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# Planning Department Newsletter

## PLANNING COMMISSION SEEKS INPUT ON COLLEGE HILL ISSUES

As reported in the March edition of the Planning Department Newsletter, planning consultant Studio Cascade of Spokane released a report earlier this year that addressed a wide variety of land use, transportation, and social matters on College Hill. The City Council retained this consulting firm in November to conduct a comprehensive review of neighborhood issues on the portion of College Hill bounded by Stadium Way, Grand Avenue,

planner Bill Grimes on April 3. A copy of the full report can be viewed at the planning department page of the city of Pullman website (<http://www.pullman-wa.gov>) or at Neill Public Library.

On April 17, the City Council and Planning Commission held a joint session to discuss Studio Cascade’s report and provide direction on future courses of action. The primary directive given at that meeting was to continue the College Hill planning process in the fall when all Pullman area citizens are available to participate in the proceedings.

In keeping with this instruction, the Planning Commission has scheduled a public input session for Wednesday, October 10, 2007, at 7:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers of City Hall. At this session, the Commission will request comments from all affected parties regarding College Hill issues and opportunities.

If you have an interest in this subject, the city invites you to participate in this upcoming Planning Commission meeting. If you cannot attend the session, but wish to provide input, feel free to submit written comments to the planning department at City Hall. After accepting comments at the October 10 meeting, the Planning Commission will decide which, if any, programs or regulations should be changed or established. Any changes would be presented for additional public review prior to a formal public hearing on this matter. ☺

### Inside this issue:

- Public Hearings—  
Whys and Wherefores* 2
- Pending Land Use  
Applications* 4



and Main Street (excepting the WSU campus). This review was jointly funded by the city and WSU.

The consultant’s report documented its findings and recommendations involving such matters as law enforcement, parking, traffic, litter, historic preservation, land use and zoning, architectural design, housing, property maintenance, capital investment, neighborhood planning, and WSU policies. The report was formally presented to the City Council by Studio Cascade’s principal

## THE WHYS AND WHEREFORES OF PUBLIC HEARINGS

For many issues, the Planning Commission and Board of Adjustment are required by law to hold what are known as “quasi-judicial” public hearings. Quasi-judicial hearings involve the legal rights of specific parties and usually pertain to one particular parcel of land. In these cases, the Commission or Board acts like a judge by determining the legal rights, duties, and privileges of specific parties in the hearing (hence the term “quasi-judicial”). The fundamental purpose of a quasi-judicial hearing is to provide the affected parties due process. Due process requires notice of the proceedings and an opportunity to be heard.

The planning department encourages participation at each of its public hearings. However, for uninitiated citizens, the hearing process can seem a bit confusing. The table below is offered to aid in understanding the basic steps of a quasi-judicial public hearing and the rationale for these procedures. ↻

<b>PUBLIC HEARING PROCEDURES</b>	<b>WHY IS THIS DONE?</b>
1. The committee chair opens the hearing.	This step advises everyone present that the hearing is starting.
2. The chair reads the rules of procedure for the hearing. Procedures require administering an oath or affirmation to tell the truth to everyone who speaks. The chair can administer the oath or affirmation to all speakers while reading the rules of procedure or individually to each speaker prior to speaking.	The rules of procedure provide the organizational structure for the hearing process.  The oath is administered to ensure the integrity of the evidence provided.
3. The chair asks questions to disclose any “Appearance of Fairness” issues for committee members and to allow persons in the audience the opportunity to disclose conflicts affecting committee members’ abilities to be impartial.	The “Appearance of Fairness” questions are asked so that any committee member may disclose potential conflicts, and so that, when appropriate, committee members may disqualify themselves because of these conflicts.
4. Planning staff presents its “staff report,” in which it summarizes background information and recommendations on the matter under consideration. Often the committee asks questions of staff following presentation of this report.	The staff report furnishes information to the public and committee to assist in all participants’ understanding of the matter.
5. The chair requests public testimony. The applicant and other proponents are called first, followed by opponents and neutral parties. Proponents and opponents then have an opportunity to respond. It is likely that time limits will be imposed on this public testimony. When this testimony is concluded, the chair closes the public input portion of the hearing.	Accepting comment from affected parties is a key component of the hearing process.  Time limits are imposed to promote an efficient hearing and to facilitate the presentation of well-organized, concise testimony.
6. The committee members discuss the merits of the case. Often the committee asks more questions of staff or witnesses at this time. Sometimes this procedure is combined with step #7 below.	The committee seeks consensus during this stage of the hearing so that it can proceed to making a final decision.
7. The committee members formulate a written record of their decision called a “resolution.” First, the committee members adopt “Findings of Fact” and “Conclusions,” based on the evidence presented at the hearing, in order to provide a written justification for their decision. Although staff usually provides a draft resolution to the committee before the hearing, the committee sometimes finds it necessary to prepare additional or different “Findings of Fact” and “Conclusions”; if this occurs, it can take some time because committee members often must write complex statements. Then, once “Findings of Fact” and “Conclusions” have been adopted, the committee makes its decision on the matter. Planning Commission decisions are made in the form of recommendations to the City Council; Board of Adjustment decisions are final city rulings, subject to appeal in Superior Court.	The committee must ensure that it has appropriate documentation citing not just its decision, but also the reasons why it is making this decision. It must be careful to utilize only the evidence presented at the hearing, and the evidence used to justify a decision must be substantial in light of the entire record.



