

CITY OF PULLMAN
PLANNING COMMISSION
Regular Meeting Minutes
January 25, 2006

The City of Pullman Planning Commission held a regular meeting at 7:30 p.m. on Wednesday, January 25, 2006, in Council Chambers, City Hall, 325 SE Paradise, Pullman, Washington with Chair John Anderson presiding.

ROLL CALL: Present: Anderson, Streva, Martin, Gruen, Ronniger
 Excused: Irby
 Absent: Bengston, Volkening
 Staff: Dickinson, Johnson

ANDERSON Called the meeting to order at 7:33 p.m.

MOTION Martin moved to accept the minutes of the February 23, 2005 Regular Meeting as written. Seconded by Streva and passed unanimously.

MOTION Martin moved to accept the minutes of the July 27, 2005 Regular Meeting as written. Seconded by Streva and passed unanimously.

MOTION Martin moved to accept the minutes of the December 14, 2005 Special Meeting with a correction on page 7 changing the dates from February 22, 2005 and March 22, 2005, to February 22, 2006 and March 22, 2006. Seconded by Ronniger and passed unanimously.

ANDERSON Read the public hearing rules of procedure, administered the oath or affirmation for those wishing to provide testimony during the hearing and qualified all Commission members. Asked for the staff report.

REGULAR BUSINESS Dickinson stated that the applicant was Kathy Wilson of DRA Realty, Kathy Wilson proposal on behalf of Walter and Dora Mih and Brett Bly. Staff is in favor of the to amend the proposal because the property is located in a densely populated portion Comprehensive Plan of College Hill within walking distance of the university; the Map and zoning neighborhood is primarily rental units; the properties immediately south classification from R2 to and zoning the subject property are currently zoned R4 while the R4 on a three-lot parcel properties to the north and west of the subject property are currently of land totaling 18,000 square feet located at zoned R2, and the zoning code provides for buffers when a high density 400 and 420 NE Oak zoning district is located adjacent or across the street from a low density Street on College Hill. zoning district; and the Comprehensive Plan proposes higher densities in the vicinity of the university campus because it encourages pedestrian travel and a reduction in overall transportation impacts when compared with development of apartment complexes at distant locations in town. Explained that the applicant's proposed future development of the site is not an issue before the Planning Commission, but rather was included for informational purposes only. Answered questions regarding parking requirements per bedroom versus potential resident; "piecemeal" versus

wholesale zone changes; changes in tax structure; and density differences between an R2 and an R4 zone.

Entered into the record Staff Report No. 06-1 with Attachments A through G as Exhibit No. 1

Entered into the record a letter from Allen D. Schmelzer, dated January 25, 2006, as Exhibit No. 2.

ANDERSON

Opened the public testimony portion of the hearing.

KATHY WILSON
DRA Real Estate

Stated that she is the applicant, and that she is representing Walter and Dora Mih and Brett Bly. Stated that the Mih's plan is to construct a 14-unit apartment building with attendant parking stalls fulfilling current requirements; their desire is to enhance the neighborhood. Stated that the tax base would increase due to the development. Stated that the subject property had been previously zoned R4 but was rezoned R2. Commented that several apartment complexes already exist nearby. Answered questions regarding the current structure, explaining that it is a 6-bedroom structure that may be close to 100 years old, but has served as a rental unit for more than 50 years. Stated that the house sits on two lots and has a detached garage; both structures would be demolished to make way for the new development. Stated that there is another house on the third lot that would remain. Answered questions regarding the attractiveness of the house.

ANDERSON

No other proponents. Called for opponents.

ALEX HAMMOND
1110 NE Indiana Street
Pullman, WA 99163

Stated that he represents, at least in part, the College Hill Association (CHA). Stated that he was upset because the CHA did not receive direct notification of the zone change. Urged the Commission to not approve the rezone. Stated that this was an instance of "spot-zoning" for the profit of the land-owner. Referred to a parking study to be released shortly regarding parking and traffic on College Hill. Commented that the City should not act on this request until it has examined issues such as parking, traffic and historic preservation in a larger context.

DICKINSON

Entered in the record a memorandum from the Board of the College Hill Association, dated January 24, 2006, as Exhibit No. 3.

ANDERSON

Called for additional opponents. Administered oath to opponent who arrived late.

