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MAR 11 2014

Ashland Planning Commission Meeting

April 11, 2014

Subject : Normal Housing Project

Thank you for your civic and professional time and services on this ambitious project. I realize it is an important plan in Ashland's housing future. While there have been some helpful zoning, location and other changes made as the planning process has moved on, even a good plan might be improved or provide more guidance for future implementation by decision makers and contractors. Some concerns like about water and waste- water hook-ups, East Main Street modifications, and financing plans are still to come. It would seem that any initial development would almost require that those elements would be resolved before there could be any occupancy.

1. My earlier concerns about planning for accessability for seniors and ADA for disabled have been allayed by planning staff.

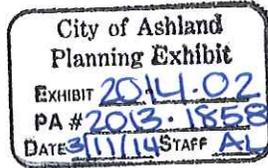
2. Accessory Residential Units (p. 7) will be permitted in nearly all zones, no information was provided. Does this potentially authorize a doubling of living units to this plan? If so, does that violate the zone density standards. I understand that not many in Ashland have used that infilling strategy as a long-term rental option. If this particular development might attract more people to live in small detached units, it would be a big consideration for the design plan.

3. Affordable housing and less-expensive housing (p. 9). Design for less lawns and maintenance which helps on home-owner association fees. Vest pocket parks (p.14). are labor intensive and not very functional, particularly for any recreational use. A larger central park with picnic facilities and informal play space would be easier to maintain. and allows for more recreation than just walking or biking.

5. Shared streets (p.15) by biker, walkers and autos can be hazardous, particularly if any parking is allowed on them. All on-street parking should be restricted to bays or parking pads.

6. Street mobility (p. 15) + walk-ability look okay within the plan, but anticipate a significant increase of traffic on the east-west corridors, particularly on East Main because that is where the high density housing will be. The improvement of East Main will need turn lanes and the retention of bike lanes at the minimum. Hopefully sidewalks on lower East Main, too. Walking and biking are healthy and encouraged but the long linear layout of Ashland at the base of the Siskiyou has its commercial locations, entertainment, and most dining facilities at its north-west mid-section and south-east ending section located several miles apart. Realistically, not many residents of this plan will be walking or biking to shop for food and basic supplies, or for dining and entertainment. Hopefully this plan will be sure that there is adequate off-street parking to accomodate the influx of senior retirees and others who will rely on their vehicles. Thanks for your consideration of these points.

Dale Swire 233 Clay St. Ashland



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From Grace Point Church

Submitted by email 3/11/2014

Planning Commission,

We are concerned about the restriction the current Normal Avenue plan will place on future uses of the lot behind Grace Point Church.

First, the plan designates the W-9 wetland, as adopted by local and state agencies, based on an estimate of this region rather than an actual delineation by species and groundwater survey of the property. The actual wetland area may be larger or, as we see it after 7 years of mowing and maintaining, is significantly smaller than current estimates.

In the case of the wetland being larger than current estimates, the area available for development will be smaller and our use will be limited. However, in the event that the required delineation results in a smaller area of wetland, there seems no remedy in the current plan for a reduction of the Open Space designation to allow us to use the space available for development. In speaking with the Ashland Community Development Department it was confirmed the W-9 open space size would not change even if a wetland delineation survey showed it to be smaller.

It seems that there is some attempted amelioration of this by density transfer from open space to the rest of our property, this allowing a maximum of 64 dwelling units on the entire property. This is a tradeoff but is only usable to us if we make unacceptable changes to the property by placing residential dwellings on our front field and in our parking lot. It does not allow us to make up for that loss to the South of the church in our field. From a 5 to 10 year timeline we have a property that really cannot be used. From a longer term planning viewpoint this may be a reasonable planning concept except I must remind this commission that this Nazarene Church was started in Ashland in 1905 (109 years ago) so we do plan with a long term viewpoint.

A combination of 2 possible solutions exists. The first is allowing the decrease or increase in the conservation area based on an accurate delineation. Secondly, increasing the density allocation from NN-02 (10 units per acre) to NN-03 (15 units per acre) on the only usable space to the South of the church. This would leave the current NN-02 designation for the rest of the church's property. We request you adopt both.

Shifting the focus now to the matter of 2 transportation corridors traversing this area. I am told by staff that an alley or multi use path is required by code adjacent to open spaces. This means that in addition to a 50 foot swath through this property for the road another 25 feet will be taken by the proposed alley. This is in addition to the required 50 foot buffer zone around wetlands. That raises the public taking for transportation corridors to about 75 feet and 125 feet if you consider the buffer zone. This seems exorbitant from our viewpoint.

Our request as a solution is to move the current road as far to the south as allowable, within 50 feet of the W-9 open space. This would eliminate the coded need for another transportation corridor.

Where in this code and planning action is there a use for this property? There is a public straightjacket to most reasonable uses of this property. We might just have to lease to a farmer who wants fence for livestock to raise cows, sheep, goats and pigs and not ever annex.

Finally, there have been comments made in the public forum pertaining to ditching we have done on the property. Some well meaning folks seem to think that this is their property to police. Prior to any ditch cleaning we contacted the Oregon Department of State Lands and were told that there were existing ditches on this parcel and that maintaining these ditches was allowable. We did as they recommended, cleaning these drainages to their previous depth and removing brush from these ditches. We were able to find the previous depth because there were existing culvert pipes in at least 3 locations to set our cleanout depth.