CITY OF PULLMAN BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT

Regular Meeting Minutes December 16, 2013

The City of Pullman Board of Adjustment held a regular meeting at 7:30 p.m. on Monday, December 16, 2013, in Council Chambers, City Hall, 325 SE Paradise, Pullman, Washington with Chairperson Michael Kallaher presiding.

ROLL CALL: Present: Beaumont, Chapman, Harbour, Kallaher, Vik

Excused: Smart

Staff: Dickinson, Johnson

KALLAHER Called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. and called roll.

MOTION Vik moved to approve the minutes of the August 19, 2013 Regular

Meeting as prepared by staff. Seconded by Harbour and passed

unanimously.

MOTION Chapman moved to approve the minutes of the October 21, 2013 Regular Meeting as prepared by staff. Seconded by Beaumont and

passed unanimously.

REGULAR BUSINESS

Conduct a public hearing to review and take action on a conditional use permit application submitted by Schweitzer Engineering Laboratories, Inc. to construct a 14,000-square-foot child care center, located at the southwest corner of the intersection of NE Hopkins Court and NE Andrus Drive on College Hill.

Kallaher read the public hearing rules of procedure, administered the oath or affirmation for those wishing to provide testimony during the hearing and qualified all Board members. When Kallaher asked if there was anyone in the audience who wished to disqualify any Commission member, there was no response. Kallaher asked for the staff report.

Dickinson stated that the applicant is Schweitzer Engineering Laboratories, Inc. (SEL), and their application is to construct a 14,000-square-foot-child care center building with a 9,000-square-foot-playground and 41 parking spaces on a 2.2-acre parcel located at the southwest corner of the intersection of NE Hopkins Court and NE Andrus Drive in the Port of Whitman County Industrial Park. The applicant has indicated that this child care center would be used only by SEL employees. The zoning of this property is I2 Heavy Industrial and child care centers are conditional uses in the I2 district.

Staff has reviewed this proposal and finds it to be acceptable. The project meets all of the zoning code standards and would not appreciably increase traffic because the center would only serve SEL employees and they are already using those local streets for their

employment. The only staff concern is that a a wetland buffer extends into the property a short distance so staff believes it is appropriate to require a critical areas report to address potential wetland impacts from this project. Staff recommends approval subject to one condition requiring the applicant to submit a critical areas report.

Entered into the record Staff Report No. 13-13 with Attachments A-H as Exhibit No. 1.

In response to the question if the site were to be expanded in the future, as is listed in the proposal, would it require another hearing, Dickinson said it would depend upon the proposed use within that new structure. In response to a question about a potential second access into the industrial park, Dickinson said it would be a challenge to create one, and there are no standard specifications which trigger additional access points.

KALLAHER

Called for proponents.

KIRK MORRIS 1630 NE Lower Drive Pullman, WA 99163 Stated that he has lived at that address for approximately two years and it is not within 300' feet of the subject property. He works for the applicant and is attending as a representative for the applicant. The project was due mostly to the required hours for manufacturing shifts and employees experiencing problems finding child care for the early start or late end times. Most traffic accessing the center would already be within the Port; other ingress/egress options are already being considered. When the center is fully staffed, there may be as many as 25 employees. He said he has no concerns about the condition requiring the Critical Areas Report.

KALLAHER

Called for additional proponents – no response.

Called for opponents – no response. Called for neutral parties – no response. Closed the public input portion of the hearing.

DISCUSSION

Chapman stated that it seems to be the appropriate thing to do.

Vik thought it was a good idea, and concurs with staff recommendations.

Beaumont opined that the applicant had done all the right things with respect to preparing this proposal.

MOTION

Vik moved to accept Findings of Fact Nos. 1-19 of Resolution No. BA-2013-9 as prepared by staff. Seconded by Beaumont and passed

unanimously.

MOTION

Chapman moved to accept Conclusions Nos. 1-9 of Resolution No. BA-2013-9 as prepared by staff. Seconded by Harbour and passed unanimously.

MOTION

Harbour moved to approve Conditional Use Permit Application No. C-13-5 with the condition regarding a critical areas report as prepared by staff. Seconded by Beaumont and passed unanimously by roll call vote.

KALLAHER

In regard to the next item before the Board, Kallaher stated that he was Treasurer of the committee in charge of getting the Bond approved for the remodel to the Pullman High School, so he must recuse himself from the hearing; doing so will leave the Board without a Chairperson and Beaumont has agreed to act as Chair of the Board is amenable.

