

TOWN OF LA CONNER
PLANNING COMMISSION ZOOM MEETING
January 19, 2021

The Planning Commission meeting was called to order at 6:07 p.m.

Commissioners present: Bruce Bradburn, Rick Dole, Marna Hanneman, Carol Hedlin, Liz Theaker.

Staff: Marianne Manville-Ailles, Kevin Cricchio, Ramon Hayes, Scott Thomas.

Members of the public: 6.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

None.

MINUTES:

Commissioner Bradburn moved to approve the December 15, 2020 minutes. Seconded by Commissioner Hanneman. Motion carried 5-0.

OLD BUSINESS:

- *Continue discussion of proposed density changes to LCMC 15.20. Note we have identified a couple other code clean up things that we need to address that got missed in the fall code update.*

Planner Marianne Manville-Ailles detailed a few changes that were made to the code. It was discovered that the lots of record section which was updated in the Fall of last year did not address unplatted lots, so that was added. Under Hearing Examiner Responsibilities, reference to specific permits that require hearing was removed and it was instead made to reference Table A. This means that the table can be updated as needed without having to also make the change in other sections of the code.

She also gave a quick overview of the proposed density changes. In the existing code, there was a two-tier system that had 5,000 square foot lots and under 5,000 square foot lots- these are primarily the 4,000 square foot lots that can be found throughout town. Council originally directed the Planning Commission to look at additional density almost two years ago. The Commission initially started with trying to update the Planned Unit Residential Development requirements, but found it to be cumbersome and ultimately decided to achieve the density increases more simply through the zoning code. This was done by getting removing two-tier system and simply reducing the minimum lot size to 4,000 square feet, reducing the setbacks to be consistent with the smaller minimum lot

size, including a blanket 5 foot side setback, which was at the direction of Council. Clarification was also added to the code that garages have zero setback from an alley.

For multifamily, the minimum lot size was reduced accordingly, from 10,000 square feet to 8,000 square feet for the first two units and for every unit thereafter the additional square footage was reduced proportionately from 4,000 square feet to 2,640 for each additional attached unit, and from 3,300 square feet to 3,200 square feet. The minimum square footage was reversed to require less square footage for attached versus detached units, since this made more sense. The maximum allowed lot coverage for impervious surface was increased from 60 percent to 70 percent. The 50 percent unit density bonus for senior housing was removed since it was never defined and the new density changes are a blanket reduction. Setbacks for multifamily were reduced in accordance with the other reductions.

The commission decided to require a blanket additional 3,000 square feet for additional multifamily units, regardless of whether they are attached or detached.

There will be a public hearing on the code changes at the next planning commission meeting. Marianne said that the primary reason these code changes were brought back to the commission this time was so that the public would have a longer period of time to look at what is being proposed, especially since it was closely tied to the Maple ballfield rezone.

NEW BUSINESS:

- *New Planning Commission Chair and Vice Chair for 2021*

Commissioner Bruce Bradburn is the Planning Commission Chair and Commissioner Rick Dole is the Vice Chair for 2021.

- *MONA Presentation – Preliminary discussion regarding Historic Design Review for MONA building and potential purchase and improvement to adjacent Joan Cross building. – Workshop Discussion Format after presentation by MONA board.*

CJ Ebert gave an overview of two projects that the Museum of Northwest Art is looking to do. MONA has an option to purchase the Joan Cross building at 125 Washington Avenue and would also like to repair the museum, located at 121 S. First Street. The museum's south wall is leaking, repair of which will also involve the roof, and the heating and ventilation system needs to be replaced. Realistically, all three elements need to be replaced at the same time to reduce cost. The two projects will require separate funding sources- a BFA grant has been secured to help fund the Joan Cross building and internal museum improvements such as for presentation and education, and separate funding will have to be raised for the museum repair. The museum board wants to know what's going to be allowed architecturally on the south wall before they move forward with their captical campaign, so they can give the public an idea of what the project involves.

Tom Beckwith showed concepts for retrofitting the Joan Cross building, opening it up internally for windowed offices and a conference room and modifying the exterior to better fit with the historic downtown. This building would handle the staff they anticipate needing for the capital campaign. Beckwith also showed a concept for retrofitting the museum's second floor into a flexible space for presentations. A reason that MONA got involved with the Cross property now instead of waiting until after the museum repairs are done is because Joan Cross is retiring and wants to sell it soon.

CJ Ebert then discussed the existing museum building. Built in the 1980's, it has some design issues, including no gutters on the south side of the building and is unprotected from the full force of the elements. The first floor walls are leaking and deteriorated material was discovered when the museum had a professional weatherproofing company do an analysis. If repairs were made to the building as-is, controlling the drainage would be an issue, especially since the building sits slightly over the property line onto the neighboring Post Office property. MONA is working on getting a construction easement and the proposal is to build a new parapet, extend the roof out and install a rainscreen to protect the building from the elements. This would create a continuous horizontal roofline, but other large historic buildings in town also have this design, and MONA is proposing to install artwork on this wall to give it an artistic element and soften the appearance. Before any work is possible, MONA will have to negotiate with the Post Office, and in order to do that they will be meeting with local legislators so they will need to know if their proposal is doable before they can do that.

Joanna Sikes, MONA Executive Director said that being able to provide an educational facility that can be utilized by the community is a mission of the museum, is critical to their success in the future and will allow them to reach out to the communities they serve in a strategic way. She said that everyone recognizes that the museum repair is necessary for the longevity of the building and that the Joan Cross building is an opportunity because it is adjacent to the museum.

There was general discussion on this project. Commissioner Bradburn suggested leaving the south wall blank, since there is never consensus among the public on what art looks good. Marianne clarified that the commission will be reviewing the proposal for historic compliance and potential art would be decided by the Arts Commission. Commissioner Dole requested a drawing of what the rainscreen would look like. Tom Beckwith said that the rainscreen could be modulated so it was not one flat surface. Commissioners Hanneman and Hedlin mentioned how the idea of a metal and glass awning didn't seem like it would fit in with the downtown. Marianne said that the materials are not prohibited but also not preferred, so the commission would need to look at it on a case by case basis and other materials or options such as recessed doorways could be considered instead. Kevin Cricchio asked about what the mentioned lot line adjustment was in reference to. Tom Beckwith said that the issue of the museum being located partially on the Post Office's property could be resolved with a lot line adjustment, and that would remove the need for an easement.

The commission had no issue with the concepts for the Joan Cross building, so MONA will go ahead and use the Joan Cross drawings for their fundraising and in the meantime work on the MONA south wall rendering and some alternatives and bring their proposal back to the planning commission at their next regular meeting.

CLOSING COMMENTS:

Commissioner Theaker said she wanted to express her appreciation for Linda Talman who recently resigned from the planning commission and all of the years of service she put in. Marianne said that a resolution recognizing Talman's years of service was presented at the last council meeting.

Planner Kevin Cricchio introduced himself to the planning commission.

Mayor Hayes thanked the commissioners for their service and also expressed his appreciation for Linda Talman and all her years of service. He also thanked Marianne for her work as planner and her contribution to the town and welcomed Kevin Cricchio as new planner.

With no further business Commissioner Hedlin moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:54 p.m. Seconded by Commissioner Dole. Motion carried unanimously.

Chair

Date