

CITY OF THE DALLES PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

Thursday, November 7, 2013

City Hall Council Chambers

313 Court Street

The Dalles, OR 97058

Conducted in a handicap accessible room

6:00 PM

CALL TO ORDER:

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

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Bruce Lavier, Chris Zukin, Dennis Whitehouse, Jeff Stiles

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

Mark Poppoff, Mike Zingg, Rob Raschio

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

City Attorney Gene Parker, Planning Director Richard Gassman, City Engineer Dale McCabe, Administrative Secretary Carole Trautman

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Chair Lavier noted to amend the agenda by designating agenda item VI (Staff Comments) as item number V, and agenda item V (Work Session) as item number VI.

It was moved by Zukin and seconded by Whitehouse to approve the agenda as amended. The motion carried unanimously; Poppoff, Zingg and Raschio were absent.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

It was moved by Whitehouse and seconded by Stiles to approve the October 3, 2013 minutes as submitted. The motion carried unanimously; Poppoff, Zingg and Raschio were absent.

STAFF COMMENTS:

Director Gassman suggested the Commission set a time limit for the work session. It was the consensus of the Commission to adjourn at 8:00 PM.

Director Gassman suggested the Commission set a meeting format of hearing staff's memorandum review, Commissioner questions and comments, and allow public comments. It was the consensus of the Commission to use the suggested format.

Director Gassman gave an explanation of the design of the Planning Commission work session and advised that public comments will be taken into consideration. Gassman said the Planning Commission and City Council both will eventually conduct public hearings where testimony will be heard and be considered public record.

WORK SESSION:

Director Gassman said there was one written comment received from concerned east side local citizens dated November 6, 2013. The comment was forwarded to the Planning Commissioners via email.

Director Gassman gave an extensive review of staff's memorandum.

Chair Lavier asked what if the existing waivers of remonstrance (WR) were eliminated. Director Gassman said if the property owners would want them removed, the City would have difficulty forming a Local Improvement District (LID), and that the existing WRs were not located in one concentrated area enough to form an LID. They were randomly located throughout the City.

Chair Lavier noted that one advantage to getting streets up to City Standards was that the streets would be maintained by the City. Director Gassman indicated that the large problem was the cost and the fact that many streets were not ready for improvements because of no storm water system or engineering.

Stiles asked if property owners were expected to pay the same amount for street improvements (SI) on a collector road as a street not on a collector road. Director Gassman said the cost was the same to the property owner. The City would actualize more cost because of the pavement thickness, but only in the case of the pay into the fund (PIF) method where cost estimates are utilized. Whitehouse asked if the property owner paid for SI engineering. City Engineer McCabe said the property owners would hire an engineer and submit plans to the City Engineer for engineering approval.

Director Gassman pointed out that the major problems in the past have come with the smaller lot property owners that wanted to divide, or property owners that wanted to build a house. With minor partitions and new development, owners built anywhere within the City's jurisdiction, and often not near anything where there were existing public improvements. The partitions or new developments were randomly scattered, and often there were no storm systems, water systems, engineering, etc., Gassman stated. It is often very difficult to get the public improvements installed. Then the property owners were forced to other alternative deferral arrangements.

Gassman reported that large areas on the east side have very few streets, and they do not have local residential streets. They are mostly collector streets. If a subdivision was developed in that area, then there would probably be some new streets classified as local residential, Gassman advised. Because the existing streets are collector streets, they do not fall into the set of alternative City standards adopted in 2010. Most of the streets that have reduced City standards are on the west side and arguably do not need the same set of public improvements that the longer, more heavily traveled collector streets require. This issue could be up for review, Gassman stated.

Director Gassman advised that the American Disabilities Act required local jurisdictions to provide for access, and although the Act does not require jurisdictions to "retro-fit" existing streets, the City would be required to abide by ADA requirements for new streets. Gassman said the City may be in potential financial jeopardy if full improvements were not installed for new streets. Whitehouse asked if property owners would be held accountable as well as the City. City Attorney Parker stated most financial liabilities were imposed in larger cities, but eventually it could be applied to the more rural areas.

Stiles suggested looking at using property taxes as a revenue source for street improvements. As property owners make improvements on a lot, the value increases. Perhaps, Stiles said, a portion of the tax increase could be used for street improvements. City Attorney Parker thought the property taxes were used for the City's general funds. Whitehouse said the Commission needed to look at all avenues and resources for funding, and he believed the City should share the costs with the property owners.

After some discussion, it was the consensus of the Commission to listen to citizens' testimony at this meeting, take a tour of the key areas of issue within the City and UGB boundaries with the Commission, staff and City Engineer, then prioritize the issues at the next meeting.

Testimony

Mary Merrill, 2437 East 10th Street, The Dalles, Oregon, asked the Commission to consider using swales rather than installing storm water systems. Ms. Merrill said she owns a home that has no WR, yet she lost a house sale because there was a "perception" that future owners were going to be responsible for improvements. Ms. Merrill also suggested the City consider pursuing state grants for 10th Street (possibly the only street in The Dalles that extends across the entire city), as it could be eligible for state funding for a bicycle path or other improvements.

Jerry Johnson, 3102 East 13th Street, The Dalles, Oregon, asked if the \$2 water fee goes into a fund for future storm water improvements. If it did, then the City should consider using those funds for storm water. Mr. Johnson said he believed everyone in the City should help pay for improvements on the east side, not just the east side people. City Attorney Parker reviewed the ordinance and reported that the money goes into special funds to pay for capacity increasing improvements, essentially for new projects to install storm systems.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS/QUESTIONS:

None.

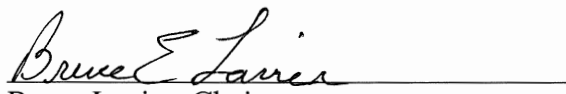
NEXT MEETING:

November 21, 2013

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 7:37 PM.

Respectfully submitted by Carole J. Trautman, Administrative Secretary.


Bruce Lavier, Chairman