MOTION

Chapman moved to accept Beaumont as Temporary Chairperson. Seconded by Vik and passed unanimously.

KALLAHER

Left the chamber.

REGULAR BUSINESS

Conduct a public hearing to review and take action on a conditional use permit application submitted by Pullman Public Schools to reconstruct the existing Pullman High School, located at 540 NW Greyhound Way on Military Hill.

Beaumont read the public hearing rules of procedure, administered the oath or affirmation for those wishing to provide testimony during the hearing and qualified all Board members. When Beaumont asked if there was anyone in the audience who wished to disqualify any Commission member, there was no response. Beaumont asked for the staff report.

Dickinson stated that the applicant is Pullman Public Schools; the proposal is to reconstruct the existing Pullman High School (PHS) at 510 NW Greyhound Way; the project specifically involves demolishing most of the existing structure, renovating 47,000 square feet of existing building floor area, constructing 135,000 square feet of new building floor area, and adding about 14 vehicle parking spaces to raise the total number of spaces to approximately 328. The proposal also includes a variance request to increase the allowable height of a portion of the auditorium to 37 feet, which is two feet higher than the standard height in the R1 district. This property is zoned R1 Single Family Residential, and educational facilities are conditional uses in the R1 zone. Staff has reviewed this proposal and finds it to be acceptable. The applicant is proposing to continue school operations on site while construction proceeds, so the application indicates that portable classrooms may be placed on the parking lot while that construction happens; accordingly, staff believes that a condition should be imposed to ensure that the minimum number of required parking spaces be maintained at the site during the academic year. Staff has also suggested a second condition that would grant the requested height variance since the topography of the site appears to justify that particular request. Staff is recommending approval of this proposal with those two conditions.

Entered into the record Staff Report No. 13-12 with Attachments A-I as Exhibit No. 1.

Dickinson answered a question regarding the height limitation and explained that the height of a structure is calculated by measuring the highest adjoining ground elevations within 5 feet of the building perimeter to the midpoint of the highest gable on the roof.

BEAUMONT

Called for proponents.

STEVE McNUTT Spokane

Stated he is the project architect (from NEC Architecture) and he is representing the proponent. He described the particulars of the project with the use of Microsoft PowerPoint© slides; fire access will wrap around the entire building; it is hoped for and planned to not use any portable classrooms; and the current schedule is to complete construction documents in June 2014 with the project to go out to bid in July 2014. He stated that any delays in the process would lead to significant cost increases due to the funding cycles.

In response to questioning, he stated that student safety is of high concern and ingress to the building prior to the first bell will be allowed at all convenient entry points, but after the first bell, all doors will lock except the main entrance past the administration offices; if portable units are necessary, parking requirements will be considered and addressed; demolition and construction is to occur in phases.

MIKE TERRELL 5312 S Chapman Road Green Acres, WA Explained that he is the landscape architect who prepared the Conditional Use Permit (CUP). He spoke to the proposal's compliance with City Planning Standards. He stated that PHS was granted a CUP in 1971 and has been in continuous use as a high school since 1973 and another CUP was requested and granted for the score board approximately five years ago. The proposed use will result in no significant changes in the use. The height limit exception that is being requested is buffered by distance and topography.

In response to questioning, he stated that stormwater requirements change and the plan is to have detention basins on the high school campus with metered flow to an adjacent natural area south of the school.

DR. PAUL STURM 1210 NW Orion Drive Pullman, WA 99163 He stated that he is the Superintendent of Pullman School District (PSD). He gave some historical context; the existing high school started as open concept, and over time the school has closed walls and have started to experience electrical power deficiencies, concrete structure hinders technological advances, and the heating system fails at times. There are also safety and security issues that were not concerns when the current campus was designed and constructed. The community expressed interest in improving the school, with the interest increasing particularly after Lincoln Middle School was improved. Consideration became serious in 2010, with community input requested in 2011.

The school district did discuss three options:

- 1) Rebuild as proposed;
- 2) Rebuilding on a new location at the existing site;
- 3) Change the location and build new.

The other options did not gain traction, not in small part because changing the location would have significantly impacted the cost of the project. He stated that in February 2013, voters approved the proposed plan with a margin of nearly 80%.

KARL JOHANSON 800 NW Greyhound Way Pullman, WA 99163 Stated he has lived in the district for 31 years and for four years at the current location, which is directly adjacent to the subject property. He is totally in support of the project, is a school board member, and believes that their decisions are appropriate. He stated that by remaining on the existing site, 30% of the existing building will be retained, which shows good stewardship of the property.

