

MINUTES

PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING

March 6, 2025
5:30 p.m.

City Hall Council Chambers
313 Court Street, The Dalles, Oregon 97058
Via Zoom / Livestream via City Website

PRESIDING: Cody Cornett, Chair

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Addie Case, John Grant, Mark Poppoff, Nik Portela

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Maria Peña, Carrie Pipinich

STAFF PRESENT: Director Joshua Chandler, City Attorney Jonathan Kara,
Senior Planner Sandy Freund, Secretary Paula Webb

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chair Cornett at 5:30 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair Cornett led the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

It was moved by Commissioner Case and seconded by Commissioner Grant to approve the agenda as submitted. The motion carried 5/0; Commissioners Case, Cornett, Grant, Poppoff and Portela voting in favor, none opposed, Commissioners Peña and Pipinich absent.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

It was moved by Commissioner Grant and seconded by Chair Cornett to approve the minutes of February 6, 2025 as submitted. The motion carried 5/0; Commissioners Case, Cornett, Grant, Poppoff and Portela voting in favor, none opposed, Commissioners Peña and Pipinich absent.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

QUASI-JUDICIAL PUBLIC HEARING

Variance 131-25, Jason Alford, Applicant

Request: Approval to reduce the block width internal to a proposed 29-lot single-family residential subdivision at the terminus of E. 21st Street.

Chair Cornett read the rules governing a public hearing. He then inquired whether any Commissioner had ex parte contact, bias, or a conflict of interest that would preclude an impartial decision. Hearing none, Chair Cornett opened the public hearing at 5:34 p.m.

Senior Planner Freund presented the Staff report and provided a presentation (Attachment 1). The report outlined the variance request under consideration and described the challenges of the site, including steep slopes and topographic constraints.

Chair Cornett inquired whether all lots were above the 5,000 square foot minimum. Senior Planner Freund confirmed that the lots ranged from 5,000 square feet to 15,926 square feet.

Chair Cornett invited testimony from the applicant.

Mr. Darrin Eckman and Ms. Jamie Crawford, AKS Engineering and Forestry, represented the applicant, Jason Alford.

Mr. Eckman expressed appreciation for Staff's support and confirmed that the report accurately described the site's conditions. He emphasized that all lots met the minimum depth requirement, and that the variance only applied to the minimum lot width not being met for the internal lots within the proposed subdivision. He also confirmed that some lots would have double frontage; however, they would not be accessed from both West 14th Street and West 16th Street due to the site's topography.

Ms. Crawford elaborated on the intent of the zoning standards and stated that the proposed lots functioned similarly to typical lots because access would only be taken from one side. She explained that the reduced block width would not impact traffic or pedestrian movement negatively and that pedestrian access was within acceptable limits under City standards.

Mr. Eckman provided further clarification with numeric comparisons, noting that the walking distance around the proposed internal block was approximately 554 feet, which was less than the 650-foot diagonal distance of a standard City block.

Chair Cornett requested a definition of a "through lot." Ms. Crawford defined it as a lot with double frontage. Director Chandler added that although through lots were generally discouraged, they were permitted under certain conditions, including restrictions on driveway access from one side.

Ms. Crawford concluded by stating that the subdivision met all other requirements of the City's Code aside from the one addressed by the variance.

Chair Cornett closed the public hearing at 5:55 p.m. and opened deliberation. Commissioner Poppoff stated the matter was straightforward; Chair Cornett agreed.

RESOLUTION

Resolution PC 626-25: Approval of Variance 131-25, Jason Alford

It was moved by Commissioner Grant and seconded by Commissioner Case to adopt Resolution Number PC 626-25, approving Variance Number 131-25, based on the findings of fact and conclusions of law in the agenda staff report, with the specified conditions of approval. The motion carried 5/0; Commissioners Case, Cornett, Grant, Poppoff and Portela voting in favor, none opposed, Commissioners Peña and Pipinich absent.

STAFF COMMENTS / PROJECT UPDATES

Director Chandler updated the Commission on several ongoing initiatives and projects:

- New floodplain requirements were being prepared and would be brought before the Planning Commission by May for adoption, in compliance with federal and state mandates.
- A proposal to restructure the Planning Commission's operations was in development. This included the potential hiring of a Hearings Officer, a contracted land use attorney who would oversee certain decisions such as variances and conditional use permits. The intent was to streamline the land use process and reduce the frequency of full Commission meetings from two to one per month.
- Staff anticipated presenting this proposal to the City Council in April and noted that implementation would require a Code amendment and an RFP process.
- Updates on active subdivisions included:
 - Approval of Subdivision 86-24 can now proceed, pending any appeals received from parties of record to the Variance.
 - A new 25-unit subdivision on the west side of town is currently being reviewed.
 - A previously approved subdivision near Columbia View Drive, initially approved approximately 20 years ago, was resuming development.
 - The Basalt Commons project had submitted a building permit application and was progressing through the review process.

Director Chandler also shared that recruitment efforts were underway to fill multiple City positions, including the upcoming vacancy for the Economic Development Officer and the Administrative Assistant position in the Community Development Department.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS / QUESTIONS

Commissioner Grant inquired about compensation for the Hearings Officer, and Director Chandler confirmed it would be a contracted, as-needed position.

