

## **ASTORIA PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING**

Astoria City Hall  
July 26, 2016

### CALL TO ORDER:

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

### ROLL CALL:

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

Commissioners Excused: Sean Fitzpatrick

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

### APPROVAL OF MINUTES: June 28, 2016

Commissioner Spence noted that he had made the comments in the last paragraph on Page 5, not Vice President Easom.

Vice President Easom noted he was not present at the June meeting, but was quoted throughout the minutes.

President Pearson moved that the Astoria Planning Commission table approval of the minutes until the next regular meeting for revisions; seconded by Commissioner Spence. 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):

CU16-07 Conditional Use CU16-07 by Katrina and Aaron Gasser to utilize a finished bedroom and bath in the basement for a home stay lodging at 774 Alameda in the R-1, Low Density Residential 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.

Commissioner Spence declared that he knew Katrina Gasser through the Kiwanis Club, but he did not believe this would affect his ability to make an impartial decision. He confirmed he had not discussed this project with Ms. Gasser.

Vice President Easom declared that his company manages the property next door to the Applicant's property. However, he did not believe this would change his decision.

President Pearson called for 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 asked if approving this request would create the potential for more home stay lodgings in R-1 zones. Planner Ferber confirmed that all home stay lodgings would require a Conditional Use Permit.

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

Katrina Gasser, 774 Alameda Avenue, Astoria, said she believed she had met all of the conditions and looked forward to hosting based on her understanding of the City's expectations.

Commissioner Spence asked how the Applicant planned to advertise the availability of the rental. Ms. Gasser said she would use the Airbnb application.

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 was concerned about parking three cars tandem with a guest. He believed cars would end up parking on the street, which would burden the neighborhood. The grassy area could not be made into a parking spot because of the location of the utility pole. He did not believe the parking requirement had been met.

President Pearson said he was okay with the three off-street parking spaces because there was no sidewalk. However, the situation would change if a sidewalk were installed.

Commissioner Spence agreed with Staff's conclusion that the criteria had been met and he had no objections.

Commissioner Mitchell did not believe it was likely that the City would install a sidewalk in the near future. She also believed the neighborhood would have to request sidewalks and participate in the process.

Planner Ferber said she had confirmed with Public Works that no pedestrian improvements were planned for that area. However, if pedestrian improvements were made in the future, parking would need to be moved to the grassy area. Director Cronin added that sidewalks could be installed through a variety of processes and programs, but it was not likely a sidewalk would be installed in that area anytime soon.

Commissioner Mitchell said she has stayed at lodgings advertised on Airbnb. It is up to the neighborhood to decide how onerous this home stay lodging would be, but no one has shown up in opposition. Therefore, she agreed with the Staff report. If a problem arises, it would be remedied in the future.

Commissioner Moore said he had no issues with the request.

Commissioner Innes said she was undecided. She was concerned about parking, but there was a chance that cars would not end up in the street. She planned to vote in favor of the request.

Commissioner Moore moved that the Astoria Planning Commission adopt the Findings and Conclusions contained in the Staff report and approve Conditional Use CU16-07 by Katrina and Aaron Gasser; seconded by Commissioner Mitchell. Motion passed 5 to 1. Ayes: President Pearson, Commissioners Moore, Mitchell, Spence, and Innes. Nays: Vice President Easom.

President Pearson read the rules of appeal into the record.

ITEM 4(b):

CU16-08                      Conditional Use CU16-08 by Jeremy Towsey-French to locate a ciderworks (light manufacturing) and small taproom in an existing commercial building at 1343 Duane Street, Suite B 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 Spence asked why the building's address was on Duane Street when the building fronts 13<sup>th</sup> Street. Staff was unsure of the history of the building and confirmed for Vice President Easom that the entire building had one owner and three separate lease spaces. One space held Reach Break Brewing, one would hold the ciderworks, and Staff was unsure how the third space was being used.

