

CITY OF THE DALLES PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

Thursday, November 17, 2011

City Hall Council Chambers

313 Court Street

The Dalles, OR 97058

Conducted in a handicap accessible room

CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Lavier called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Bruce Lavier, Ron Ahlberg, John Nelson, Dennis Whitehouse, Nan Wimmers, Chris Zukin

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

Mark Poppoff

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

City Attorney Gene Parker, Senior Planner Richard Gassman, and Administrative Secretary Carole Trautman

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Commissioner Wimmers moved to approve the agenda as submitted, Commissioner Nelson seconded. The motion carried unanimously, Poppoff was absent.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Commissioner Zukin moved to approve the minutes of the September 1, 2011 meeting as submitted, Commissioner Whitehouse seconded. The motion carried unanimously, Poppoff was absent.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

None

REVIEW – CUP 154-09, WONDERWORKS CHILDREN’S MUSEUM OF THE GORGE:

Senior Planer Gassman reported that the decision to be made regarding CUP 154-09 would typically be made at the City staff level, but since no Site Plan Review had ever been submitted, staff determined the most appropriate action to take at this time was to bring the applicant’s recent request before the Planning Commission.

Senior Planner Gassman explained that Wonderworks requested use of the building located at 206 Madison Street pending completion of a Site Plan Review (SPR) and subsequent remodeling work. The main issue for usage is the parking area, Gassman explained, and any use of the building would require paving and drainage in the parking lot. The SPR application had not been submitted, Gassman reported, because Wonderworks was in the process of raising project funds.

The Staff’s recommendation would be as follows: temporary occupancy, use of occasional occupation, barricade the parking lot when not in use, and determine a time frame for a Site Plan Review and subsequent remodeling work, Gassman reported.

Chair Lavier asked how often the property would be used. Ann Kelly, PO Box 355, The Dalles, project manager from Wonderworks, answered that the space would be used for fundraising and classes, approximately eight (8) hours a week. Kelly said no more than four or five families would use the property, and during classes there would be 10-15 parents with children present.

Commissioner Ahlberg asked if there was currently any signage in the parking area that indicated parking was prohibited. Kelly said there was not. In the past, part of the parking lot was owned by the railroad, Kelly explained, but now Wonderworks owns the entire lot. One advantage to using the property on a periodic basis would be that it would raise others' awareness that the Wonderworks parking lot would not be available to the public, Kelly stated.

Chair Lavier asked if Wonderworks would be agreeable to Staff's recommendations. Kelly said Wonderworks was agreeable, however obtaining grants could possibly make it difficult to adhere to a time table. Wonderworks, Kelly stated, is currently working on grant applications. Kelly asked if the Planning Commission would be willing to work with Wonderworks if the project took longer than one and a half years. Lavier asked Gassman if the project could be reviewed again if necessary. Gassman said the timeline could be flexible, but some timeline is needed.

Commissioner Whitehouse asked if the parking lot would only be used for parking. Kelly affirmed it would only be used for parking.

Commissioner Nelson asked Kelly what type of work had already been completed on the building interior. Kelly said the building currently had heat, and there were new windows and doors in the front. Kelly also stated there was no bathroom, but plumbing was available. Nelson asked if the bathroom would be installed prior to occupation, and Kelly affirmed. Wonderworks also had money for interior framing and insulation, Kelly stated. Nelson asked if Wonderworks was planning on occupying the front third of the building. Kelly confirmed the plans called for occupying the front third, installation of a bathroom, and remodeling the remainder of the building as funds would allow. Kelly also stated there would be a temporary wall in place during temporary occupancy. There are no overhead lights, but electrical wiring is in place, Kelly reported. Wonderworks will work with Building Codes to get the building useable and will probably be ready to use the building in early spring, Kelly said.

Commissioner Ahlberg clarified with Kelly about the feasibility of fulfilling the goal of occupying the building in light of the funds needed to do so. Kelly answered that if the grants could not be obtained, then Wonderworks would probably not be able to keep the building and make the changes.

Commissioner Zukin suggested to modify the proposed timeline to one year for completion of the SPR application and one year from the date of the SPR application decision for completion of the work. Kelly stated Wonderworks wanted to progress, and the only issue holding up the progress was the engineering.

Discussion followed about solutions to the parking lot usage. Kelly said part of the parking lot plan was to install a fence in the back part of the parking lot, but in the meantime signage could be implemented.

Commissioner Nelson asked if Public Works had been included in these discussions. Gassman said there would be no problems with Public Works.

Commissioner Zukin moved that Wonderworks be allowed to use the property at 206 Madison with the following conditions: 1) that the building and parking area be used only by Wonderworks for Wonderworks activities; 2) until the parking area is paved, it shall only be used by Wonderworks; 3) at other times the parking lot will be barricaded and signed to prevent its use; 4) Wonderworks will submit a complete Site Plan Review Application within one (1) year from the date of the approval of these terms; and 5) Wonderworks will have all required improvements completed within one (1) year from the date of the decision of the Site Plan Review Application. Commissioner Wimmers seconded, the motion carried unanimously; Poppoff was absent.

STAFF COMMENTS:

Senior Planner Gassman reported that the City Council approved a proposed work plan for a new tree committee. Gassman stated the scope of work would include the inventory of additional trees in the right-of-ways and public property, not on private properties. Gassman said he would be asking former tree committee members to participate.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS/QUESTIONS:

Commissioner Nelson asked about the status of Riverenza. Senior Planner Gassman reported that he sent Riverenza a letter inquiring on their hours of operation. In the letter, Gassman said he asked Riverenza to submit a proposal to the Planning Commission to modify the hours of operation and to be prepared to discuss the scope of their activities. Gassman also stated he would schedule it for Planning Commission once he received the applicant's response.

Commissioner Whitehouse inquired about the upcoming LCDC roundtable discussion. Carole Trautman will send more event information to the commissioners.


NEXT MEETING:

Next meeting: December 1, 2011

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 6:42 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Carole J. Trautman, Administrative Secretary.



Bruce Lavier, Chairman
Planning Commission Minutes
November 17, 2011