JO MARK
1165 S. Grand Avenue
Pullman, WA 99163

Questioned the number and type of complaints lodged against the Mihs and or Blys in their time as landowners. Questioned what improvements are possible in an R4 zone that are not possible to landowners in an R2 zone and commented that property in an R4 zone is as likely to become dilapidated as property in an R2 district. Anderson explained that the landowner's suitability as landlords and questions about possible

future development are not relevant to the zoning issue before the Commission; the proposal before the Commission was whether the rezone of the subject property was consistent with the applicable policies of the Comprehensive Plan and the purposes of the Zoning Code.

ALEX HAMMOND

Stated that the subject property had been zoned R2 since the 1980s; the proposed rezone would be a major change to the Comprehensive Plan which was affirmed in 1999. Asked that the Commission consider the effects of higher density residences on the College Hill neighborhood. Opined that the proposed rezone would allow development that would be out of scale with the surrounding area. Answered questions regarding the parking study to be released soon; stated that it was performed by an independent consultant hired by WSU with City acceptance. Stated that there is a proposal for the College Hill area to be designated a Historic District being prepared by a Professor McCoy from WSU. Stated that he does not believe the proposed zone change would be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

ANDERSON

No neutral parties. Called for reply by proponents.

KATHY WILSON

Stated that she received numerous notices of this hearing because she manages numerous rental properties within 300 feet of the subject property; also stated that the property was adequately posted. Stated that there are some beautiful houses that should be preserved in the neighborhood, but the house owned by the Mihs on the subject property is not one of them. Doesn't believe that this is a "spot zone." Stated that WSU has purchased several properties and requested zone changes or other permissions in order to lease the properties to a sufficient number of renters so that the structures can be maintained and/or rehabilitated properly. Stated that College Hill is a perfect location for student residents, and the Mihs' proposed apartment building would fulfill current parking requirements better than the current 6-bedroom house with little parking. Answered questions regarding the possibility of rehabilitating the current structure. Stated that the previous rezone of the area was due to the request of numerous owner-occupants in the neighborhood, but the constitution of the neighborhood has since changed to mainly renter-occupied residences. Answered questions regarding the Mihs' plans for the area if the rezone were not to occur.

ANDERSON

Gave oath to proponent who arrived late.

DONALD SCHNEIDER
P.O. Box 821
Pullman, WA 99163

Stated that he owns property within the 300-foot radius of the subject property, and that he received a timely notice of the hearing. Stated that he has been a general contractor in Pullman for 15 years. Stated that he is in support of the rezone proposal. Believes that the house on the subject property does not lend itself to rehabilitation because many of its original features have been altered. Answered questions regarding the house on the subject property. Stated that the property is beautiful, but

the structure is not. Believes that, with proper development, the property could be an asset to the neighborhood.

ANDERSON Called for reply by opponents.

ALEX HAMMOND Stated that arguments regarding the character of the current structure versus potential development are irrelevant; the aesthetics are not at issue. Stated that the issue before the Commission is whether the proposed zone change is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and the Zoning Code. Stated that he doesn't believe the applicant has successfully argued that the proposed zone change is consistent.

ANDERSON No rebuttal by proponents. Ended the public comments portion of the hearing.

DISCUSSION The Commission discussed whether the proposed zone change fits with the culture of the neighborhood and discussed the continuing growth of both the city and the college.

MOTION Martin moved to accept Findings of Fact Nos. 1 through 15, for Resolution No. PC-2006-1, as written. Seconded by Streva and passed unanimously.

MOTION Anderson moved to add Finding of Fact No. 16 stating, "At the public hearing on January 25, 2006, Alex Hammond testified that a consultant hired by the University will provide a report on traffic in the area, probably within a few months." Seconded by Ronniger and passed unanimously.

MOTION Anderson moved to add Finding of Fact No. 17 stating, "At the public hearing on January 25, 2006, Alex Hammond testified that a history faculty member at Washington State University was preparing a report on the historic nature of the College Hill area." Seconded by Martin and passed unanimously.

MOTION Martin moved to accept Conclusions Nos. 1 through 8, for Resolution No. PC-2006-1, as written. Seconded by Streva. Failed 3-2, with Martin and Streva voting in favor.

MOTION Martin moved to accept Conclusion No. 1 as written. Seconded by Streva. Failed 3-2, with Martin and Streva voting in favor.

