



Planning Commission Minutes

Note: Anyone wishing to speak at any Planning Commission meeting is encouraged to do so. If you wish to speak, please rise and, after you have been recognized by the Chair, give your name and complete address for the record. You will then be allowed to speak. Please note the public testimony may be limited by the Chair.

April 25, 2023
SPECIAL MEETING
MINUTES

I. CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Norton called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. at the Civic Center Council Chambers, 1175 E. Main Street.

Commissioners Present:

Lisa Verner
Haywood Norton
Lynn Thompson
Eric Herron
Doug Knauer
Kerry KenCairn

Staff Present:

Brandon Goldman, Community Development Director
Derek Severson, Planning Manager
Michael Sullivan, Executive Assistant

Absent Members:

Michael Dawkins

Council Liaison:

Paula Hyatt

II. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Community Development Director Brandon Goldman made the following announcements:

- The Land Use Board of Appeals (LUBA) heard oral arguments earlier today regarding the appeal of PA-T3-2022-00004, 1511 Highway 99 North. LUBA is expected to render a decision on May 9, 2023.
- Derek Severson has been promoted to the position of Planning Manager, and Mr. Goldman has been officially appointed Director of the Community Development Department.
- Commission Dawkins was awarded the Allen C. Bates Public Service Award by the City Council at their April 18, 2023 Business Meeting.

III. PUBLIC FORUM – None

IV. TYPE II PUBLIC HEARINGS

PLANNING ACTION: PA-T2-2023-00040

SUBJECT PROPERTY: 1111 Granite Street





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OWNER: City of Ashland

DESCRIPTION: A request for Site Design Review and Conditional Use Permit approvals to construct a new water treatment plant (WTP) for the 80-acre city-owned property at 1111 Granite Street. The application also includes: Exceptions to the Site Design Development & Design Standards with regard to bicycle parking, pedestrian access and circulation, plant sizes, street trees, irrigation system design standards, fences and walls and open space; Exceptions to the Street Design Standards; Physical & Environmental Constraints Review Permits for Hillside Lands with Severe Constraints and Floodplain Lands, Exceptions to the Development Standards for Hillside Lands, and a Limited Use Permit to construct a new road crossing over Ashland Creek at Horn Creek Road to provide access to the WTP; a Variance to the WR zone's 35-foot maximum building height to allow a 48-foot structure; and a Tree Removal Permit to remove 99 trees within the proposed building envelopes, roads, paved surfaces, and areas to be graded. Trees to be removed will be mitigated on a one-for-one basis, and the remaining 848 trees on the lot will not be impacted. **COMPREHENSIVE PLAN DESIGNATION:** WR-20; **ZONING:** Woodland Residential; **MAP:** 39 1E 17; **TAX LOT:** 600

Ex Parte Contact

No ex parte contact was reported. All Commissioners except for Commission Thompson attended a site visit on April 24, 2023.

Staff Presentation

Planning Manager Derek Severson provided a presentation regarding the salient points of the application, which include a request for Site Design Review, a Conditional Use Permit (CUP), tree removal permit, and a request for a variance and several exceptions to the Ashland Municipal Code (AMC). Mr. Severson detailed the proposed project site, and remarked that the site would not be visible from adjacent properties, nor would it have any perceived impact to the surrounding area (see attachment #1).

Mr. Severson informed the Commission that the application included a geotechnical analysis, and also contained plans to mitigate any disturbance to the hillside lands and to provide revegetation. The applicant also requested an exception to hillside development standards in order for the building to lessen the plant's impact to the hillside. The application also requested an exception to the height allowance standards from 35ft to 48.38ft. Mr. Severson concluded that staff was generally in favor of the proposal with the conditions included in the staff report.

Questions of Staff

Commissioner Thompson asked why solar panels were included in the proposal, to which Mr. Severson responded that they are intended to provide emergency power to the site.

