

PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING

February 16, 2021

The regular monthly meeting of the Oregon Planning Commission was called to order via Zoom by Chairman Scott Winckowski. Members present included Mayor Seferian, Yussef Olive, Greg Vriezelaar, and Rick Orovitz. City Administrator Michael Beazley; Public Service Director Paul Roman; Commissioner of Building & Zoning James Gilmore and Acting Secretary Alex Schultz were also present.

The meeting was called to order at 5:05 p.m.

Chairman Winckowski stated he was going to skip by the organizational meeting and ask for a motion for the adoption of the meeting schedule for 2021 that was attached to their packets. Mr. Orovitz made a motion to approve the 2021 meeting schedule. Mr. Olive seconded. There were no objections. The 2021 meeting schedule was adopted as submitted.

Mayor Seferian moved to approve the December 15, 2020 regular meeting minutes as submitted. Seconded by Mr. Orovitz. There were no objections.

The following item was on the agenda:

Z-810-21 Zoning change from **R-2 Medium Density Residential District** to **C-3 Planned Commercial District** on the property described as **2965 Pickle Road**, Parcel No. 44-23941. The applicant is the **Oregon Planning Commission** for owner **Oregon Economic Development Foundation**.

Mayor Seferian stated with the Planning Commission being the body that is presenting this it would seem a little unusual at times, but when it is a big city project like this and through direction of the City Council, we feel the Planning Commission is the appropriate place to initiate this action. This action is nothing new. It actually started almost eight years ago when we talked about developing our town center, which starts at what used to be the Kmart site. This is something that was advertised. We originally went to the City Council members with the concept of creating a town center because for years every council person has always heard input from people in the city that they wanted more retail shopping and restaurants, which is something they felt the City of Oregon was lacking and it would be a real asset to the residents of the City of Oregon. So, most council people through their campaigns have actually stated they would do what they could to make that happen. It is very difficult to attract retail when we know the market is what dictates what type of retail will take shape or form by demand. We felt that if we created a site that was advantageous to retail growth then private enterprise would feel it was more desirable to make investments there. So, this project began when the idea was presented to Council about eight years ago when we heard the Kmart building could come up for sale due to the issues

Kmart itself experienced nationwide. We addressed City Council and asked if they would be interested in supporting this. We had public meetings. We probably had six or seven different times when this topic came up, as well as every time we tried to promote it through the press or wherever we could get someone to listen, we would state our intentions for this area. So, we had to get Council to make a commitment that they would support this action. Otherwise, with all the steps we had to take to come to this point which first started as acquiring the Kmart site, we would not have wanted to do that without Council's support. We started with the public hearings, putting it out there that this was our intent and tried to make it as public as possible. Once we felt we had Council members commit to this project, we decided to go forward. First step was buying the Kmart property, then buying the radio station property and other parcels so that we could actually have a project, because we knew that if we did not do it now when it existed, we would never have this opportunity again. So, with us being able to acquire the Kmart site and secure land going south from that, we could actually have enough property to coordinate what we felt was some proper growth. We had to act as soon as we could because if we lost any of them it would really make the project impossible, and the opportunity to have a development like this would probably never exist again. So, that is why we are here. That is why we have heard some people make comments out in the public that this is a foregone conclusion, like it has already been decided. We cannot argue that this is not a bit true because we have presented it multiple times, as many times as we could, and we had to get commitments along the way; otherwise, we could not get all of these things that we needed to create this opportunity. We still want to hear input, we could tweak this project; but, to undo it now is probably not very likely.

Mr. Beazley added that the Mayor has laid a foundation for the number of years we have been working with the community toward this end. Tonight is a simple step toward taking a small portion of this area, and long term, we expect to add these steps with other portions of this area, to create a C-3 district. The mayor is talking about the long-term broader project, but tonight it is the 9.9-acre parcel that long term we believe should be the first step in this C-3 district. He then deferred to Mr. Gilmore to explain what a C-3 district is and what area we are talking about tonight.

