

MINUTES
COLUMBIA CITY PLAN COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
MONDAY, OCTOBER 1, 2018
7:00 P.M.

WHITLEY COUNTY GOVERNMENT CENTER
COUNTY COMMISSIONERS/COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING ROOM

MEMBERS PRESENT

Doug Graft
Jon Kissinger
Don Langeloh
Jeff Walker
Dennis Warnick
Dan Weigold
Larry Weiss
Patrick Zickgraf

STAFF

Nathan Bilger
Amanda Thompson

ATTORNEY

Dawn Boyd

MEMBERS ABSENT

Walt Crowder

VISITORS

One visitor was listed on the guest list at the October 1, 2018, 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 SEPTEMBER 10, 2018,
COLUMBIA CITY PLAN COMMISSION MINUTES

Mr. Graft asked if there were any corrections or additions to the September 10, 2018, meeting minutes. Hearing none, Mr. Langeloh made the motion to approve the minutes as presented. Mr. Weigold gave the second. Mr. Zickgraf abstained while the other members voted in favor of the motion.

ADMINISTRATION OF THE OATH TO WITNESSES

Ms. Boyd administered the oath to one witness.

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Review of Resolution 2018-01, Columbia City Downtown Economic Development Area

Mr. Bilger summarized the Staff Report and explained that this resolution is a renewal of the existing downtown Tax Increment Finance area. He stated that this TIF was revised in 2015, but the Redevelopment Commission wants to renew it in order to reset the expiration date prior to the construction of the apartments at Line and Van Buren, which is a public-private partnership. No new changes to the TIF area were proposed. Mr. Bilger described that the Plan Commission needed to review the resolution for compliance with the Comprehensive Plan. From the Staff's point of view, Mr. Bilger stated that the resolution seemed to appropriately align with the Comprehensive Plan.

Mr. Langeloh asked if zoning would be affected by the TIF. Mr. Bilger replied that it would not. Mr. Walker then made the motion to approve Resolution 2018-01 and forward a favorable recommendation to the City Council. Mr. Warnick gave the second, and the Commission members voted unanimously to carry the motion.

2. 18-C-DEV-7

Mr. Bilger told the Commission that D & T Meinika, LLC, requested Development Plan approval for an 11,014 square foot commercial retail building to be located at 597 W. Connexion Way, Columbia City. The Commission members acquainted themselves with the paperwork as they had not received it in advance of the meeting. Mr. Bilger explained that since this request did not require a public hearing, it had been accepted after the meeting packets had been sent. He displayed an aerial of the property and described the proposed layout. He stated that parking was a concern. The Ordinance requires 14 spaces for the specified use, but Mr. Bilger also asked the Commission to consider future uses, which could require as many as 55 spaces. He suggested that an area be reserved for future parking. Mr. Bilger listed 5 total suggested conditions for the Commission to consider. He added that the Commission could opt for the proposal to be reviewed by an Executive Committee at a separate meeting if they did not want to act on it immediately due to having only just received the paperwork.

Mr. Graft requested that the owner come forward to speak. David Meinika was present and introduced himself to the Commission. He stated that he owns several parcels in the area. To the east, he owns Performance Rental, and the space is leased

from another company that he owns. His plan is to move out of that building and store the rental equipment in the new building. He added that Performance Rental will be adding lawnmower sales and service and possibly trailer sales. To address Mr. Bilger's parking concern, Mr. Meinika stated that the current display area could be designated as the future parking location. Referencing the Staff Report condition regarding a Special Exception for outdoor storage, Mr. Meinika added that he already received a Special Exception in 2012. Mr. Bilger stated that he would locate that file and review to see if a renewal would be necessary. Mr. Meinika noted that the plan is to bring the equipment indoors most nights. The current Performance Rental building will then be available for lease.

