

MINUTES
COLUMBIA CITY PLAN COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
MONDAY, AUGUST 7, 2017
7:00 P.M.

WHITLEY COUNTY GOVERNMENT CENTER
COUNTY COMMISSIONERS/COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING ROOM

MEMBERS PRESENT

Walt Crowder
Doug Graft
Jon Kissinger
Don Langeloh
Dennis Warnick
Dan Weigold
Larry Weiss
Patrick Zickgraf

STAFF

Nathan Bilger (arrived at 7:34 pm)
Amanda Thompson

ATTORNEY

Dawn Boyd

MEMBERS ABSENT

Jeff Walker

VISITORS

There were seven visitors who signed the guest list at the August 7, 2017, Columbia City Plan Commission meeting. A guest list is included with the minutes of this meeting.

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Graft called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.

ROLL CALL

Ms. Thompson read the roll call with those members present and absent listed above.

CONSIDERATION AND ADOPTION OF THE JULY 10, 2017, COLUMBIA CITY PLAN COMMISSION MINUTES

Mr. Graft asked if there were any additions or corrections to the July 10, 2017, meeting minutes. Mr. Weigold motioned to approve the minutes as presented. Mr. Kissinger seconded the motion. Six members voted in favor of the motion while Mr. Langeloh and Mr. Crowder abstained.

ADMINISTRATION OF THE OATH TO WITNESSES

Ms. Boyd administered the oath to four of the seven visitors.

OLD BUSINESS

17-C-SUBD-2

Robert Myers requested approval for a replat of Wildflower Ridge Addition, located at 875 N. State Road 109, Columbia City. This petition was continued from the July 10th meeting to give time for the proposal to be considered by the Drainage Board. Ms. Thompson described for the Commission that since the last meeting, the Staff Report had been updated to show the Drainage Board's specific approvals for structures. The comments and review criteria in the Report were also updated to reflect the approvals. A copy of the Drainage Board's Consent for Permanent Structure was included in the Commission members' meeting packets. Mr. Graft invited the petitioner to step forward.

Kevin Michel of Walker & Associates was present on behalf of Mr. Myers. Mr. Michel stated that the plat name would be changed to Wildflower Ridge Addition Amended, proposed by Mr. Bilger as a more appropriate name than "Section 2." The Drainage Board notes and approvals will be noted on the face of the plat.

Mr. Graft asked if anyone present wished to speak regarding this petition. No one was present, and the public portion of the meeting was closed. Mr. Kissinger asked why Mr. Myers proposed to build on Lot 1 instead of Lot 2. Mr. Michel said that Mr. Myers may want to sell the building at some point, and it would be easier to sell if it were on its own conforming lot. Building the structure on Lot 2 would mean another split and possibly Variances for road frontage if a sale were to occur. Mr. Crowder asked why the Drainage Board approval specified a minimum distance of 40' from the drain for a utility easement but none was marked on the plat. Mr. Bilger replied that the Board was making a requirement to keep utilities from this area but none were proposed in the area of the ditch. Mr. Michel agreed that this was the case.

Mr. Kissinger asked if the structure approved by the Drainage Board was the only building planned for the property. Mr. Michel said it was to his knowledge. Mr. Weiss asked if the proposed building would be for storage only. Mr. Michel replied that was correct and that the Health Department's approval would be needed otherwise because no well or septic is on site. Mr. Bilger added that a rezoning might also be needed depending on what other use would be proposed. There was some discussion about adding a condition of approval to have either noted in the Covenants or on the plat that any septic or other connection must receive consent from the Health Department.

Mr. Warnick then motioned to approve the petition as presented with the conditions listed in the Staff Report as well as the condition stating that the plat would indicate that Health Department approval would be required for well and septic connections. Mr. Langeloh seconded the motion, and the members voted unanimously in approval.

