

ASTORIA PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING

Astoria City Hall
April 26, 2016

CALL TO ORDER:

Vice President Easom called the meeting to order at 6:38 pm.

ROLL CALL:

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

Commissioners Excused: President David Pearson

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Vice President Easom called for approval of the March 22, 2016 regular meeting and work session minutes. Commissioner Fitzpatrick noted the following corrections to the regular meeting minutes:

- Page 3, line 2 – "~~Vice President Eason~~ **Commissioner Fitzpatrick** confirmed that the relocation of the daycare center was not related to the Applicant's business."
- Page 3, paragraph 10, line 3 – "However, much of the debris was not removed **from the yard.**"
- Page 3, paragraph 12 – "Director Cronin said in January, Commissioner Fitzpatrick recommended code enforcement at a property on the corner of 8th and ~~Harrison~~ **Grand.**"

Commissioner Innes moved that the Astoria Planning Commission minutes of the March 22, 2016 meeting as corrected; seconded by Commissioner Moore. Motion passed unanimously.

Director Cronin noted the following correction to the work session minutes:

- Page 1, fifth bullet, second sentence – "Director Cronin showed photographs and described which features defined Columbia Landing as townhouses and ~~Martin~~ **Market View** Townhomes as row houses."

Commissioner Moore moved that the Astoria Planning Commission approve the minutes of the March 22, 2016 work session as corrected; seconded by Commissioner Innes. Motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

Vice President Easom 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):

CU16-03 Conditional Use CU16-03 by Rickenbach Construction for Trish Bright to locate indoor family entertainment Museum of Whimsy on the first and second floor of an existing meeting space at 1215 Duane in the C-4, Central Commercial zone.

Vice President Easom 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.

Commissioner Fitzpatrick declared a potential conflict, noting he owns the adjacent property directly to the south, but he believed he could be impartial.

Vice President Easom asked Staff to present the Staff report.

Planner Ferber reviewed the written Staff report, noting that the report was updated with photographs of the proposed parking area and sign. Staff recommended approval of the request with the conditions listed in the Staff report.

Commissioner Innes understood the entry to the museum would be on 12th Street and asked why the sign on Exchange St was a concern. Planner Ferber explained this was an error in the original Staff report. She confirmed that the updated Staff report now accurately reflects the main entry would be on Duane, with extra doors on 12th Street.

Commissioner Moore said parking in the commercial space looked like it could accommodate 34 spots, 16 spots for the museum and 18 for the old muffler and body shop building, which he believed had been unoccupied for a decade. He asked if using some of the vacant building's parking would make it less useful.

Planner Ferber explained that the Applicant owns the parking lot, so use of the vacant building will not be affected. The parking lot could be used for both buildings if the owners worked out an agreement.

Commissioner Moore clarified he wanted to make sure the City was not encouraging or enabling a vacant building by taking its parking for another building. Planner Ferber explained that off-street was recommended, but not required. Director Cronin added that the criteria being considered is for the Banker's Suite and the Planning Commission should consider how to apply the criteria to that site. The Commission can require the off-street parking based on the proposed use, but the vacant building ordinance is upheld through Code enforcement. He could follow up to find out if Staff has implemented the ordinance on the vacant building.

Commissioner Spence noted the Staff report required the bicycle space to be located in the sidewalk furnishings zone. Staff explained that a bike rack cannot be placed in the middle of the sidewalk. The furnishing zone extends about two or three feet from the edge of the curb. Sidewalks must maintain a clearance for pedestrians and wheelchairs, so the furnishing zone provides a buffer.

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

Michelle Dieffenbach, 37734 Eagle Lane, Astoria, said she appreciated the Planning Commission's review and the Staff report that Planner Ferber put together for the project. The owner has voluntarily proposed to offer off-street parking to the museum's visitors. This building is not required to provide any parking, so the owner would appreciate the parking lot remain a voluntary amenity.

Vice President Easom called for any testimony in favor of, impartial to, or opposed to the application. Hearing none, he called for closing comments of Staff. There were none. He closed the public hearing and called for Commission discussion and deliberation.

Commissioner Moore moved that the Astoria Planning Commission adopt the Findings and Conclusions contained in the Staff report and approve Conditional Use CU16-03 by Rickenbach Construction; seconded by Commissioner Fitzpatrick. Motion passed unanimously.

Vice President Easom read the rules of appeal into the record.

Public Hearing Items 4(b) and (c) were discussed during the work session. Staff confirmed both public hearings would be rescheduled.

ITEM 4(b):

A16-01 Amendment A16-01 by the Community Development Director to amend the Astoria Development Code, Article 9 – Administrative Procedures, City Wide.

ITEM 4(c):

A16-02 Amendment A16-02 by the Community Development Director to amend the Astoria Development Code housing section to encourage more infill and development of existing residential lots as part of a larger affordable housing strategy, City Wide.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS/COMMISSIONERS:

Commissioner Moore reported he had been approached by someone who was concerned that the list of vacant and derelict properties Staff was putting together would be publicly accessible. Director Cronin said the list is not published online; it can only be accessed at City Hall. The list contains seven properties at this time and Staff continues to add properties to the registry.

Director Cronin reported an open house featuring the library options had been scheduled for May 25, 2016 from 4:30 pm to 6:30 pm at the library. The open house will be hosted by the Astoria Library Board and Astoria City Council. After the open house, a joint Library Board and Council meeting will be held at City Hall at 7:00 pm. No decisions will be made that night, but public comments will be taken.

Commissioner Spence noted that two public hearings on the agenda had moved to the work session. He asked if action on these items would be delayed by a month. Director Cronin explained that after publishing the notices about the public hearings, Staff received comments that indicated a work session would be easier and more collaborative. Public hearings will be rescheduled for some time in the future, depending on direction from the Planning Commission and City Council.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

There were none.

ADJOURNMENT TO WORK SESSION:

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned to convene the work session at 6:58 pm.

APPROVED:



Community Development Director