streets being two, not three.

Having no further questions for staff, Mr. Weiss asked the petitioner to speak.

Shawn Ellis, Mission 25 director, and Matt Shipman, Mission 25 board member and legal counsel, spoke on the request. Ms. Ellis stated that the garage was not for vehicles, but for storing ground maintenance tools and equipment and for drop-off of donations. Mr. Shipman said it would be basically a service entrance. He then discussed the reasons for elimination of the second full entrance. Mr. Kissinger asked if the service drive would have a turnaround. Ms. Ellis clarified that the only large vehicle using that drive would be a trash truck; there would not be any semi-trucks.

Mr. Crowder asked where the nearest fire hydrant was located. It was pointed out that there was one on-site, and at least one more across the street. Mr. Langeloh asked about the proposed playground. Mr. Shipman said that was an outdoor fenced area, partially covered, on the west side of the building, near the adjacent Parkview lot.

Mr. Warnick asked about the completion date. Ms. Ellis stated that it would be done by June 2025 due to funding requirements.

Mr. Weigold thanked Mission 25 for their efforts in making this happen.

Having no further questions for the petitioner, Mr. Weiss asked for public comment. Having no public comment, he asked for further Commission discussion or a motion.

Mr. Warnick made a motion to approve 23-C-DEV-4 as presented, with the staff's conditions, except that proposed condition #6 be omitted. Mr. Hill seconded. Motion passed, 8-0-1, with Ms. Venable abstaining due to her position on the Mission 25 board.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

### **4. Parking code update**

Mr. Bilger stated that the code writing was still in progress.

### **5. Extraterritorial jurisdiction expansion update**

Mr. Weiss summarized the changes made to the proposed ETJ area that were based on the comments from the County Plan Commission. He stated that the requested area was reduced to only that nearest the high school property, south of 200 South, and an area adjacent to Eagle Glen, bounded by 300 East and 100 South. Mr. Bilger explained the details of the revised area, stating that the line would follow roads and waterways for the most part to try to avoid splitting properties. He said that there was still one property split, but it was a small corner and to avoid it would create a more confusing boundary. He provided a summary of the remaining process to move forward.

Mr. Weiss said that if the Commission would accept the proposed changes, it would be before the County Plan Commission at their September 20<sup>th</sup> meeting to allow for notifications to be sent to the property owners in the area.

Mr. Bilger relayed that most of the County Plan Commission members felt that future ETJ expansions should be in smaller areas, related to annexations or other specific reasons.

Mr. Weigold expressed frustration about the process and the lack of understanding of the change. Mr. Warnick felt that it stemmed from a history of not wanting growth. Mr. Weiss said that the negative feelings could be helped if future ETJ expansions were not every 50 years but every 2-5 years. There was discussion about how to foster better communication and cooperation between the Commissions to address consistency in codes and processes like

this. They expressed appreciation for the joint training sessions as opportunities for communication.

Mr. Warnick made a motion to accept the revised ETJ map as presented; Mr. Zickgraf seconded. Motion passed, 9-0.

**6. Miscellaneous items**

Mr. Bilger reviewed the options for motions for each type of public hearing case. He said that this was a review that he was trying to do with each board during the year.

Mr. Weiss provided an update on his health condition and let the Commission know dates he would be unavailable in the coming months.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, Mr. Weiss asked for motion to adjourn. Mr. Langeloh so moved; Mr. Crowder seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 P.M.

**GUEST LIST**

- 1. Cassie Bumbaugh ..... 501 N. 850 West -92, Pierceton
- 2. Todd Jones ..... 960 S. 900 West -92, Pierceton
- 3. Andy More ..... 5715 N. Ashford Drive, Columbia City
- 4. Shawn Ellis ..... 315 S. Chauncey Street, Columbia City
- 5. Matt Shipman ..... 119 S. Main Street, Columbia City
- 6. Diana DuPont ..... 1676 S. 700 East, Columbia City

**GUEST LIST (WEBCAST)**

- 7. No attendees