



PLANNING COMMISSION
Meeting Notes of May 1, 2024

Commissioners present: John Carr, Gary Walvatne, Tom Watton, Joel Metlen, and David D. Jones
Councilors present: Carol Bryck and Rory Bialostosky
Public present: Jessica Iselin, Kathi Halicki, Terry Anderson and Sharia Cassidy
Staff present: Planning Manager Darren Wyss, Associate Planner Chris Myers, City Attorney Bill Monohan, and Administrative Assistant Lynn Schroder

The meeting video is available on the [City website](#).

Pre-meeting Work Session

Chair Carr reviewed the order of business for the hearing for DR-24-01. Commissioners asked procedural questions.

1. Call To Order and Roll Call

Chair Carr called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm. Planning Manager Wyss took roll.

2. Public Comment related to Land Use Items not on the Agenda

None.

3. Approval of Meeting Notes: [04.03.2024](#)

Commissioner Jones moved to approve the meeting notes for 04.03.2024. Walvatne seconded. **Ayes: Watton, Jones, Walvatne, Metlen, and Carr. Nays: None. Abstentions: None. The motion passed 5-0-0.**

4. Public Hearing (Quasi-Judicial): [DR-24-01, Class II Design Review for a proposed mixed-use addition at 1593 Willamette Falls Drive with office space on main level and three dwelling units on upper level](#)

Chair Carr introduced application DR-24-01, a Class II Design Review at 1595 Willamette Falls Drive. Carr explained the hearing procedures and opened the public hearing.

City Attorney Monohan addressed legal standards and appeal rights. The substantive criteria for the application are Community Development Code (CDC) Chapters 59, 41, 46, 48, 55, and 99.

City Attorney Monohan addressed the Planning Commissioners' conflicts of interest, bias, and ex-parte contacts. None of the Planning Commissioners disclosed conflicts of interest, bias, or ex parte contact. Commissioner Watton declared that he has been in the subject building at 1595 Willamette Falls Drive and has a project on a property across the alley from the subject property. He stated that he has no financial interest in the DR-24-01 proposal. Monahan then invited audience members to raise any objections regarding the Planning Commission's jurisdiction or any potential biases or ex-parte disclosures by the Commissioners. Audience member Terry Anderson asked Commissioner Watton to expand on his project across the alley from DR-24-01. Commissioner Watton explained that he has a client who owns property across the alley from 1593 Willamette Falls Drive and is considering an ADU expansion on his property. Neither he nor his client are affiliated with the subject property. Anderson did not raise any further challenges to Watton but noted that another attendee, Sharla Cassidy, who lives adjacent to the subject property, may have a challenge. Sharla Cassidy did not challenge Watton's participation. Watton stated that he did not have a conflict of interest and affirmed his ability to decide based on the facts presented for DR-24-01.

Associate Planner Chris Myers delivered the staff report. The applicant seeks approval for a Class II Design Review to erect a new building addition onto an already existing residential structure. This addition will incorporate commercial office space on the ground floor and three additional dwelling units on the second level. The proposed project falls within the Willamette Neighborhood Mixed-Use Transitional Zone and does not lie within the Historic Design District.

Proposed site improvements will involve upgrading the frontage, including installing curb, gutter, sidewalk, and stormwater planters along 15th Street and upgrading and paving Knapps Alley to meet City Alleyway Standards. A new driveway apron will provide access to parking and a garage from the alley. A compact garbage and recycling enclosure will be built behind the current utility building, accessible via the alley. An ADA accessway will link the main entrance of the addition to the ADA parking area at the back of the site, extending to the sidewalk along Willamette Falls Drive.

Myers clarified that new state laws regarding parking requirements for smaller residential units allow the removal of 2 parking spaces for a total of 6 required parking spaces for the proposal. The applicant modified their application based on new parking requirement information and revised the labeling of parking spaces on the site plan. Two new onsite parking spaces are located behind the building addition and accessed off the alley. The city engineer approved using some street parking spaces for the project as the West Linn Development Code allowed. The required parking spaces for the project are calculated based on the combination of uses (commercial office and dwelling units), with potential adjustments due to new state laws.

The proposed project requires an 8-foot-wide Public Utility Easement along the front of the property on Willamette Falls Drive and Knapp's Alley. The proposed addition has an open front porch, which encroaches 4" into the 8-foot-wide Easement.

Jessica Iselin presented the project, which includes an addition to an existing building and the desire to provide on-site parking to alleviate congestion in the neighborhood.

Kathi Halicki, President of the Willamette Neighborhood Association (WNA), presented on behalf of the WNA and expressed general support for the project but had concerns about traffic and parking. Shannen Knight and Sharia Cassidy submitted written testimony in opposition to the proposal. Terry Anderson and Sharia Cassidy submitted oral testimony in opposition to the proposal. Testimony provided expressed concerns about:

- More parking in the area and this project will only add to the problem.
- The area must be more crowded, and it must be easier for local traffic to move around the neighborhood.
- Traffic "circling" is a problem as cars drive around and through the neighborhood looking for parking spaces.
- Developments of this type only add to the already difficult traffic situation.
- The proposed addition's mass and scale are not appropriate for the neighborhood and will be an invasion of privacy, as tenants will be able to look down into adjacent properties.
- Formalizing parking spaces on 15th Street via street improvements will reduce the number of spots.
- Compatibility and scale have yet to be taken into consideration.

Jessica Iselin provided the applicant's rebuttal. She noted that the application provides affordable housing and has a low parking requirement. The city engineer requires the Knapps Alley improvements. Chris Myers, Darren Wyss, and Bill Monahan answered questions from the Commission.

There were no requests for continuances.

Chair Carr closed the public hearing was closed. Deliberations were opened.

Commissioner Walvatne was concerned about the stacking of parking and the maneuverability of cars in certain spots. Commissioner Watton was concerned about scaling and massing the building. Commissioners discussed parking, the mass and scale of the proposed addition, and the need for smaller housing options. Commissioners did not want any structural elements of the proposed project to encroach on any required easements, including any vertical restrictions.

Vice Chair Metlen moved to approve DR-24-01 as presented with five conditions of approval and directed staff to prepare a Final Decision and Order based on the findings in the staff report and the record. Chair Carr seconded. **Ayes: Jones, Metlen, and Carr. Nays: Watton and Walvatne. Abstentions: None. The motion passed 3-2-0.**

5. Planning Commission Announcements

None.

6. Staff Announcements

Planning Manager Wyss reviewed the upcoming Planning Commission schedule.

7. Adjourn

Chair Carr adjourned the meeting at approximately 8:34 pm.