NEW BUSINESS

17-C-DEV-4

Whitley County Consolidated School Corp. requested approval to amend their previously approved Development Plan for Columbia City High School which is to be located at 1600 S. State Road 9, Columbia City. Mr. Bilger explained that the original Development Plan was approved in March. The cost of construction and recent approval of a stoplight at the school's entrance have warranted several changes for the Commission to consider. Mr. Bilger outlined six changes for review, noting that the removal of the north access road, no longer needed because of the stoplight, is the main reason the amended approval is required. The Staff Report listed four suggested conditions for the approval of the amended Plan.

Charles Tyler of Fanning Howey Associates was present on behalf of the school corporation. He explained that the bids received were 9.5-10% over budget. Luckily, this project is large enough to allow for modifications without significantly impacting programs and activities planned for the school. The north drive that had been proposed originally was only for incoming bus traffic but now is no longer needed because of the approved traffic signal. The Department of Transportation has State Road 9 scheduled for improvements in 2019, and the school is hoping to coordinate the changes at their intersection with this schedule which will save on cost. Discussions are underway as the school hopes to have the traffic light installed with the improvements in 2019, but INDOT says the light is not needed until the high school is active. Mr. Tyler continued by describing other areas of reduction.

Mr. Crowder asked if a point of connection had been established for the school's northern walkway to connect to the City's future trails. Mr. Tyler said that it had not yet been determined. Mr. Zickgraf asked if the existing drive would be improved to accommodate the increased traffic. Mr. Tyler said no widening was planned, and the traffic study yielded favorable results with the current drive's stacking ability. Mr. Weiss said he had spoken with several parents who had complaints about the stacking. They reported to him that it is difficult to get in the appropriate lane to exit the campus. Mr. Weiss requested amending the drive to accommodate this concern. Mr. Bilger suggested that the lanes be striped when the striping for the stoplight is completed. Currently, the exit lanes are not striped. There was some discussion on the amendments to occur on State Road 9 in order to accommodate the school. Mr. Weiss asked if the speed limit in the area would be reduced. Mr. Tyler responded that INDOT does not want to permanently reduce the speed, but there will be a posted reduced speed with flashing lights during school hours. Mr. Weiss expressed concern over the possible danger for those wishing to turn south from 200 South onto State Road 9 if the speed limit has not been adjusted. Mr. Tyler expects that with the traffic signal in place, there will be breaks in the traffic to allow safe traffic flow. Mr. Zickgraf wondered how many students currently drive to the high school and how many would be driving to the new school. Mr. Tyler said he believed the number to be around 600 for both the current and future school.

Mr. Crowder recalled that the previously proposed north entrance could have been used as an alternate route into the school if a vehicle accident would occur and block traffic at the main entrance. He asked what alternative route the school planned now that the north drive is no longer proposed. Mr. Tyler responded that the benefit of the north drive had been realized but removing it from the plan allowed funds to be distributed to other areas of the project. Mr. Weiss asked if there would still be a plan to add signage encouraging traffic to exit onto 200 South and towards State Road 205. Mr. Tyler said this is still planned and conversations are underway regarding the wording and placement of the signs.

Mr. Weiss asked if the parking areas that are no longer proposed might be planned to be added at a future time. Mr. Tyler said that they do hope this will be a possibility, and the grading being done now is being done with that in mind. He added that no part of the project will prevent the north drive from being considered later on either. Mr. Crowder wondered if the north drive could be installed but with modification such as being only half as wide as originally planned. Mr. Tyler replied that the cost would be the same no matter what the width. Mr. Bilger suggested that the planned trail might be widened to be used as an emergency road. He felt this had been done in other areas. Mr. Tyler and Mr. Weiss noted that the trail would then need to be upgraded to meet road standards which would not be cost effective.

Mr. Tyler wanted the Commission to know that even with the proposed modifications, the project has been operating under the previous Development Plan approval and no delays in the original timeline are expected. All but two categories of the project have been rebid, and those categories will be rebid in September. Mr. Crowder asked if the project is still over forecast even with the proposed changes. Mr. Tyler replied that it is.