MOTION Gruen moved to accept Conclusion No. 1, amended to state, "This proposal is not consistent with the applicable policies of the Pullman Comprehensive Plan." Seconded by Ronniger. Passed 3-2, with Martin and Streva opposed.

MOTION Martin moved to accept Conclusion No. 2 as written. Seconded by Streva. Failed 3-2, with Martin and Streva voting in favor.

MOTION Gruen moved to accept Conclusion No. 2, amended to state, "This proposal is not consistent with the overall purposes of the Pullman Zoning Code and the purposes of the proposed zone districts." Seconded by Ronniger. Passed 3-2, with Martin and Streva opposed.

MOTION Martin moved to accept Conclusion No. 4 as written. Failed for lack of a second.

MOTION Ronniger moved to accept Conclusion No. 5, amended to state, "This proposal would have an adverse effect on some community facilities and services," Conclusion No. 7 amended to state, "This proposal would have an adverse environmental impact," and Conclusion No. 8, amended to state, "This proposal would not be a benefit to the community." Seconded by Gruen. Passed 3-2, with Martin and Streva opposed.

MOTION Ronniger moved that the proposed Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map amendment be forwarded to the City Council with a recommendation that the change not be approved. Passed 3-2, with Martin and Streva opposed.

MOTION Martin moved to accept Findings of Fact No. 1 through 17, as approved for Resolution No. PC-2006-1, as Findings of Fact Nos. 1 through 17 for Resolution No. PC-2006-2. Seconded by Streva and passed unanimously.

MOTION Martin moved to accept the Conclusions Nos. 1 through 5, as approved for Resolution No. PC-2006-1, as Conclusions Nos. 1 through 5 for Resolution No. PC-2006-2. Seconded by Streva and passed unanimously.

MOTION Gruen moved that the proposed zone change from R2 to R4 be forwarded to the City Council with a recommendation that it not be approved. Seconded by Ronniger and passed 3-2, with Martin and Streva opposed.

REGULAR BUSINESS Proposed establishment of Pine Street Plaza located on a portion of Pine Street, north of Main Street. Commission discussed the fact that the bridges and pathway were in place and the paving stones were already on-site. Anderson stated that the plaza has been in process for a long time, and that he was anxiously awaiting completion of the project. The Commission discussed possible reasons for opposition to the plaza including lost parking opportunities and the closing of the street.

MOTION Martin moved to find the establishment of the Pine Street Plaza consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. Seconded by Gruen and passed unanimously.

REGULAR BUSINESS Review and recommend Anderson expressed some trepidation over the Commission's ability to adequately fulfill the duties of the proposed "Heritage Commission,"

action on the proposed
Historic Preservation
Ordinance.

specifically relating to Section 16.70.070(1)(d). Commission discussed the merits of their acting in this role, and the potential for an increase in the number of applications received in regards to this role should the College Hill, or any other portion of Pullman, become a historical district. Stated that they would want rules of procedure. Discussed how the new committee might be affected by the Appearance of Fairness Doctrine. Commission came to a consensus that the draft ordinance is acceptable, but that they prefer the name "Landmarks Commission" rather than "Heritage Commission."

REGULAR BUSINESS
Election of Planning
Commission Chair and
Vice Chair for 2006

Martin moved to elect Anderson as Chair and Volkening as Vice-Chair for 2006. Seconded by Gruen and passed unanimously.

OTHER BUSINESS

Ronniger shared an article that came from Extension Today, a faculty publication at the University, entitled "Number One Water Problem: Low Impact Development Key to Stormwater Management", with the Commission members.

Dickinson provided a copy of a letter from Alice L. Schroeder, President of the League of Women Voters of Pullman, dated January 25, 2006, to each of the Commission members, and explained that Ms. Schroeder had come to the Regular Meeting thinking that the discussion with the Police Advisory Committee (PAC) would be occurring during that time. He stated that he would provide a copy of the letter to each member of the PAC in attendance at the Special Meeting held at 6:00 p.m. on January 25, 2006.

UPCOMING
MEETINGS

Anderson reiterated the Commission's previously stated desire to meet with the Police Chief, Fire Chief and Public Works Director. Gruen stated that he would not be available for the regularly scheduled April meeting.

ANDERSON

Adjourned the meeting at 10:50 p.m.

ATTEST:

Chair

Planning Director

Secretary