## Pending Land Use Applications

Displayed below are land use applications submitted to the planning or public works department or city-generated proposals for planning provisions that require a public meeting, public notice, or site plan review in accordance with the city code.

PROJECT	DESCRIPTION	LOCATION	STATUS
Critical Areas Ordinance Revisions	proposed amendments to city's ordinance regarding environmentally sensitive areas	citywide	draft amendments transmitted to state; CC scheduled to review final ordinance in October
Hinrichs Annexation	annex 37 acres to the city	west of Sunnyside Park and north of SW Old Wawawai Road	staff reviewing legal description of property
Askins Annexation	annex 35 acres to the city	Johnson Road south of the Village Centre Cinemas	CC accepted annexation on 4/3; city awaiting petition from applicant
Crimson and Gray Subdivision No. 1 Preliminary Plat	divide 12.0 acres into 42 lots in an R2 district	west of N. Grand Avenue between Terre View Drive and Albion Road	staff reviewing application; possible PC hearing on 10/24
Bryant House Special Valuation	request for special property tax valuation for single family house rehabilitation	1005 NE Maple Street	staff reviewing application; possible LC meeting on 10/24
Beasley Conditional Use Permit Extension Request (C-06-3)	extend for 2 years the approval period for a permit involving construction of a 15- & 12-unit apartment building on 3.2 acres	215 NW Clay Court	staff reviewing application materials
Remax Sign Administrative Variance Application (AV 07-4)	install off-premise sign for condominium project at NW Clay Court	50 NW Terre View Drive	staff approved application; appeal period ends 10/4
University Park Substantial Development Permit (No. 76)	construct 39,000-sq-ft commercial/residential building near S. Fork of Palouse River	630 E. Main Street	staff processing permit
Wal-Mart Supercenter SEPA determination and site plan	develop 223,000-sq-ft store on a 28-acre site	south of SE Harvest Drive/ Bishop Boulevard intersection	Superior Court judge denied PARD appeal on 10/18/06; PARD filed appeal with Court of Appeals on 11/27/06
Crimson Village site plan (07-2)	develop mixed-use retail/residential buildings totaling 66,000 sq ft on 10.5-acre lot	1000 block of SE Bishop Boulevard	staff requested applicant to revise site plan
Anita's Townhouses site plan (07-4)	build two housing units on 6,016-sq-ft lot	1055 NE B Street	staff requested applicant to revise site plan
Tomason Place Apartments site plan (07-11)	establish 26-unit apartment building on 82,600-sq-ft parcel	555 NE Terre View Drive	staff requested applicant to revise site plan
Birch Hills Apartments site plan (07-14)	develop 144 apartments on approx. 15-acre site	2200 NE Westwood Drive	staff requested applicant to revise site plan
Hospital Parking Lot Addition site plan (07-15)	establish 37-stall parking lot	835 SE Bishop Boulevard	staff requested applicant to revise site plan



**KEY TO ZONING DISTRICTS:** R1 Single Family Residential; RT Residential Transitional; R2 Low Density Multi-Family Residential; R3 Medium Density Multi-Family Residential; R4 High Density Multi-Family Residential; C1 Neighborhood Commercial; C2 Central Business District; C3 General Commercial; I1 Light Industrial; I2 Heavy Industrial; IRP Industrial Research Park; WSU Washington State University

**KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS:** CC: City Council; PC: Planning Commission; BOA: Board of Adjustment; DOE: State Department of Ecology; LC: Landmarks Commission

**NOTES:** 1) If an applicant fails to act on a pending application for a period of six months, said application will be dropped from the above list.. 2) Numbers in parentheses are planning staff's internal file numbers. 3) Site plan review by city staff is generally conducted for proposed construction of developments other than single family homes, duplexes, or manufactured homes; it does not apply to most construction on the WSU campus.



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