Chair Cornett noted that he would be absent for the July 17 meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Chair Cornett adjourned the meeting at 6:06 p.m.

Submitted by/
Paula Webb, Secretary
Community Development Department

SIGNED:

Cody Cornett, Chair

ATTEST:

Paula Webb, Secretary
Community Development Department



City of The Dalles Planning Commission

MARCH 6, 2025 | 5:30 PM

Variance No. 131-25

Applicant: Jason Alford

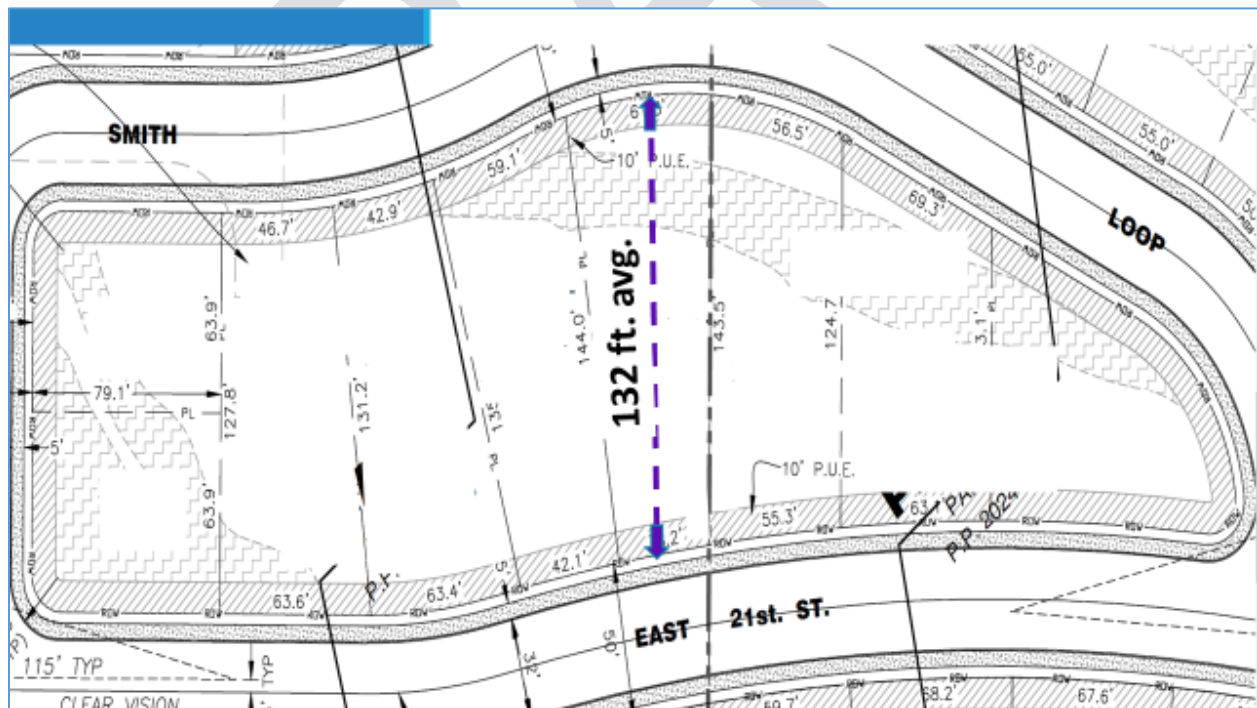
Address: Terminus of East 21st Street

Assessor's Map and Tax Lot: 1N 13E 11BC tax lots 2300 & 2800

Zoning District: "RL" Low Density Residential

Proposal: Applicant requests a Variance to reduce the block width internal to a proposed 29-lot single-family residential subdivision at the terminus of East 21st Street.

Subject
Property
Terminus of East
21st St.



Review Criteria: Variance TDMC 10.3.070.030

A variance to the requirements of this Title shall be granted only in the event that each of the following circumstances is found to exist:

- A. The proposed variance will not be contrary to the purposes of this Title, policies of the Comprehensive Plan, or any other applicable policies and standards adopted by the City.*
- B. Exceptional or extraordinary circumstances apply to the subject property, which do not apply generally to other property in the same zone or vicinity. Such circumstances are a result of lot size or shape, topography, or circumstances over which the Applicant has no control.*
- C. The variance is necessary for the preservation of a property right of the Applicant which is substantially the same as owners of other property in the same zone or vicinity.*
- D. The conditions or circumstances justifying the variance have not been willfully or purposely self-imposed, and do not result from a violation of this Title since its effective date.*
- E. The proposed variance will not substantially reduce the amount of privacy enjoyed by users of neighboring land uses if the variance were not allowed.*
- F. The proposed variance is the minimum variance which would alleviate the difficulty.*

Recommendation

- 1. Staff Recommendation:** Move to adopt Resolution No. PC 626A-25, approving Variance No. 131-25, based on the findings of fact and conclusions of law set forth in the Agenda Staff Report, with the specified condition of approval.
2. If the Planning Commission desires to approve the decision with additional findings or with different conditions, move to adopt Resolution No. PC 626A-25, approving Variance No. 131-25, based on the findings of fact and conclusions of law in the Agenda Staff Report, as modified by the Commission.
3. If the Planning Commission desires to deny Variance No. 131-25, move to adopt Resolution No. PC 626B-25, identifying the specific criteria supporting the denial.