

**CITY OF WEST LINN
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES**

Wednesday, October 1, 2008

Members present: Vice Chair John Kovash and Commissioners Valerie Baker, Robert Martin, Dean Wood and Ron Whitehead.

Staff present: Bryan Brown, Planning Director; Chris Kerr, Senior Planner; and Gordon Howard, Staff Attorney

Members absent: Commissioner Shawn Andreas and Chair Michael Babbitt

CALL TO ORDER

Vice Chair John Kovash called the Planning Commission meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers of City Hall, 22500 Salamo Road, West Linn, Oregon.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Whitehead **moved** to approve the Minutes of August 20, 2008. Commissioner Martin **seconded** the motion and it **passed** 5:0.

PUBLIC COMMENTS (None)

PUBLIC HEARING

(Note: Full copies of the staff reports and all related documents for the hearings on the agenda are available for review through the Planning Department.)

PLN-07-05, Sunset Neighborhood Plan

Vice Chair Kovash opened the public hearing, explained the applicable criteria and procedure, and announced the time limits for testimony. He asked the Commissioners to declare any conflict of interest. Commissioner Baker reported that her son attended Sunset Primary School. When invited by the Vice Chair, no one in the audience challenged the authority of the Planning Commission or the ability of any individual Commissioner to hear the matter.

Staff Report

Chris Kerr, Senior Planner, presented the staff report (See Planning & Building Department Staff Report dated September 16, 2008). He said the Sunset Neighborhood Association had formed the Sunset Plan Steering Committee, which had worked with consultants, Cogan Owens Cogan, and the staff to draft the plan. He reported the Committee had worked hard to involve, inform, and solicit feedback from all residents in their neighborhood of 950 households through mailings, the newspaper, their newsletter, open houses, the web, and door-to-door contact. He noted they achieved a 20% survey response rate and 60 residents attended the public meetings. He said staff attended all of the meetings. He reported that the Sunset Neighborhood Association had voted to ask the City Council to adopt the plan at their general meeting on September 9, 2008. He pointed out how the plan was organized and highlighted their Neighborhood Profile and certain Goals, Policies and Action Items to maintain existing character, preserve existing

housing stock, keep Sunset Primary School where it was, and develop a plan for the future of the Willamette River waterfront. He reported the proposed plan met all applicable criteria and would become part of Comprehensive Plan if the City Council adopted it. He recommended that the Planning Commission forward it to the City Council with a recommendation to adopt it. During the questioning period, Mr. Kerr confirmed the staff had received no other correspondence on the matter

Proponents

Doug Vokes, 4972 Prospect St., outgoing President of the Sunset Neighborhood Association, thanked the staff and the consultants for their help.

Troy Bowers, 2790 Lancaster St., Secretary/Treasurer of Sunset Neighborhood Association and incoming President of the Association, reported the neighborhood had coalesced around the core concepts in the plan. He said residents were generally happy with their existing neighborhood. He said the school and the park were important aspects of the neighborhood. He said residents had been galvanized by the prospect of losing the school, but the School District was now actively working with them. He said they intended to continue to work on issues such as those related to the Transportation System Plan. He said they felt that some, newer, homes were “out of scale and character” with the rest of the neighborhood.

During the questioning period, Commissioner Baker asked how they planned to ensure that any future redevelopment of the school property would be designed to complement the neighborhood. Mr. Bowers related that a group of residents (not the Association) had initially approached the School District to suggest the school be improved, instead of moved. He said if the District did decide to move the school they would work aggressively with the City and the District to ensure the site was redeveloped correctly – perhaps with a community center. He said they felt it was important to keep the ball field there. Mr. Kerr advised there were things the Association and the School District could do to ensure the school stayed where it was, such as modifying traffic patterns and addressing traffic problems around the school. Mr. Bower clarified that there were some residents who were not convinced the school should stay, but they were in the minority. Vice Chair Kovash recalled the neighborhood representatives had testified that a group of individuals had approached the District to discuss the school issue. He suggested the City advise the School District that there was an official neighborhood association that should be a participant in such discussions.

Commissioner Wood asked if the future plan for the waterfront anticipated the mill would not be there. Mr. Vokes said they wanted to plan better opportunities for people to view and enjoy the waterfront, whether or not the mill was still there, but the plan did not go into detail about that. Mr. Bowers confirmed to Commissioner Martin that the Parks and Recreation director was about to begin planning trails there and he was encouraging the neighborhood to be involved in that process.

Alice Richmond, 3939 Parker Rd., commended the Association for the polite, calm manner in which they worked together to draft their plan. She indicated she hoped the school building would be preserved in any event. She sadly recalled the loss of the old West Linn Hotel. She

suggested some sort of commercial shopping area could be on the West Linn waterfront, facing its Oregon City counterpart across the river. She cautioned not to ignore the fact that modern houses had to be bigger to accommodate things like computers and larger kitchens.

Commissioner Baker noted the plan listed responsible parties connected with specific actions. She asked how they would be notified of this. Mr. Kerr anticipated the actions items would be worked on one at a time and those parties would get involved at that time.

Deliberations/Motions

Vice Chair Kovash closed the public hearing and opened deliberations. Commissioner Martin praised the neighborhood for a wonderful process and plan. He said their extensive work to involve people and get their support and their taking responsibility for taking a lead role in ensuring it was actually executed stood out. Commissioner Whitehead complimented the neighborhood on their work. He hoped the remaining four neighborhoods without a plan would decide to follow their example. Mr. Bowers said his neighborhood association had learned from other plans that came before. Commissioners Baker and Martin suggested that if the City Council approved the plan, the Council should send a copy of it to the School District with a cover letter to inform them it had been adopted and contained a goal specific to the school.

Commissioner Whitehead **moved** to recommend that the City Council approve PLN-07-05, Sunset Neighborhood Plan. Commissioner Martin **seconded** the motion and it **passed** 5:0.

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ITEMS OF INTEREST FROM STAFF

Planning Director Brown listed items to be on the November 5th agenda. He confirmed the joint Planning Commission/City Council work session was scheduled for the following Monday evening.

ITEMS OF INTEREST FROM THE PLANNING COMMISSION (None)

ADJOURNMENT

There being no other business, Chair Babbitt adjourned the Planning Commission meeting at ____ p.m.

APPROVED:

Michael Babbitt, Chair

Date