BEAUMONT

Called for additional proponents – no response. Called for opponents.

JAMIE BRUSH 635 SE Taylor Street Pullman, WA 99163 She has lived on Pioneer Hill for 9 years and she does not live within 300 feet of the subject property, but she has a child who attends school in PSD and is currently a 6th Grader at LMS. She read a quote from the Superintendent of Public Schools of Washington about the benefits of walking and bicycling to schools and a quote from the City of Pullman Pedestrian/Bicycle Circulation Plan which calls for "safe and adequate access to activity centers" including the high school. She opined that PHS should be equally accessible and expressed concerns regarding difficult and unsafe pedestrian/bicycle

access routes available to the high school site. She asserted that bicycle use and improved fitness would lead directly to educational benefits and a higher quality of life, specifically through increased health benefits, and this would be accomplished if the high school were placed on a new, centrally located site.

In response to questioning, she stated that bicycle/pedestrian concerns have not been addressed throughout the process. Beaumont said that he did not wish to minimize bicycle/pedestrian access, but there are myriad other concerns to be considered.

LANE BROWN 1310 SE Harvest Drive Pullman, WA 99163 He has been in Pullman for six years and at his current address for approximately three years. He stated that he is not opposed to the new high school, but has concerns about its location, that the current location is not the optimal location for the high school as it necessitates very long bus rides or parent chauffeurs for student access. He also indicated concern about the potential disruption of construction occurring at the same time as classes are in session. He closed by asking what other sites were considered and deemed unacceptable.

DYONNE DAVIDSON 1310 SE Harvest Drive Pullman, WA 99163 She stated that she has been in Pullman for approximately five years and she has a daughter who will begin at the high school next year. She is concerned that her daughter's education will be disrupted by the demolition and construction at the existing high school. She said that she has a couple of decades experience in architectural design and it has been her experience that with any project, usually during demolition, there are a lot of budgetary surprises and cost overruns and she asked about the phasing plan.

CHRISTIAN PAULSEN 530 SW City View Street Pullman, WA 99163

He stated that he is a co-owner of Taco del Mar and he has two younger siblings that attended school during construction and he can vouch that their grades were adversely affected. He opined that he has always been amazed at how difficult it is to get to the high school, and while he doesn't know of a great alternative location for the high school, he believes it would be a good idea to explore additional options. He did vote for the high school bond measure, but thought the only option was for the proposed project on the current site; he would like for the school to explore other options. He reiterated that his greatest concern is the educational disruption.

PAM DeBOWES 770 SE Pheasant Run Court Pullman, WA 99163 She stated she has been in Pullman for 13 years. She has walked her children to school since they began and her choices of residence have related directly to the location of the school her children will attend. She asserted that it takes her a minimum of 30 minutes to

make a single round trip to the high school and she dreads taking the trip. In regards to the remodel of the high school, she lives near Franklin Elementary School which is currently undergoing a remodel and the construction is very disturbing to her and her daughter, who is a pupil at the school. She suggested relocating the high school and repurposing the current structure for laser tag.

BEAUMONT

Called for additional opponents – no response. Called for neutral parties – no response. Called for reply by proponents.

STEVE McNUTT Spokane

He said that he has been involved with the reconstruction of schools across the state. They did seriously consider relocating to another site, but one of the fundamental problems cost-wise is that to relocate means you walk away from a substantial investment in existing site development and 35,000 square feet of existing building, as well as the cost of purchasing another site, and to do so at this point would demand a supplementary bond measure.

He also indicated that they are very sensitive to the disruption issues raised and they have done this successfully in at least a half-dozen projects in Spokane and other projects and have shown that the process is satisfactory. He opined that kids are very flexible, probably more so than adults.

He requested that they focus on the merits and demerits of the application that has been submitted and not consider options that are really not viable at this point.

MIKE TERRELL 5312 S Chapman Road Green Acres, WA He reminded the Board that the CUP application addresses renovation of the existing high school, the height variance, additional parking, and portable classrooms. The topography of Pullman makes it a major challenge to make any significant facility in Pullman totally bicycle/pedestrian friendly.

DR. PAUL STURM 1210 NW Orion Drive Pullman, WA 99163 There was a lot of internal process on this subject, and the high school was discussed at school board meetings dating back to 2004. Prior to the February 2013 election, there was no mention or support for moving the high school to a different location. By the time of the election, the decision had been made to renovate on site.

