

City of Hood River
Planning Commission Work Session
Public Meeting
Monday, September 17, 2012

City Council Chambers
211 Second Street
Hood River, OR 97031
5:30 p.m.

PRESENT: Chair Laurie Stephens; Commissioners Steve Winkle, Casey Weeks, Jennifer Gulizia, Nathan DeVol, Bill Irving, Nikki Hollatz.
ABSENT:
STAFF: Planning Director Cindy Walbridge, Senior Planner Kevin Liburdy.

MINUTES

- I. CALL TO ORDER: Laurie Stephens, Chair at 5:40 p.m.
- II. PLANNING DIRECTOR'S REPORT:
Cindy Walbridge reported that there is an extension request on the Naito's cable park application. The Naito's application for the hotel and the upland project is at LUBA. There is no date set for the appeal.

LUBA's remand of the Walmart application is still with the applicant who must take action in order for the city to move forward with review.

Past minutes will be completed soon.

The City Council has requested that the Planning Commission look at the language concerning restricting residential uses in the Waterfront area. Removal of the sign code and reduction of interior setbacks for small accessory buildings are from the planning department staff. As far as the zoning for the Waterfront area, the planning department staff is looking for direction that would be taken back to the City Council.

III. WORK SESSION

- A. Restricting residential uses in the Waterfront area.

Chair Stephens asks Liburdy to go over the packet.

Liburdy said that the Economic Opportunities Analysis included recommended policy and code amendments. Recommended code amendments included limiting residential in C-2 zone. Concerns were raised by the public and property owners. Adopted code amendments continued to permit multi-family subject to minimum density, but require conditional uses, PUDs and minimum density requirements for other types of residential uses including mixed-use project. The idea was that we would reevaluate and complete the Economic Opportunities Analysis discussions within six months. A few big projects

have slowed down the process of discussing residential on the waterfront. The packet has existing definitions and proposed definitions for HRMC 17.01.060.

Planning Commission discussed 11 units per acre requirement and asked if it applies to residential only or commercial mixed use. Liburdy confirmed the density requirement applies to both exclusive residential and mixed-use.

Chair Stephens explained the Planning Commission can revisit these conditions at another time but tonight because of the request of the City Council the focus should be on the Waterfront.

Mayor Babitz: The City Council has been discussing the language that is currently in place. The requirement for a PUD process was expected to give control to the Planning Commission that they could reject residential development if it has strong reasons to believe that it was incompatible and could cause erosion of employment lands. The city attorney says that it is difficult to reject something on the basis that these are important employment lands and there are three parcels in the Waterfront that the C-2 zone applies to. Currently two of those three are in late stages of proposed development, one of those developments has fallen through and one is in the process. If the Naito's decide to go on a different path and build luxury apartments there is nothing that the Planning Commission can do except apply the density criteria and those employment lands would be lost in a very critical area.

Babitz feels that there was an agreement that the Waterfront should be reserved for recreation and job creation. There is a lot of development happening very fast. The process for making changes to zoning is a long process. Under state laws the tools to specify specific residential uses are extremely limited. He asks that Planning Commission to change the language to make it clear that in this limited region of the city, residential uses of any form are not allowed in this area. The City Council asked the staff to reconsider the C-2 zone and reopen that language and the City Council would like to see changes to that language. There has to be at least two public hearings, one for the Planning Commission and one for the City Council.

The commission discussed the pros and cons of mixing residential with retail, as well as height of buildings.

Commissioner Winkle feels there are benefits with residential and retail being mixed but it would probably be difficult to attract affordable housing. Concerns were raised about houses being dark nine months out of the year.

Stephens said that because of the three parcels at the Waterfront, the Planning Commission might want to look at a master plan.

Commissioner Irving suggested the city should get the resources and time to finish the work of the Economic Opportunity Analysis and those zones might need to be adjusted.

Councilor Kate McBride asked the Planning Commission to consider the possibility of having mixed use within the required density standards. This should be considered in all commercial areas not just the Waterfront. McBride suggested keeping commercial on the bottom level and residential on top.

Commissioner Weeks asked if the city has the ability to have an ordinance that says the residence might be owner occupied or if a higher tax rate could be in place if it is not owner occupied.

Walbridge explained the city can limit short term occupancies but can't limit the duration that a house is not occupied.

Babitz explained that there can't be a separate tax structure for those not living in a house.

Stephens invited realtor Greg Colt to speak from the audience. Colt feels the waterfront should be a mixed-use area. He does not believe it should be non-residential. Believes affordable housing could be built on the Waterfront.

Stephens questioned where the incentive would be to build affordable housing.

Commissioner DeVol suggested it is not a good idea to mix residential with commercial/light industry because of the accompanying noise, trucks, machinery, and questioned the likelihood that affordable housing could be developed on the Waterfront.