The Commission members discussed the façade material, number of employees, parking, lighting, and signage. It was the consensus of the Commission that the Plan was not complicated, and, with the exception of Mr. Graft, they felt comfortable making a motion. Mr. Warnick made the motion to approve the Development Plan as presented, with the conditions listed in the Staff Report, including a modification of the first condition being that the landscape plan be approved by Staff, the third condition should reference planning for 45 total spaces, and the addition of 2 conditions including that masonry be installed across the showroom and that the project must comply with the requirements of the Soil and Water Conservation District. Mr. Kissinger gave the second. The members voted 7-0-1 with Mr. Graft in abstention.

OTHER BUSINESS

3. Discussion of inconsistent zoning and uses

Mr. Bilger described that it has come to his attention that some time in the past, residential properties on the north side of Raber Road were zoned industrial. Now considered legal nonconforming uses, the residents are limited and prohibited from adding residential structures, additions, or other improvements. Mr. Bilger asked the Commission to consider if the zoning should be changed. The members discussed. Mr. Warnick suggested the properties be rezoned to R-3, Multifamily District, to match the surrounding area. Mr. Bilger stated that there would also need to be an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan to change the Land Use Map, and the Comprehensive Plan amendment should be done before the rezoning. The members also discussed that GB, General Business, might be the best zoning. Mr. Langeloh asked if the Zoning Ordinance could be amended instead, to add residential as a Special Exception use. Mr. Weiss suggested using the lot sizes to determine the proper zoning. Mr. Bilger asked if they wanted to direct him to investigate other areas in town. Mr. Zickgraf agreed with Mr. Langeloh's suggestion and additionally wondered if rezoning would create unnecessary work. He cautioned against an amendment that might impact individuals who would prefer not to be affected. Mr. Bilger stated that past precedent has been to ignore the legal nonconforming status for these particular properties and issue the requested building permits. The office can proceed with this practice while the Commission considers the best solution, if any. Mr. Langeloh made the motion to postpone a directive. Mr. Warnick gave the second.

As another item of Other Business, Mr. Weigold brought to the attention of the Commission that there are places in the City where addressing has become a problem. The numbering system used in the past was based on structures instead of a distance point as it is now. Consequently, in some areas, there is not room for numbers where structures were added, and numbers on one side of a street do not correspond to numbers on the opposite side. Annexed properties are also a problem as the County numbering system is different than the City's. The Post Office has allowed "halves," but they do not work well in the database and are confusing to emergency departments and delivery companies. Problems with taxes have also occurred. Mr. Weigold described that the only solution is to renumber the affected areas, but this is a very unpopular topic with the property owners. Mr. Bilger stated that the Plan Commission should consider this situation because they may need to make a decision on it at some point in the future.

In the meeting packets, Ms. Thompson had included draft schedules for the 2019 meeting dates. Mr. Warnick questioned the distance between the filing deadlines and meeting dates. Ms. Thompson thought that the Rules of Procedure needed to be amended before the timeframes could be changed. Mr. Bilger stated that he would investigate. It was the consensus of those present that the schedule would be reviewed at the next meeting.

Mr. Warnick asked if there was a provision that parking lots be reviewed before being established downtown. He referenced an area where a business had been removed on the corner of Jackson and Line Streets. Mr. Bilger stated that no new parking had been created, but a previous parking area was being used. Mr. Warnick also asked about an unsafe building with a collapsed roof. Mr. Bilger said that the Building Inspector was aware of the structure and pursuing the proper course of action. Mr. Weiss asked for follow up information regarding the parking lot at Rhoades Automotive. Mr. Warnick replied that Ms. Thompson had informed him that the gravel lot had an extended deadline for paving and that time had not yet passed. The area for the new service garage, however, did not have a deadline that anyone could recall. Mr. Weiss asked if the salvage yard project on the former Omnisource property was moving forward. Mr. Bilger said that it was still pending, to his knowledge.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Mr. Warnick made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Walker gave the second, and the meeting was adjourned at 8:14 PM.

GUEST LIST

1. Dave Meinika ----- 4375 N. Airport Road, Columbia City, IN