He agreed that the top of Military Hill is not the easiest location to access, but PSD is a rural school district that encompasses about 250 miles with Pullman at the center and students come from locations outside of City limits, including County addresses and Albion.

Topography is a factor and the City has expressed plans to bring bike paths to the school and there are bicycle and pedestrian friendly paths on the site. PSD also has a cooperative agreement with the City where Pullman Transit buses secondary students and the school district has instituted a bus for before- and after-school activities.

STEVE McNUTT Spokane

In response to a question about the minimum amount of acreage that would be required for relocating the high school, in order to provide the full complement of Title 9 athletic programs, somewhere between 40 and 45 acres would be necessary. With the topography in Pullman, it would likely need to be 10-15% more because there would be so much unusable transition space.

BEAUMONT

Called for additional reply by proponents – no response. Called for reply by opponents.

DYONNE DAVIDSON 1310 SE Harvest Drive Pullman, WA 99163

She stated that she personally asked questions about relocating the high school at school board meetings, and she only became aware of the process when the current proposal was presented as the only option.

JAMIE BRUSH 635 SE Taylor Street Pullman, WA 99163

She wanted the Board to be aware that she did attend school board meetings and she has brought up her concerns.

LANE BROWN 1310 SE Harvest Drive Pullman, WA 99163

He asked if it would be possible to dissociate the playfields from the school buildings.

BEAUMONT

Called for additional reply by opponents – no response. Called for neutral parties.

BOBBIE RYDER 800 NW Greyhound Way Pullman, WA 99163

Stated that the existing site provides many opportunities for new trails, and the current site is a better option for Albion students to bike.

BEAUMONT

Called for additional neutral parties – no response. Called for rebuttal by proponents – no response. Closed the public input portion of the hearing.

DISCUSSION

Chapman stated that it would be difficult to establish the high school at a different site, the proposal appears to meet CUP criteria, and many schools in town have been redeveloped on site. Vik agreed with Chapman. Beaumont stated that even trying to find a 5-7 acre site requires looking outside of city limits. Chapman asserted that it might affect people more negatively if the high school were

proposed to be moved to a different site.

DICKINSON

Given the extent of public testimony, he suggested that additional findings of fact be considered by the Board.

He proposed:

- Finding of Fact No. 27 to state, "At the public hearing regarding this matter on December 16, 2013, proponents described the scope of the proposal, the extent of its compliance with pertinent planning standards, and the historical context in which the project was conceived."
- Finding of Fact No. 28 to state, "At the public hearing regarding this matter, opponents claimed that the high school property is situated at the top of a steep hill in a relatively remote location that is difficult and unsafe to access by means of pedestrian or bicycle travel; opponents also expressed concern that maintaining classroom operations during the reconstruction of the high school would be disruptive to the educational process; opponents indicated that it would be in the public interest to establish the high school at a more centrally located site that is easily accessible via all modes of transportation."
- Finding of Fact No. 29 to state, "At the public hearing regarding this matter, proponents stated it would be very difficult to pursue establishment of a high school at an alternative location because the process would involve abandoning a substantial investment at the subject property and acquiring another site at significant cost. Proponents indicated they are sensitive to the potential disruption issues raised, and they are confident that, based on their experience with similar school reconstruction projects, educational operations at the high school would be successfully maintained during the construction process. Proponents also asked the Board to judge the merits of the instant proposal rather than consider other options that could be set forth."

Vik moved to accept Finding of Facts Nos. 1-26 as prepared by staff and Finding of Fact Nos. 27, 28, and 29 proposed by staff based on the testimony. Chapman seconded. Passed unanimously.

Chapman moved to accept Conclusions Nos. 1-9 as prepared by staff. Seconded by Harbour and passed unanimously.

Vik moved that Conditional Use Permit No. C-13-4 be approved with the two conditions suggested by staff. Seconded by Harbour and passed unanimously by roll call vote.

MOTION

MOTION

MOTION

OTHER BUSINESS	No other business was presented.
UPCOMING MEETINGS	January 20, 2014 – no conflicts noted. Staff stated that there are no current applications for business to be held on this date.
	February 17, 2014 – no conflicts noted.
	March 17, 2014 – Vik indicated he had a possible conflict; no other conflicts noted.
MOTION	Chapman moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Beaumont and passed unanimously.
ADJOURNMENT	The meeting was adjourned at 10:51 p.m.
ATTEST:	
Chairperson	Planning Director
Secretary	