CITY OF PULLMAN PLANNING COMMISSION

Regular Meeting Minutes Wednesday, May 26, 2010

The City of Pullman Planning Commission held a regular meeting at 7:30 p.m. on Wednesday, May 26, 2010 in Council Chambers, City Hall, 325 SE Paradise, Pullman, Washington with Chair Stephen Garl presiding.

ROLL CALL: Present: Anderson, Bergstedt, Garl, Gibney, Paulson, Shannon,

Wendle

Excused: Crow, Overstreet Staff: Dickinson, Emerson

GARL Called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm and called roll.

MOTION Shannon moved to accept the minutes of the April 28, 2010

Regular Meeting as submitted by Staff. Seconded by

Anderson and passed unanimously.

REGULAR BUSINESS

Review for consistency with the Comprehensive Plan a petition submitted by Washington State University to vacate a 2,115-square-foot segment of alley right of way located east of Monroe Street between Campus and Oak Streets. Dickinson stated that this proposal involves the vacation of the eastern portion of the alley located off of Monroe Street between Campus Street and Oak Street. The property is located directly behind the WSU President's house and WSU reports that there is some indiscriminate parking and other activities that go on there and they would like to have better control over the area to prevent those things from happening. The Public Works Department is recommending that if this vacation is approved that a full width and length utility easement be retained for the property. That is acceptable to the petitioner. It is not an area suitable for pedestrian activities since it is completely closed off on the east end at the President's residence. The planning staff finds that this proposal is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

GARL Asked the Commission for questions.

DISCUSSION The Commission asked for clarification on the location of the

subject property to be vacated; who uses the subject property; what will happen to the area adjacent to the subject property to be

vacated.

MOTION Gibney moved to recommend to the City Council to accept the

vacation request as outlined in Staff Report No. 10-7 and that it is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. Seconded by Shannon

and passed unanimously.

REGULAR BUSINESS

Continue simultaneous public hearings to review and recommend action on a proposal initiated by the City of Pullman Planning Department to amend the zoning classification from R2 Low Density Multi-Family Residential and R4 High Density Multi-Family Residential to RT Residential Transitional for a parcel of land approximately 29 acres in size generally bordered by Stadium Way, B Street, Howard Street (extended), and Maple Street Extension/Indiana Street on College Hill, and change the Comprehensive Plan Land Use Plan Map to Low Density Residential for those portions of the property currently designated as High Density Residential.

Dickinson entered into the record a letter dated April 22, 2010 from Doug Hauff, as Exhibit No. 29.

Entered into the record a letter dated April 29, 2010 from Roy Kopf, as Exhibit No. 30.

Entered into the record a letter dated May 3, 2010 from Holly Urness, as Exhibit No. 31.

Entered into the record a letter dated May 5, 2010 from Jim Walden, as Exhibit No. 32.

Entered into the record a letter dated May 13, 2010 from Ed Garretson, Secretary of the Whitman County Historical Society, as Exhibit No. 33.

Entered into the record a letter from Anita Hornback as Exhibit No. 34.

Entered into the record a letter dated May 23, 2010 from Tim "Sully" Sullivan, as Exhibit No. 35.

Entered into the record an email dated May 26, 2010 from Greg Griffith, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, as Exhibit No. 36.

Entered into the record an email with attachments dated May 26, 2010 from Greg Griffith, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, as Exhibit No. 37.

Dickinson stated that the main purpose of the meeting tonight was to take in more input.

GARL

Opened the public comment portion.

Major Andrew Tong 425 NE Howard Street Pullman, WA 99163 Stated that he is a long time resident of Pullman, but does not currently live here. He owns several properties on College Hill and it is how he has been planning for his future; they are his investments. He is concerned that the proposed re-zone would negatively affect these investments.

Eileen Macoll Pullman, WA 99163 Stated that she is a property owner on College Hill and the rezone will not protect any of the structures in the Historic District.

DICKINSON

Entered into the record a letter dated April 23, 2010 from Whitman County Landlord Tenant Association Board, submitted

by Eileen Macoll as Exhibit No. 38.

Entered into the record a memo dated May 3, 2010, from Gregory Colvig, submitted by Eileen Macoll as Exhibit No. 39.

Entered into the record a Real Estate sale data sheet on 1070 NE Monroe Street submitted by Eileen Macoll as Exhibit No. 40.

Entered into the record College Hill Real Estate Business Plan and Guidelines dated April 2005, submitted by Eileen Macoll as Exhibit No. 41.

John Chapman 405 NW North Street Pullman, WA 99163 Stated that last month during the meeting one of his duplexes that he and his wife built a few years ago was brought up as being worse in appearance than the tri-plex on the corner of Michigan and Monroe Street on College Hill. There is also another tri-plex on College Hill in the same area that was built in the 1980's that is of similar size, but no one says anything about it. He feels that over time people become used to it as part of the surroundings and they do not notice it as much, but because his duplex is a recent addition it is being targeted as a problem development.

