

TOWN OF LA CONNER
PLANNING COMMISSION ZOOM MEETING
August 17, 2021

The Planning Commission meeting was called to order at 6:05 p.m.

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

Staff: Michael Davolio.

Others present: Park Commissioner Ollie Iversen and 3 members of the public.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

None.

MINUTES:

Commissioner Hanneman moved to approve the May 18, 2021 minutes. Seconded by Commissioner Dole. Motion carried 5-0.

OLD BUSINESS:

- *Parks Plan Status*

Park Commissioner Ollie Iversen said that Planner Davolio and he are probably 2/3 to 3/4 of the way through and the first draft hasn't been pulled yet. They toured the parks they could find and took updated pictures, and one of the things Ollie noted is that the Parks inventory has a number of small parks that are not in the old plan. Davolio asked that the commission look at the Parks Plan and the Parks Inventory and if they see something unfamiliar to let him know so that they can determine whether it ought to be there or its something to continue to build on and he'll take more pictures. He hopes to have a draft plan for the commissions to review at their September meeting.

NEW BUSINESS:

- *Public Meeting – LU21-45CU John Dunning Conditional Use Permit, 623 Morris Street, Units E-1 & E-2 – This is a public meeting with the Planning Commission making recommendation to the Hearing Examiner. The Hearing Examiner will hold a hearing at 2pm August 31, 2021 and will make the decision on these permits.*

Public hearing opened at 6:18 PM.

The application is for a conditional use permit to change two existing commercial spaces to short-term residential use. This is defined as a commercial use, and is allowed as a conditional use in the commercial zone. Historic design review will be done administratively since there is only a minor modification, adding one window to the side of the building.

One comment letter was received from Scott Price. Mr. Price said that the Town of La Conner does not have adequate commercial spaces that are similar to this. He has been looking to purchase something like this for years and the inventory is extremely low. There are plenty of houses to purchase and rent out without changing any commercial use. This has been a commercial building since the 1890s and is in the historic area and is a very significant location and it would adversely affect the diversity of different uses within the Town by eliminating two very useful commercial spaces.

John Dunning said that he and his partner tried unsuccessfully to fill the space and then decided to condominize the complex. They knew that they could never sell the entire property as one unit vacant. They have sold one retail space and are in the process of leasing or selling two more spaces. He and his wife bought the three upstairs apartments that are used as vacation rental units earlier this year and then decided to buy the two downstairs units and make them ADA compatible rental units.

After considerable discussion, a motion was made by Commissioner Theaker to recommend to the Hearing Examiner that the John Dunning Conditional Use application be approved. Seconded by Commissioner Hedlin. Motion carried 3-2.

Public hearing closed at 6:43 PM.

CLOSING COMMENTS:

Planner Davolio has done some research on requiring fire sprinklers in new construction and has come up with a couple of options. He is waiting to hear from the fire chief if these options are in line with what the fire department wants before submitting to the commission. Davolio is putting together a range of suggested changes to the development code which will be part of the annual update and he hopes to bring them to the commission for review and have the approval process completed by December.

The next planning commission meeting will be on September 21st via Zoom.

With no further business Commissioner Dole moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:49 p.m. Seconded by Commissioner Hanneman. Motion carried unanimously.

Chair

Date