There were no further questions for Mr. Tyler, so Mr. Graft asked if anyone from the public wished to speak. Joe Sheets introduced himself to the Commission and wanted to point out that, in his opinion, there would be no break in traffic on State Road 9. As the light would change to stop southbound traffic on State Road 9, traffic exiting the school would be allowed to disburse. So, during certain hours, there would be very little opportunity for traffic on 200 South to make a left turn onto State Road 9. Mr. Weiss responded that this was the reason he had proposed the reduced speed limit for the area but with INDOT's resistance to that idea, he is not sure how the problem might be solved. Mr. Sheets suggested the school could consider marking their exit onto 200 South with a sign stating "no left turn onto State Road 9" during certain hours. The Commission discussed that the County Commissioners would have jurisdiction to consider such a sign on this road. Mr. Sheets also asked if there was a website set up where the public could go to see the project plans. Mr. Tyler said there is a project site, but they need to receive their final bids and get approval from the Board before the information will be updated. The link for the project website can be found on the schools webpage.

There was no one else present who wished to speak, so Mr. Graft closed the public portion of the meeting and encouraged the Commission members to discuss. Mr. Weiss said he still feels that the exit lanes at the main entrance should be extended to

accommodate the additional traffic that the high school will bring. Mr. Crowder voiced his support for this idea. Mr. Langeloh suggested that the school needed to specifically disburse certain traffic to the 200 South exit. Mr. Weiss said that being private property, the Commission had no jurisdiction to make such a requirement. Mr. Tyler stated that the school is considering adjusting the start/end times of the three schools in hopes of improving the traffic flow. Mr. Weiss mentioned that traffic from sporting events could also be problematic.

Mr. Crowder continued to ponder what methods might be possible to allow an additional access point. Mr. Bilger asked if there was an existing field access. Mr. Tyler said there was not. Ms. Boyd asked if the drive might be more feasible if the drive were gravel and gated for emergency use only. Mr. Tyler said that there are multiple driveways from the residential properties that had been purchased. It might be possible that one of those driveways could be extended for an emergency access. Mr. Weiss suggested considering the current construction entrance also. The members and Mr. Tyler continued to discuss this idea as the most feasible option. Mr. Kissinger mentioned that there might be some trouble with the difference in elevation. Mr. Tyler told the Commission that he would have this concept investigated.

With no further discussion, Mr. Warnick motioned to approve 17-C-DEV-4 with the conditions stated in the Staff Report and including conditions for the consideration of the emergency drive, consideration of the extension of the lanes exiting the school to State Road 9, additional signage directing traffic to exit to 200 South and towards State Road 205, and that the approval be subject to the comments of the Soil and Water Conservation District. Mr. Langeloh seconded the motion. The motion carried with a vote of 6-0-2 with Mr. Weigold and Mr. Graft abstaining.

OTHER BUSINESS

Distribution of code changes

Mr. Bilger announced that the department had intended on having the previously approved Ordinance changes for chapters 2, 5, and 13 ready for distribution, but some formatting issues were discovered and the pages were not yet ready.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Mr. Graft called for a motion to adjourn which was given by Mr. Weigold. Mr. Crowder seconded the motion, and the meeting was adjourned at 8:08 P.M.

GUEST LIST
COLUMBIA CITY PLAN COMMISSION
AUGUST 7, 2017

1. Dale Hinslea-Bolante ----- 3701 S. Washington Road, Columbia City
2. Kevin Michel ----- 4242 S. 700 East, Columbia City
3. Linda Thomson ----- The Post & Mail newspaper
4. Charles Tyler ----- Fanning Howey, Indianapolis
5. Joe Sheets ----- 3035 W. 700 North, Columbia City
6. Tom Smith ----- The Skillman Corp.
7. Tyler Roebuck ----- IN Whitley County newspaper