Allison Munch-Rotolo 635 NE Illinois Pullman, WA 99163 Stated there were three relevant issues raised by the opponents: property values, non-conforming uses and owner objections. She disputes that there would be any negative effect on property value. Lower allowable building densities are associated with higher, not lower, property values. Feels that the real issue with respect to this proposal is owner objection. Some people support the proposed rezone, some people object to it. Presented two possible compromises for the proposed rezone:

- 1. Approve the rezone to RT with permission for non-conforming uses to be reestablished or expanded perhaps thru a conditional use permit process.
- 2. Rezone the individual properties within the Historic District to the lowest allowable building density that does not cause them to become a non-conforming use. Even the uses that are currently non-conforming would become conforming.

The value of these properties is not limited to economics. These properties have historic and civic value as well. A re-zone would preserve and increase the historic and civic value of properties in the neighborhood.

DICKINSON

Entered into the record a Map of Multi-Family Non-Conforming Uses Under RT Zoning dated May 26, 2010 as Exhibit No. 42.

GARL

Closed the public comments portion of the hearing.

Opened discussion to Commission.

DISCUSSION Anderson suggested that the public testimony and submission of

input portion be closed. Gibney suggested entering a map of

Historic District Contributing Structures into the record.

DICKINSON Entered into the record a Map of College Hill Historic District

Contributing Structures dated May 2006 as Exhibit No. 43.

GARL Asked for comments from the Commission.

ANDERSON Stated that the city initiated this proposal, which sets it apart from

other zone change requests. Said he was supportive of the application, and suggested that the city consider liberalizing its rules for non-conforming uses to accommodate affected property

owners.

GIBNEY Indicated he was uncomfortable with the number of non-

conforming uses that would be created by means of this rezone. Noted that, by his count, public input on this matter was running two to one against the proposal. Said he may be more inclined to support a smaller RT rezone—like the zone change area proposed by staff in the initial draft of the College Hill Core Neighborhood Plan that was bordered by Illinois, Indiana, Monroe, and Garfield

Streets.

WENDLE Commented that arranging for consideration of an RT rezone for

the entire historic district made sense during the formulation of the College Hill Core Neighborhood Plan. Stated that he was very uncomfortable supporting the downzone at this point due to the non-conforming uses that would be created. Opined that the

proposal would adversely affect property values.

SHANNON Mentioned that he has not yet decided that this rezone would be

the right fix for this area. Indicated that very strict architectural design standards may be the more appropriate solution. With his recent experience dealing with parking and population density issues along his street on Upper Drive, he expressed sympathy

with homeowners in the historic district.

BERGSTEDT Stated that the Commission will need to address many of the

issues raised during this hearing through design standards. Noted that the Commission must consider in its deliberations that there are a considerable number of rental properties within the rezone

area.

PAULSON

Expressed an affinity for the current characteristics of College Hill. Said he likes the existing diversity in the neighborhood, and does not see a need for the change to RT zoning. Asserted that the community must continue to maintain the basic infrastructure on College Hill, but that zone changes in the area were not necessary.

GARL

Commented that existing and anticipated regulations are more appropriate tools to address neighborhood issues than the proposed rezone to RT. Stated that one off-street parking space is required for each bedroom in any new or replacement residential structure, thereby meeting parking demand. Indicated that, while the neighborhood will never go back to being exclusively single family in nature, the current low density R2 zoning for the historic district will limit the number of dwelling units that will be established there. Noted that the issue of buildings perceived to be out of scale with their surroundings is a matter to be mitigated through design standards rather than zoning designations. Suggested that the city continue to enforce existing codes to control poor behavior. Expressed concern over the number of non-conforming uses that would be created under an Mentioned that, in accordance with the RT classification. provisions of the College Hill Core Neighborhood Plan, the community has an interest in maintaining a good supply of housing near the WSU campus to facilitate non-motorized travel. Commended the College Hill Association, Landlord/Tenant Association, and others for working with area residents to enhance the neighborhood.

GIBNEY

Remarked that the proposed rezone would not accomplish the basic goals that have been formulated to enhance the area.

SHANNON

Opined that action needs to occur soon to maintain/improve quality of life in this area. Suggested that architectural design standards, front yard parking regulations, nuisance codes, and similar provisions be employed to counteract mounting pressure to erode the status of the neighborhood through undesirable housing/occupancy conditions.

ANDERSON

Reiterated his support for the RT zoning. Expressed concern about maintaining the integrity of the historic district if the R2 designation is retained.

GARL

Asked staff to provide copies of exhibits not previously supplied to the Commission. Also asked staff to draft resolutions set up to deny the proposed rezone since that appeared to be the inclination of the Commission.

Secretary

MOTION Shannon moved to reconvene June 23, 2010 at 7:30 p.m. to continue the public hearing. Seconded by Anderson and passed unanimously.

UPCOMING MEETINGS Bergstedt will not be available June 23, 2010.

MOTION Shannon moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Paulson and passed unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT The meeting was adjourned at 9:13 pm.

ATTEST:

Chair Planning Director