

CITY OF LA GRANDE

Planning Commission Meeting

Regular Session

November 9, 2021

6:00 p.m.

Zoom Meeting

La Grande City Hall
1000 Adams Avenue

MINUTES

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

James Hickey
Liberty Avila
Bruce Weimer
Ann Morrison

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:

Dave Felley

STAFF PRESENT:

Michael Boquist, City Planner
Kendra VanCleave, Planning Secretary

DISCUSSION/DISPOSITION

CITIZENS PRESENT:

Tanner Sheahan

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

HICKEY, Chair, called this Regular Session of the Commission to order at 6:00 p.m. and conducted a Roll Call; a quorum was determined to be present.

The Agenda was approved as presented

AGENDA APPROVAL

CONSENT AGENDA

AVILA introduced the following Motion, with WEIMER providing the Second.

MOTION: That the Consent Agenda be approved as presented for the September 14, 2021 meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

MSC: Unanimous

NONE

NEW BUSINESS

NONE

PUBLIC HEARING

- a. Conditional Use Permit
File Number: 12-CUP-21
Christ Church

(PUBLIC HEARING OPENED 6:02 PM)

HICKEY asked for the Rules of Order to be Read. WEIMER stated that he knew the applicant and a member of the congregation just wanting to know what would take place for Planning Commission. WEIMER referred the member back to the Planning Commission and Building Department for appropriate use of the space. There were no challenges.

HICKEY asked for the staff report.

BOQUIST opened with the application to allow a religious assembly to permanently locate in the downtown Central Business Zone.

1. The subject property is located within the City's downtown Central Business Zone. It includes three (3) storefronts that have been vacant for the past several years. Historically, the building was occupied with a tavern and other retail uses. It has recently been renovated, brought up to Code and the historic façade restored to facilitate a new ownership or tenant.

2. The predominant uses intended for the Central Business Zone (CB), are consumer services and retail commercial activities. Religious Assembly and Community Education uses are allowed, but do not fit the primary focus for this zone and thus are allowed subject to a conditional use permit.

3. The subject property is also located within the Parking Exempt Overlay Zone, which encompasses the entire downtown core. Because of the dense development pattern and limited open space within this overlay zone, developments are not required to provide off-street parking and may utilize on-street parking to satisfy their needs.

BOQUIST continued with the review criteria:

A. That the use is conditionally permitted in the zone in which it is proposed to be located.

Finding: The subject property is located within the downtown Central Business Zone (CB). The applicant intends to occupy and use the existing building for "Religious Assembly" purposes, along with plans for future "Community Education" opportunities should the need or opportunity arise. Such uses are allowed by conditional use per Land Development Code Ordinance 3252, Series 2021, Section 2.2.008(C)(3) and (C)(9).

B. That the proposed development is timely, considering the availability and adequacy of the transportation system, and public facilities and services.

Finding: This criterion generally applies to areas where City standard improvements are missing (e.g., no streets, sidewalks, water, sewer, etc.) and where large projects require the extension or widening of streets and/or constructing other infrastructure improvements. For this request, the subject property is located along Adams Avenue, which is a fully developed street meeting all City standards.

C. That the location, size, design, and operating characteristics of the proposed development will be compatible with and will not have significant adverse effects on the use or development of abutting properties or surrounding neighborhood with uses permitted in the underlying zone.

Finding: the applicant's narrative explains that they believe the church will bring life and vibrancy to the

downtown by drawing citizens and college student to the downtown core.

The predominant use of the building will be for religious assembly (church services) on Sunday mornings from 8:00am to 11:30am (+/-), which would include Sunday school for children. Other incidental activities may occur during the week or other times as needed, such as weddings, bible studies, misc. meetings.

With regards to neighborhood impacts, the property is surrounded by businesses that are generally closed during the operation times of the church. There are no residential uses in close proximity that would be impacted by the noise generated by the worship team (band) or the parking generated during service times. The church is currently meeting in another downtown space on Depot Street, which has residential uses in the vicinity and it has proven to not result in any notable adverse impacts.

Additionally, BOQUIST indicated that no public or agency comment were received.

Commissioner MORRISON joined meeting.

HICKEY asked if the current use at HQ is under a conditional use permit. BOQUIST responded that it is not. HQ is permitted as an event facility and an assembly use is permitted there.

HICKEY asked for testimony from the applicant.

Mr. Sheahan commented that he is excited about the space and to breath life into a vacant building. Avista Utility commented to him that the building hasn't had service since 2010. Feels they can bring a unique feel to the downtown corridor and bring in community events with other churches.

HICKEY asked for testimony in favor, neutral or opposition to the application. There were none.

HICKY invited Commission discussion. Commission discussed parking in which the building is in an exempt parking area. Discussion continued with occupancy limits. BOQUIST responded that is set by the Building Department. The building has 3 exit doors in front so it could have a fairly large occupancy.

MORRISON commented that Sunday services will be held on Sunday when most businesses are closed which frees up some parking.

HICKEY asked applicant if events will be combined with other churches. Mr. Sheahan commented there isn't a huge list of events. If a bigger event happened it would be on a Sunday or on an evening. Also for about

an hour on Wednesday's a group of pastors get together.

AVILA commented that it's good to see something being done with the building and no comments were received on the application. AVILA asked the applicant if they have talked with surrounding business owners. Mr. Sheahan commented that he had talked with several business owners and received positive responses.

MORRISON agreed with AVILA comment good to see something being done with building and had no concerns.

WEIMER stated if there ever was a concern about any noise the building housed a unpleasant bar and as the previous Fire Chief occasionally had to go there on calls as well police and a church seems better than an Adams Avenue bar

(PUBLIC HEARING CLOSED 6:22 P.M.)

WEIMER introduced the following Motion with HICKEY providing the Second.

MOTION: I move that the Finding of Fact and Conclusions set forth in the Draft Decision Order be adopted and that the Conditional Use Permit be approved.

USC: Unanimous

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

None

CITY PLANNER COMMENTS:

NONE

BOQUIST commented that the Observer Building apartments have a temporary occupancy for 20 units and have posted a bond that allows for that occupancy while the project completes. Currently waiting on carports to be installed and to finish up landscaping.

Veteran's Village cottage home development for veterans has occupancy approved for 3 tiny homes and possibly a 4th. Units 5-8 are under finish work. Units 9-10 no current status.

Additionally, Jacksons Food Stores is submitting for a redevelopment at the old Shell station on Island Avenue.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

There being no further business to come before this Regular Session of the Commission, HICKEY adjourned the meeting at 6:30 p.m. The Commission is scheduled to meet again in Regular Session, Tuesday, October 14, 2021 at 6:00 p.m., in the Council Chambers of City Hall, 1000 Adams Avenue, La Grande, Oregon.

ATTEST:

APPROVED:

Kendra VanCleave
CEDD Secretary
Date Approved:

Chairperson

