

TOWN OF LA CONNER
PLANNING COMMISSION ZOOM MEETING
September 21, 2021

The Planning Commission meeting was called to order at 6:06 p.m.

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

Staff: Michael Davolio.

Others present: 9 members of the public including project applicant Greg Ellis.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

None.

MINUTES:

Commissioner Theaker moved to approve the June 15, 2021 minutes. Seconded by Commissioner Hedlin. Commissioner Bradburn abstained. Motion carried 4-0.

Commissioner Dole moved to approve the July 20, 2021 minutes. Seconded by Commissioner Theaker. Motion carried 5-0.

Commissioner Hanneman moved to approve the August 17, 2021 minutes. Seconded by Commissioner Hedlin. Motion carried 5-0.

Commissioner Dole moved to amend the approved May 18, 2021 minutes to correct the date. Seconded by Commissioner Hanneman. Motion carried 5-0.

OLD BUSINESS:

- *None*

NEW BUSINESS:

- *Public Hearing - Greg Ellis Historic Design Review, 333 Washington Avenue*

Public hearing opened at 6:14 PM.

Planner Michael Davolio gave an overview of the project. There are six existing lots that were recently the subject of boundary line adjustments which made the lots bigger and

more buildable and on that basis the applicant submitted this proposal to rehabilitate the existing house on the property, and to build five additional single-family dwellings with the possibility of adding accessory dwelling units above garages on those lots. Davolio went through the criteria for historic design review and it's his determination that this application meets the minimum standards.

Davolio did have some concerns that there wasn't enough information on specific lots for the commission to make a determination on those specific lots, so he suggested that the commission could either choose to retain jurisdiction over each individual lot, or they could do a more general approval of the design standards and that would allow him to do an administrative review and approval of the individual lots, he also provided them with some suggestions on design requirements that might be helpful.

Commissioner Dole asked about the discrepancy between project descriptions and whether there would be five or six new houses. Applicant Greg Ellis said that the reason for that is that there is a possibility he could acquire Lot 5 and if so he would like to build on it and so included it. Planner Davolio clarified that Lot 5 is not part of this application and that if Ellis wants to come in later with something else for Lot 5, the commission will have an opportunity to review it then.

Greg Ellis said that his goal is to create an affordable, beautiful community with low-impact design for families, similar to Seabrook. He plans to make the houses available as custom homes, so that is the reason for the flexibility on the colors. He picked a group of colors from the Sherwin Williams historical color sheet that buyers could choose from for their home.

Commissioner Hanneman said that in the past applicants have provided detailed architectural plans and this project doesn't have that and she would like to see that. Commissioner Hedlin also said that there is normally more information on the plans. Commissioner Dole would like to see driveways and access to the homes from the street shown on the site plan. Commissioner Bradburn agreed with the other commissioners that there is not enough detail and said that when there is a specific sale for a specific lot with a specific plan, then that should come for historic review. He does not personally feel that a blanket approval of historic review is something the commission should be doing.

John Durgin said that his concern is that the elevations aren't consistent with the surrounding neighborhoods. He is in favor of the development, but wants the houses to be cute and pretty and consistent with the houses in the neighborhood and to do that, the very first thing they have to have is a gable in the front. None of Ellis's designs do that because they are bungalow style.

Jim Matthews said that he agreed with John Durgin on the appearance of the structures and the rooflines. He also said that several times it's been mentioned about basements and being in the floodplain and he thinks that's a real issue.

Public hearing closed at 7:07 PM.

After considerable discussion, a motion was made by Commissioner Theaker to defer a decision on this project until the next meeting and give Mr. Ellis an opportunity to provide more detail about the plans. Seconded by Commissioner Hanneman. Motion carried 5-0.

- *2021 Annual Code Update*

Planner Davolio said that the staff report is his general take after several months of reviewing the code, working with the regulations and looking to see where there are inconsistencies or holes and how they can be filled to make this document both internally consistent and externally consistent with the comprehensive plan and other related documents. Fire safety is an issue that has been a concern for many people, and so he created some language to deal with that. It doesn't require fire sprinklers for every home, but it does significantly increase the places where fire sprinklers would be required. Davolio also added some definitions, some of which were temporarily approved by the commission and council with regard to the homeless population and this would put them into the code on a permanent basis.

One of the issues that was dealt with is that staff does all of the public notices, but the code says that's the responsibility of the applicant. As far as staff knows, that has never been the responsibility of the applicant, so that was clarified. Camping permits are currently a conditional use permit which requires public notice to properties within 300 feet. That requirement was removed. If you look at the park where camping is permitted, there are no homes within 300 feet of the actual campsite.

Davolio made some clarifications to the historic review process. He also took the fees out of the ordinance because it's more appropriate for them to be approved separately by the council as regulations rather than in ordinance form which is a much more complicated process. This will make it much easier for the fees to be amended in the future.

There was a request from CJ Ebert to reduce some of the parking requirements and Davolio felt that at least one of his suggestions made a lot of sense, so he added it. He also made some clarifications to the sign regulations and also to clarify in the code where there are costs to applicants.

It is his goal to have these changes approved by the Town by December and there is a mandatory 60-day review period by the State. Provided the commission has approved the changes, Davolio will draft a SEPA checklist which will go with the code revisions to the State. The changes will come back to the commission and then go to Council.

There was general discussion on the code revisions. The commission thanked Davolio for including the fire sprinkler requirements. They will have a special meeting in two weeks to continue the code revision discussion as well as discuss the Parks Element update.

CLOSING COMMENTS:

The next planning commission meeting will be in person on October 5th.

With no further business Commissioner Hanneman moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:34 p.m. Seconded by Commissioner Hedlin. Motion carried unanimously.

Chair

Date