Commissioner Verner noted that a public comment received prior to the meeting had asked why an





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Environment Impact Statement (EIS) had not been included in the application (see attachment #2). Mr. Severson responded that the AMC does not have an EIS requirement, and that the applicant provided the requisite information to address the Water Resource Protection Zone and Environmental Constraints permits. Mr. Goldman added that an EIS is typically a requisite element of federal funding, therefore the inclusion of an EIS could occur during the development phase of the project.

Applicant Presentation

Applicant Scott Fleury, Director of the City's Public Works Department, informed the Commission that this project had been considered since the mid-1990s, and was formalized as a future capital project in the 2012 Water Master Plan. He stated that the inclusion of solar panels was at the direction of the Council, and would allow for nearly 170-180 days of operating solely on net-daytime metering. Battery storage and backup will also be considered in the future, and the plant will also have diesel fuel capabilities on-site in the event of an emergency. Mr. Fleury remarked that this is a municipal facility and that some requirements from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Homeland Security have necessitated some of the exception and variance requests in the application.

Mr. Fleury stated that the City has been working with the Oregon Health Authority to be granted a categorical exclusion for the development of the Water Treatment Plant on this site, which is part of the funding package requirement to receive federal and state funds. The applicant has also coordinated with multiple state and federal agencies, including the Forest Service since the culvert replacement will impact a portion of their property. Mr. Fleury stated that the plant will follow existing land use code and building permit processes for the development, and will also abide by Rogue Valley Sanitary Sewer requirements.

Questions of the Applicant

Commissioner Thompson inquired about potential risks the development could pose to the surrounding area, particularly with regards to flooding. Mr. Fleury responded that the site was chosen because it is outside of the floodplain, and that the facility will be designed to meet current seismic building code requirements. He added that the topography of the site would result in any spill entering Ashland Creek in the event of a rupture.

Commissioner KenCairn asked how a potential failure at the facility could effect the downtown area. Mr. Fleury responded that the effect would be nominal.

Commissioner Knauer asked how much asphalt would be installed for the parking area, and what effect that could have on runoff into Ashland Creek. Mr. Fleury responded that there will be 5-7 parking spaces, a main circulation area between the plant and the pre-treatment ozone generation building, and that all runoff would be collected in the storm drain system before being routed through a bioswale pretreatment system and released into Ashland Creek.





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Commission KenCairn requested clarification regarding the mention of non-combustible surface under the solar field. Pierre Kwan, a member of the applicant's consulting team, responded that it indicates runoff and designates areas of bare granite. Mr. Kwan stated that the runoff will then be captured into an enhanced stormwater collection system, and that the current site location has very little percolation.

Addressing the public testimony received prior to the meeting, Mr. Fleury stated that nearby trails would not be impacted by the plant.

Chair Norton closed the Public Hearing and Record at 7:39 p.m.

Deliberation and Decision

Commissioner Knauer expressed concern that nearby residents could be negatively effected by the project during the development process, and that they be kept apprised during development. Commissioner Herron echoed that concern. Chair Norton remarked that the applicants will also need to obtain a grading permit and that dust control should be considered.

Commissioner Thompson/Verner m/s to approve the application with the conditions recommended by staff. Roll Call Vote: All AYES. Motion passed 6-0.

Commissioner Thompson stated her appreciation to staff and the Commission, and her gratitude for the opportunity to serve her community.

Chair Norton related that he came out of retirement to serve on the Commission, and that he would likely continue to participate in the proceedings as a viewer. He showed appreciation for the civility of all participants in the Commission meetings over the years.

Councilor Hyatt expressed her gratitude to both retiring Commissioners and stated that their depth of knowledge enabled her and the Council to make informed decisions. She thanked both Commissioners for serving their community.

All Commissioners expressed their appreciation to Commissioners Norton and Thompson.

V. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 7:51 p.m.

*Submitted by,
Michael Sullivan, Executive Assistant*