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

Jeremy Towsey-French, 4005 NE Multnomah Street, Portland, said he appreciated Staff's guidance and assistance. He thanked the craft beverage community in Astoria for being welcoming and helpful. Astoria has always been his home away from home and he looked forward to making the city his home. He came from a small town in rural Iowa about the same size as Astoria, but it lacked the grace and charm of a rough coastal town. This is a large endeavor for his family, but it is also an important opportunity for him to be part of a business community that he has learned to respect and appreciate. He confirmed that the third space was used as an office and the owner did not intend to lease the space. He has a separate lease for the 650-foot space and his business is a separate legal entity. He has a handshake partnership with Reach Break because they rely on each other for restroom maintenance plans and other things. They have a very good relationship. For taxation purposes, the brewery and ciderworks must remain separate business entities.

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 ciderworks was a great use of the building. Commissioner Mitchell believed the business would add life and complexity to the area. President Pearson agreed that the request met the criteria. Commissioner Innes said she loved that the area had been cleaned up and the exterior had been redone nicely.

Vice President Easom moved that the Astoria Planning Commission adopt the Findings and Conclusions contained in the Staff report and approve Conditional Use CU16-08 by Jeremy Towsey-French; seconded by Commissioner Moore. Motion passed unanimously.

President Pearson read the rules of appeal into the record.

#### STATUS REPORTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS:

##### **Item 5(a): Parks Master Plan**

Director Cronin stated the Parks Master Plan was approved by City Council and implementation of some projects would begin this year.

##### **Item 5(b): Museum of Whimsy**

Planner Ferber stated all of the conditions for Conditional Use Permit CU16-03 had been completed.

##### **Item 5(c): Astor West Urban Renewal District Expansion Open House July 28, 2016**

Director Cronin announced that the City and Chamber of Commerce were hosting the open house. Duane Street, the retaining wall, and the district's expansion will be discussed, but no presentation will be given. He explained that the open house format was in response to the current culture, as people do not want to spend more than five or ten minutes at a meeting.

##### **Item 5(d): Planning Commission Meeting – August 2, 2016**

Director Cronin said three applications would be reviewed at the August 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting. No public comments have been received yet, but Staff expected more audience members than usual. At this point, no regular meeting would be scheduled in August unless an item is continued from the August 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting.

Commissioner Spence asked if the Planning Commission would review any permits for Charlie's Chop House. Director Cronin said no, the business's use is permitted outright in the downtown area.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS/COMMISSIONERS:

Director Cronin briefly updated the Commission on efforts to deal with housing issues in the area. City Council supports accessory dwelling units (ADUs), so the Planning Commission will review ADUs at a public hearing in September. Codes pertaining to residential uses will be reviewed separately. Construction excise taxes have been approved by the legislature and Council has directed Staff to find out how much the City can generate. The tax is a percentage of the value of building permits and can be used for certain affordable housing projects. Staff is working on an economic development strategy five-year action plan and he hopes Council will approve a contract with a consultant by August 15<sup>th</sup>. After Labor Day, an open house with a panel presentation will be scheduled.

Vice President Easom asked when Staff would begin on the Downtown Core Vision Plan to finish the Riverfront Vision Plan. Director Cronin said Staff met with the Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD) to discuss funding opportunities for the project. Staff will not apply for funds until grants become available, which will be 2017 at the earliest. Staff is waiting to hear back on their grant proposal to redo the streetscape on West Marine Drive in Uniontown. If the City receives the grant, Staff would not have time for other projects as workloads are already being juggled.

Commissioner Mitchell was concerned about timing. She believed Astoria dodged a bullet in 2008. As a planner, she learned to go for the projects that could really change things when a good Council was in place and space was available. She understood Staff was overworked, but hoped the City did not repeat what happened in 2006 and 2007 along the waterfront and in downtown.

Director Cronin said he preferred to hire Columbia River Estuary Study Taskforce (CREST) and just let Staff administer the grant because the project will be very controversial. He was concerned that Staff would get bogged down by the project and other work would be jeopardized.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: None.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:13 pm.

**APPROVED:**



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Community Development Director