Mr. Gilmore read into the record that we are talking about a portion of parcel number 44-23941, and we are changing it from R-2 Medium Density Residential to C-3 Planned Commercial district. The process from this planned commercial district is not really any different, with a few exceptions, than a regular zoning change. The process first starts with the initiation from the Planning Commission and it will eventually go to City Council for final approval just like any other zoning change. The difference is this – before anything can be built or the zoning change can be complete the site plan will have to be presented to City Council for final approval. So, we are at the stage of only changing the zoning on it and eventually a site plan will be submitted showing all of the details of the proposed development. We have a general guidance of the development, which is really covered in the overlay we did earlier that gives us all the roads that need to be connected and all the general details of how it should be developed.

Mr. Beazley added that the Oregon Municipal Code provides for this step, for the Planning Commission to take action to refer this to Council for approval. It will simply create a C-3 district that is targeted to be multi-family, which is shown as Lot A on exhibit A. Most of us are aware of where the old WOHO radio site just north of the YMCA on Pickle Road, which is south of Dunn's and abuts the Hallschild neighborhood. This takes the western 9.9 acres next to the Orchard Villa nursing home and would designate that for multi-family use as part of a C-3. As a result of this action, and City Council approval as Mr. Gilmore said, no one would be able to build anything there without additional hearings and a site plan with an approval process. With this plan we would reserve the acreage closest to Hallschild for single family homes, which will remain R-2. Only the western part would be designated for multi-family. In addition to that, the code requires that we demonstrate there is a plan for infrastructure and roadways to serve the area. Just to emphasize, it is in the record and the documents presented before the members and is available in our engineering department. Paul Roman, Rodney Shultz, and our consultants are in the final stages of design work for the roadways to serve this area. We have the funding in place for roads, water, and sewer. We believe it is important to add additional multi-family housing. Oregon really faces a challenge in being competitive because we do not have new contemporary multi-family housing in several categories. In too many cases Oregon's young people are moving to Perrysburg, Sylvania, Monclova or downtown because there are not enough quality apartments in our market to meet those needs right now. We believe there is a strong interest, and we are talking to developers who are very interested and have done market studies to show our young people are looking for apartments to live in in Oregon. Another important response to emphasize, and some of the most common things we hear from our residents is they need better shopping opportunities and better restaurant opportunities. One of the things we do not have, and the restaurateurs and retailers tell us when they talk about development is Oregon has not had the density that helps support those sorts of developments. So, what they tell us is get some rooftops, get some density and retail and restaurants will follow.

Mayor Seferian stated that while we are working on the zoning change for the western portion of this parcel, we do not want to lose track of the fact that all of the parts of this plan are essential for this project to work. And as Mr. Beazley said we will have hearings on how this develops and maybe the look of it; but, for it to exist is a requirement for the project, as well as other parts of this project. Some decisions already have been made through the course of the past five years, or we would not have this detailed of a plan that shows where all these things exist. It is just the look of them that has not been completely decided yet.

Mr. Beazley followed up stating that in addition to purchase acquisition, which council has spent considerable time on, the two other significant legislative steps that were taken to lay the foundation for this were this body, the Planning Commission, and ultimately the Council went through a hearing process and established an overlay district and the general development plan as referenced in the instrument that is in front of them. So, when we did the overlay district we specifically showed exactly where we hope to put the different pieces of it and

how they will fit together. That is when we created the overlay district for the first time. The other thing is we established a community reinvestment area through a legislative process with public hearings and council. Again, as the Mayor said, people have said this is already done. Well, yes, we have actually acted on two different processes through the Planning Commission and through City Council just to get to this stage. This is simply the next step in that process and the steps after this will be a specific site plan for this area, and we will be bringing in zoning for C-3 with a more mixed-use look. Some of the areas might be focused primarily on retail and restaurants, and others will be more mixed use like a medical office, and perhaps residential and office business together. Those plans will be coming ahead, and we will be introducing those in the coming weeks and months.

