

**MINUTES**  
**COLUMBIA CITY BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS**  
**REGULAR MEETING**  
**FEBRUARY 7, 2023**  
**7:00 P.M.**

**WHITLEY COUNTY GOVERNMENT CENTER**  
**MEETING ROOM A/B, LOWER LEVEL**

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Stacey Dumbacher  
Cathy Gardner (E)  
Jon Kissinger, Chairman  
Anthony Romano, Vice Chair  
Dennis Warnick

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

**STAFF**

Nathan Bilger  
Amanda Thompson

**ATTORNEY**

*absent*

(E)lectronic participant

**AUDIENCE MEMBERS**

Three visitors were present at the meeting and signed the Guest List. There were no attendees on the webcast. A list of attendees is attached below.

**CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL/INTRODUCTIONS**

Mr. Kissinger called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M. Ms. Thompson read the roll with members present and absent listed above. Mr. Bilger introduced the new member, Ms. Dumbacher, who received a warm welcome from the Board.

**ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

Mr. Warnick made a motion to re-elect the 2022 officers for 2023. Ms. Gardner gave the second. By roll call vote, motion passed 5-0. The 2023 officers are Jon Kissinger, Chairman, and Anthony Romano, Vice Chairman.

**CONSIDERATION OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES**

Mr. Romano made a motion to approve the November 1, 2022, meeting minutes as presented. Ms. Gardner gave the second. By roll call vote, the motion passed, 4-0-1, with Mr. Kissinger abstaining due to having been absent from the November meeting.

**ADMINISTRATION OF OATH**

Mr. Bilger administered the oath to one visitor.

**OLD BUSINESS**

**1. 22-C-VAR-8**

AAP 508 N. Main Street, LLC, requested development standards Variances for a restaurant and subdivision of the building at 508 N. Main Street. Mr. Bilger reminded the Board that this item was on the December agenda, but the petitioner had requested a continuance to the February meeting. Mr. Bilger informed the Board that the petitioner recently contacted Staff

to withdraw the petition, stating that an agreement with the landowner could not be reached. The petitioner hoped to become aware of a different property that will enable him to bring his business to Columbia City.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **2. 23-C-SE-1**

Eli and Elizabeth Shultz requested a Special Exception for apartments in the Central Business District. The subject property was located on the northeast corner of Ellsworth Street and Washington Street, and more commonly known as 201/203 E. Ellsworth Street.

Mr. Bilger discussed the staff report. He stated that the previous use of the property was as a church and parsonage. Proposed was the conversion of the church building to four apartment units, including one occupied by the petitioner. The parsonage could be renovated into another apartment, two units, or be demolished. He stated that the minimum floor area per unit would exceed the minimum 750 sq. ft. He stated that there would be 8 gravel parking spaces on the north side of the building, but being in the CBD, no parking minimum was required but that any time there was a use change, parking would need to be brought up to code, which may include paving. He then displayed aerial views and submitted site plan and discussed the proposed parking, dumpster location, and the changes proposed to the exterior. He said that he felt the exterior changes would be minimal.

Mr. Bilger discussed the suggested conditions of approval, as follows:

1. The special exception is granted as presented.
2. The dumpster will be screened with an opaque enclosure.
3. Proposed parking area is to be paved within two (2) years of this approval.
4. Any exterior lighting will be oriented and/or shielded to prevent light spillage and glare onto adjacent residential properties and rights-of-way.
5. Signage, if any, will conform with sign code requirements.

Mr. Romano asked where the CBD zoning district was in relation to this site. Mr. Bilger displayed the zoning map for reference, showing that the entire block was CB.

Having no further questions for staff, Mr. Kissinger asked for the petitioner to speak. Eli Shultz, petitioner, stated that he and his wife wanted to get into real estate investing, and this property was an opportunity for them. He said that he planned to pave the parking, and the two-year deferral was acceptable. He said his goal was to make the entire property very beautiful, especially as this would be their home for a long time. He stated that plans for the parsonage were not yet determined; he was seeking input from more experienced people for guidance.

Ms. Dumbacher asked what the timeframe for renovation would be. Mr. Shultz stated that financing commitments would have the project completed within a year. Ms. Gardner asked if the construction work would be done by Eli and his wife himself. Mr. Shultz said he would act as the general contractor and would try to do a lot of the work themselves but would need to hire out more technical jobs. Ms. Gardner said that she thought the plans would look really nice.

Having no further questions for the petitioner, Mr. Kissinger asked for anyone else wishing to speak for or against the petition. Hearing none, he asked for discussion or a motion. Mr. Warnick made a motion to approve the special exception, with the staff's suggested conditions. Motion passed by roll call vote, 5-0.

### **OTHER BUSINESS**

Mr. Bilger thanked those who could attend the training session in January. He said that the recording would be available for those who wished to view it later.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, Mr. Romano made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Warnick gave the second, and the meeting was declared adjourned at 7:24 P.M.

### **ATTENDANCE LIST**

1. Elizabeth Shultz ..... 201 E. Ellsworth Street, Columbia City
2. Eli Shultz ..... 201 E. Ellsworth Street, Columbia City
3. Steven Wyland ..... 215 E. Ellsworth Street, Columbia City

### **ATTENDANCE LIST (WEBCAST)**

4. None