

## ASTORIA PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING

Astoria City Hall  
February 23, 2016

### CALL TO ORDER:

President Pearson called the meeting to order at 6:26 pm.

### ROLL CALL:

Commissioners Present: President David Pearson, Vice President Kent Easom, McLaren Innes, Sean Fitzpatrick, Daryl Moore, Jan Mitchell and Frank Spence

Staff Present: Planner Nancy Ferber  
The meeting is recorded and will be transcribed by ABC Transcription Services, Inc.

### APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

President Pearson asked if there were any changes to the minutes of the January 26, 2016 meeting. Vice President Easom corrected the third line of Agenda Item 5(a) on Page 1 to state, "...the adjacent house at 2018 **218** Franklin."

Vice President Easom moved that the Astoria Planning Commission approve the minutes as corrected; seconded by Commissioner Moore. Motion passed unanimously.

### PUBLIC HEARINGS:

President Pearson explained the procedures governing the conduct of public hearings to the audience and advised that handouts of the substantive review criteria were available from Staff.

### ITEM 4(a):

CU16-01 Conditional Use CU16-01 by Josh Allison to locate a light manufacturing (brewery) and taproom in an existing commercial building at 1343 Duane (Map T8N-R9W Section 8CD, Tax Lot(s) 15000; Lot(s) E. 86.29 feet of Lot 2, Block 117, Shively) in the C-4, Central Commercial zone.

President Pearson asked if anyone objected to the jurisdiction of the Planning Commission to hear this matter at this time. There were no objections. He asked if any member of the Planning Commission had any conflicts of interest or ex parte contacts to declare. Hearing none, he asked Staff to present the Staff report.

Planner Ferber reviewed the written Staff report. No correspondence had been received and Staff recommended approval of the request with the conditions listed in the Staff report.

Commissioner Innes confirmed no new construction was being proposed. Planner Ferber displayed some *Sketch Up* files that showed what the Applicant had proposed.

President Pearson opened the public hearing and called for a presentation by the Applicant.

Josh Allison, 4910 Mimosa Circle, Sweet Home, Oregon said he planned to open a brewery. The south end of the building with two roll-up doors would be used for manufacturing products and the taproom would be located in the middle part of the building, which also has roll-up doors.

Commissioner Mitchell said the site is very small. She confirmed that the Applicant was starting small with plans to move elsewhere. It is apparent that the Applicant has proposed an operation that is somewhat different from what some people know and love in Astoria now. She wanted to know what Mr. Allison's final plans were. Mr. Allison confirmed his proposal would be different from a large distribution facility like Fort George. His brewery would be much smaller, but he planned for the business to grow. His three to five year plan included an off-premises pub or an off-premises distribution facility while continuing the brewing operation in the proposed location.

Commissioner Mitchell understood this brewery was a start-up, and asked how this would affect the Thursday Market and if the market would have to move to another location. Mr. Allison said he preferred the Thursday Market remain in its current location because it would increase the brewery's exposure.

Commissioner Spence noted the building looked run down and asked if the Applicant intended to do any façade improvements similar to the picture that was shown to the Commission. Mr. Allison explained that the picture was an artist's concept from the property owner. He planned to paint the building and replace the old wooden roll-up doors with glass roll-up doors.

President Pearson called for any testimony in favor of, impartial to, or opposed to the application. Hearing none, he closed the public hearing and called for Commission discussion and deliberation.

Vice President Easom believed the brewery would be a great use for the property. Commissioner Innes liked the way the changes would look because they would be a great improvement. She was in favor of a new venture in town. Commissioners Spence, Fitzpatrick, and Moore confirmed they supported the request and President Pearson added that it met all of the criteria that the Commission had been asked to review.

Vice President Easom moved that the Astoria Planning Commission adopt the Findings and Conclusions contained in the Staff report and approve Conditional Use CU16-01 by Josh Allison; seconded by Commissioner Mitchell. Motion passed unanimously.

President Pearson read the rules of appeal into the record.

#### REPORTS OF OFFICERS/COMMISSIONERS:

##### OLD BUSINESS:

##### **Verizon Appeal Update**

Planner Ferber stated she had no new information to report.

##### PUBLIC COMMENTS:

##### ADJOURNMENT TO WORK SESSION:

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned to convene the work session at 6:40 pm.

##### WORK SESSION: CODE AMENDMENT UPDATES - ADMINISTRATIVE PROCESS AND HOUSING

Planner Ferber explained this work session was to discuss code amendment updates relevant to the administrative process, affordable housing, and vacation rentals. This discussion would be continued in a public hearing in March, and then reviewed by City Council in April. She briefly outlined Staff's proposed changes, which were included in the agenda packet, and displayed the Zoning Matrix Overview on Page 44.

The Commission and Staff discussed the existing and proposed standards listed on the Zoning Matrix Overview, as follows:

##### R-1 Low Density Zone:

- The Commission discussed the smaller lots in town, which were allowed in the R-1 and R-2 zones, noting the benefits of allowing smaller lots in the R-1 zone. Commissioner Mitchell said that while Astoria has limited developable space, there is enough flexibility in medium density zones that she did not believe there was a need to downsize lots in the R-1 zones. Smaller lot sizes could have negative impacts on fire codes and privacy.
  - The Commission asked Staff to find out how many undeveloped R-1 lots were smaller than 5,000 square feet. Vice President Easom noted that R-1 lots smaller than 5,000 square feet are not developable.
- Vice President Easom and Commissioner Innes confirmed they had no issues with the proposed changes for townhouses.