Chairman Winckowski opened the public hearing and asked if there was anyone there who had any questions or comments on this matter.

Kevin Veres came forward and stated his main concern is adding more traffic to Pickle Road.

Mr. Beazley replied that with regards to traffic any new development can lead to additional traffic. The way that this is shaped a lot of the traffic will end up flowing to Dustin, Isaac Streets, outlets to Coy, to Navarre, and to Harbor Drive on the north side. It will also present some traffic challenges on Pickle, and we are aware of that. We believe the three steps we are taking now will alleviate all of our traffic issues long term. The investment that was made at the intersection of Wheeling and Navarre is the same update being made at the corner of Coy and Navarre. Opening up this grid in this way will also help traffic to flow easier in the entire area. There will be additional life in this area, but we will listen as we go, and we will address traffic concerns as they arise.

Mayor Seferian stated as Mr. Beazley said we know there will be additional traffic; but, with the city being involved in how this develops is kind of a unique situation, versus if it were sold to private ventures where we would lose some of the control. Because of the nature of this, you will see a fairly sophisticated roadway system that we would not expect to see in private enterprise developments. The City has some unique funding sources to offset the cost, he then deferred to Mr. Roman to comment.

Mr. Roman advised Mr. Veres that they are doing an ongoing traffic study. The only foreseeable change in traffic will likely be a traffic light at East Harbor Drive and Navarre. The commercial development that you see here, in particular the old Kmart area, a lot of that traffic will come by way of Navarre to Isaac to Dustin. He thinks the residential portion will be split between Dustin and Pickle. The apartments along with the single-family homes to the east are projected to generate approximately 500 cars. If you split them, 250 cars on Pickle seems like a lot, but that is only about 7% of the traffic that is currently on Pickle. The other 250 some cars will go to Dustin, so the traffic is going to be split out.

Mayor Seferian added that there is a futuristic plan to continue the road to Brown

Road and at that time some of the traffic will be relieved to Brown Road from the YMCA.

Chairman Winckowski asked Mr. Roman what he anticipates for traffic control devices at East Harbor and Dustin.

Mr. Roman responded that it is very likely that could go to a four-way stop. It is a question of would that grow into something more, and that is what would have to be analyzed.

Chairman Winckowski asked if there was anyone else there with questions or comments, or if there were any further questions or comments from the Board.

Mr. Orovitz stated that on the overview where this parcel connects to Dustin, it appears Dunn's has a pavement area they have been using for their used car lot. He asked if this is correct.

Mayor Seferian answered that this parcel is actually owned by the city and they have been using a portion of it.

Mr. Orovitz asked if the City of Oregon already owns the area designated as Town Green.

Mr. Beazley replied the city does not; however, it is in our plan and we have been in discussion with the owner. It will be developed in phases and we might take some of it for the roadway, but the owners of that parcel might be interested in developing a portion of it themselves that is consistent with the Master Plan.

Mr. Olive asked what the area called Town Green is currently zoned.

Mr. Beazley responded it is zoned commercial.

Chairman Winckowski stated he has one final question. There has been reference to a site plan. As soon as the final site plan is ready to be presented will it be submitted to Planning Commission first or does it go direct to Council.

Mr. Gilmore answered that it goes to Planning Commission coordinated with the Public Service Director and then to City Council for final approval.

Mr. Roman asked if we would also have a plat map presentation for the road itself for Planning Commission as well.

Mr. Gilmore replied that is correct. We will have a plat map that will be presented to Planning Commission for approval that will show the lot as we move forward. We will have a replat for the residential side that will show that looped side street. Before the streets are built, they will have a preliminary plat approved by the Planning Commission.

Mayor Seferian moved to close the public hearing. Mr. Orovitz seconded. There

were no objections.

Chairman Winckowski then moved to recommend approval of Z-810-21 to Council. Seconded by Mr. Orovitz. All members were in favor by a vote of 5-0.

With no other business, the meeting adjourned at 5:55 p.m.

Alex Schultz,
Acting Secretary