Irving suggested that if there are just warehouses at the Waterfront that they would be dark on the weekends and would not conflict with residential uses. He supports mixed-use on the waterfront. He explained that the Port owns land in this area and they listen to the public so it is unlikely there would be incompatible development.

Commissioner Gulizia asked how low income housing was developed in the Pearl District of Portland. Walbridge responded that she has information on that area and will bring it to the next work session.

Commissioner Hollatz is in favor of mixed-use but wants to look at the bigger picture.

Winkle suggested allowing residential but maybe there should be some percentage of residential versus commercial and residential should be on the top floors.

Stephens invited citizen Linda Maddox to speak from the audience. Maddox is concerned with residential uses north of Portway, and suggested that light industrial zones could be changed to commercial noting the Luhr-Jensen property and the Western Power Building.

Greg Colt suggested that the City could set up any conditions they wanted for the Waterfront.

Walbridge explained that last waterfront plan drafted in 2006, Ordinance 1851, did address the use of the parcels including how much industrial and residential. The ordinance went through the Planning Commission and the City Council and then it fell apart. There is still good mixed-use language available.

DeVol noted that currently there is no definition for mixed-use in the zoning ordinance.

Walbridge asked if the Planning Commission is requesting that the C-2 mixed-use code language be revisited.

Babitz explained that the City Council requested revisiting C-2 zoning language. Rezoning will involve the LCDC and the Port. The Port can not approve residential development on their land. The City Council wants the Planning Commission to separate the Waterfront from other zoning possible changes because of time constraints.

DeVol suggested there needs to be a definition for mixed-use and a definition of the boundaries of the Waterfront.

Stephens asks for a straw poll on mixed-use at the Waterfront and separating the Waterfront from the rest of the zoning work. The majority of Commissioners support mixed-use but wants more information and more discussion. They agree to pull the Waterfront out of the rest of the zoning work. A public hearing will be scheduled. The Port will be notified that this meeting happened. This discussion will be continued at the October 1st Planning Commission meeting.

B. Removal of the Sign Code from the Zoning Ordinance.

Walbridge explained that the City adopted the Sign Code in 1992 and one of the main reasons it was put in the zoning ordinance was to have ability to amortize the signs over seven years and bring everything into compliance at one time and that was accomplished with the exception of one sign. The Sign Code has done its job. The biggest issue now is enforcement. For many years the City Public Works Department has been issuing all the sign permits and doing all the enforcement and recently Dave Phelps from the Police Department has been doing more enforcement. It's becoming less of a planning function. City attorney Kerns said that most cities do have the Sign Code in the zoning ordinance; they're not considered land-use issues at LUBA. He thinks it should be in its own chapter in the Hood River Municipal Code. Walbridge strongly recommends that the Sign Code be moved to the Hood River Municipal Code.

The commission discussed the relationship of signs to zoning as far as area, size, and scale. Walbridge explained that this will not change but what will change is political signs, real estate signs, "whirly-gigs", the extraneous signs. The standards are currently locked in the planning code.

The proposal will reappear in the public hearing process. A notice will be sent to DLCD and the issue will come back to the Planning Commission. The Commissioners are in favor of moving forward with this.

C. Reduction of interior setbacks for small accessory structures.

Walbridge explained that property owners come in all the time asking about accessory structures; generally they're talking about the kit structures. Currently the Building Department and the Specialty Code would allow the building at 10'x 20' and ten feet tall within three feet of the property line without a building permit. But, there is no way in the zoning code to allow the public to have a three foot building code set back. The question is: is 200 square feet too big to be within three feet of the property line?

Hood River Municipal Code Section 17.04.030 currently requires accessory uses and structures to comply with the requirements of the principal use. The building code allows for three foot setback and the staff thinks that's acceptable. Staff asks for direction from the Planning Commission on whether the square footage of buildings should be reduced and other suggested draft amendments.

The commission discussed what is allowed in the structure as far as electricity and plumbing, what constitutes an accessory building, how the measurements are taken, height, and the pitch of the roof. The majority of the Commissioners feel that a 200 sq ft building is okay within three feet of the property line.

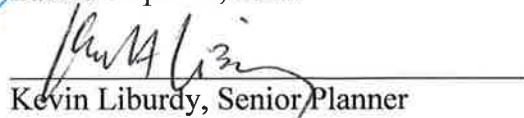
The Planning Commission directs staff to move forward with what the Building Code says and schedule a public hearing.

IV. Chair Stephens adjourned the meeting at 7:51p.m.

ATTEST:


Laurie Stephens, Chair

2/19/13
Date


Kevin Liburdy, Senior Planner

2/19/13
Date (Approved)