### R-2 Medium Density Zone:

- The Commission confirmed they had no issues with the proposed changes for single-family residence lot sizes. However, Vice President Easom believed the proposed lot size could not be accommodated in some areas.
- Commissioners agreed the proposed changes for duplexes, multi-family units, and townhouses/row houses were appropriate. They discussed how the existing standards created a good mix of zones, noting the benefits of the varying densities.
  - Staff and Commissioners discussed the definitions of townhouses and row houses. Planner Ferber confirmed Staff would work to clarify these terms.

### R-3 High Density Zone:

- Vice President Easom and Commissioner Moore agreed the single-family residence lot sizes should be smaller than Staff had proposed.
- The Commission agreed with Staff's proposed changes for duplexes.
- Vice President Easom believed lots with multi-family units could be denser than Staff had recommended. The rest of the Commission agreed with Staff's proposal. After some discussion of the density of existing multi-family developments, President Pearson suggested Staff reconsider their proposal.
  - Commissioner Mitchell believed the amount of open space per unit should be part of the density standards. Planner Ferber confirmed code language addressed this through lot coverage requirements.
  - Commissioner Fitzpatrick believed the Commission should discuss density units, which is a unit of measure assigned to each unit depending on how many bedrooms it had. In other jurisdictions, a studio would be a half density unit, a one-bedroom would be a 0.66 density unit, a two-bedroom would be one density unit, and a half density unit would be added for each bedroom above two in a unit. Twenty-six, three-bedroom units would be much denser than 26 studios.
- Commissioner Mitchell reiterated the Commission wanted definitions for townhouses and row houses. She thanked Staff for doing such a great job on the Staff reports and listed several benefits of allowing conditional use permits.
- Vice President Easom agreed accessory dwelling units should be an outright use in all zones.

### Short Term Rentals:

- Planner Ferber confirmed Staff sets up the occupational tax for homeowners when they start a short-term rental. Vice President Easom believed many homeowners who find out short term rentals are not allowed for their property would set one up anyway and not pay the occupational tax.
- The Commission confirmed no changes were necessary for home stay lodgings and bed and breakfasts.
- Vice President Easom believed vacation rentals should be allowed in residential zones because many property owners are starting them and the City could benefit from the tax revenue. He and Commissioner Moore agreed vacation rentals should be regulated and limited.
  - Currently, Staff does not have the ability to prevent illegal vacation rentals, but tax revenue could provide funds for the enforcement of standards that allow them.
  - Commissioner Fitzpatrick was opposed to allowing vacation rentals in residential zones because they would create parking and noise issues. The Astoria Police Department does not have the staff to keep parties under control. He listed other jurisdictions that are currently having many problems with vacation rentals, which he did not want in Astoria.
  - Commissioner Moore said if vacation rentals were repressed, property owners would have them anyway, as they are already. However, if a limited few are allowed, maybe some property owners would comply and the City would benefit. Knowing where the vacation rentals are located makes them easier for police.
    - Commissioner Mitchell has heard that many times that homeowners are stunned to find that many of the houses in their neighborhood are second homes. She believed it would be best for the City to maintain a balance between the residents and tourists. She has benefited from the growth in tourism. However, when the City does good things for its residents, the economy benefits.
    - Commissioners agreed that changes to the existing standards for vacation rentals would be significant, complicated, and would require a much broader discussion.
  - Commissioner Moore confirmed that Staff had changed the definition of accessory dwelling units to include units not attached to the main home or units above a garage.
- Planner Ferber noted that the proposed changes to the administrative review process were mostly housekeeping items, with the biggest change being that public notices would be posted on-site. She did not

believe current staffing levels could accommodate the time it would take to post notices at each site. However, she supported transparency and efforts to publicize public hearings to as many people as possible. She wanted the opportunity to research the issue more.

- Vice President Easom asked why Staff had proposed the ability to require a notarized signature from property owners. Commissioner Innes believed this would prevent leasees from engaging in activities that the property owners were opposed to. She and Vice President Easom agreed the last sentence of Page 27 of the agenda packet should be changed as follows: "If the Applicant ~~refuses to~~ **does not** submit the required additional information..."
- Planner Ferber explained that she receives incomplete applications often and she must contact the Applicants to request more information. In some cases, she is unable to deem an application complete without additional information and must set a deadline for the information to be received.
- Commissioner Innes believed Article 9(2)(a) (Page 33 of the agenda packet) needed to be simplified, possibly with bullet points. The information is important, but it runs on and is difficult to read.
- Staff is already sending public hearing notices to property owners within 250 feet of a site, but the code only requires 100 feet. The proposed change simply reflects what Staff is already doing.
- Staff and the Commission briefly discussed the current permit extension requirements for substantial construction.

The Commission agreed another work session was needed to continue discussing the proposed changes for affordable housing.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

There being no further business, the work session was adjourned at 7:29 pm.

**APPROVED:**



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Community Development Director