

CITY OF LA GRANDE

Planning Commission Meeting

Regular Session

February 14, 2023

6:00 p.m.

La Grande City Hall
1000 Adams Avenue

MINUTES

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Liberty Avila, Chair
Ann Morrison, Vice Chair
Dave Felley
Matthew Gougherty
Roxie Ogilvie

STAFF PRESENT:

Michael Boquist, City Planner
Kendra VanCleave, Planning Secretary

CITIZENS PRESENT:

Kaiger Braseth

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

AGENDA APPROVAL

CONSENT AGENDA

PUBLIC COMMENTS

NEW BUSINESS

- a. Elect Chair and Vice Chair

PUBLIC HEARING

- a. Variance Permit
File Number: 01-VAR-23
Josh Gustafson

STAFF REPORT

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:

DISCUSSION/DISPOSITION

AVILA, Chair, called this Regular Session of the Commission to order at 6:03 p.m. and conducted a Roll Call; a quorum was determined to be present.

The Agenda was revised to include that a new Chair and Vice Chair need to be elected for the beginning of the year. The Agenda was approved as revised.

MORRISON introduced the following Motion, with GOUGHERTY providing the Second.

MOTION: That the Consent Agenda be approved as presented for the January 10, 2023 meeting.

MSC: Unanimous
NONE

OGILVIE made a Motion, to retain the current officers as Liberty Avila Chair and Ann Morrison as Vice Chair with FELLEY providing a Second.

USC: Unanimous
(PUBLIC HEARING OPENED 6:05 PM)

AVILA asked for the Rules of Order to be Read and asked for Commissioner declarations. There were none.

AVILA asked for the staff report.

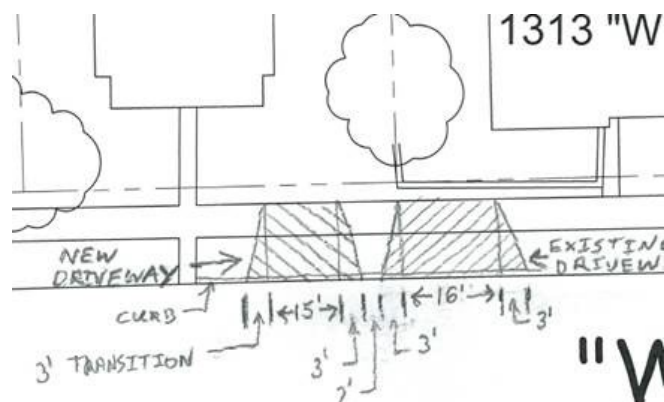
BOQUIST stated the applicant is requesting the approval of a variance to deviate from the City's minimum private driveway design standard. This

request is to reduce the minimum driveway separation distance from fifteen feet (15') to two (2) feet, resulting in a variance of thirteen feet (13'). 2. The subject property is developed with a single-family home. The property has alley access for off-street parking, but has not historically had a dedicated driveway and parking off W Avenue, similar to other properties in the vicinity.

The applicant's narrative explains that this variance arose from having limited space for a driveway approach off W Avenue. There is insufficient area along the West property boundary to accommodate an off-street parking space, but sufficient space exists along the East property boundary. However, the neighboring property has an existing driveway that sits immediately adjacent to this boundary, which presents a conflict for the applicant in meeting the City's minimum driveway separation standards.

The applicant is looking to create an off-street parking space off W Avenue due to there being limited parking available on-street. The parcels along W Avenue are narrow with houses close together, resulting in fewer on-street parking spaces being available per house. Also, the street is narrow with parking allowed on both sides. With vehicles parked on both sides of the street, the street becomes limited to one lane of traffic flow and additional congestion.

Public Works is in support of the request.



BOQUIST stated after looking at the proposal, the driveway does not line up with the driveway that is constructed on their property, will mess up the front yard and will have a 2' curb obstacle to navigate around. BOQUIST continued he asked a question to Public Works about having one large continuous curb cut which would be more accommodating since they are applying for a variance. Public Works looked at the property

again and would support an alternative variance opportunity, if the Commission was open to it and give the property owner a choice with the 2' separation or merge with the neighbor's driveway.

BOQUIST stated the shared driveway scenario Public Works would manage through the permitting process and require the neighboring property owner to sign a letter of support or no objection.

OGILVIE commented she grew up in that neighborhood and the street is narrow and most of the lots are 3000 sq ft or less. The driveway(s) are a good idea to allow more parking and safer for neighborhood.

FELLEY asked by removing 15' of curb it removes on street to off-street parking. BOQUIST commented yes for this one space.

BOQUIST stated there are 4 review criteria.

1. Having some peculiar condition that not ordinarily exist in similar zones.
2. The variance won't create a safety hazard
3. The variance won't adversely affect adjacent property owners. (This is where the signature piece would come in from neighbor).
4. Terms of Ordinance will work unnecessary hardship on applicant.

GOUGHERTY asked if there are other instances of shared driveways. BOQUIST commented yes there are several all over town.

The applicant was not in attendance to provide testimony.

AVILA asked for testimony in favor, opposition or neutral there was none.

(PUBLIC HEARING CLOSED 6:21 PM)

OGILVIE made the following Motion, with MORRISON providing the Second.

MOTION

MOTION: I move that the Finding of Fact and Conclusions set forth in the Draft Decision Order be amended to give an alternate option to merge and share driveways with your neighbor and that the Proposed Conditional Use Permit be approved.

VOTE

USC: Unanimous

PUBLIC HEARING OPENED 6:05 PM)

- b. Zone Designation Change
File Number: 04-ZON-22
Kaiger Braseth

AVILA announced that the Rules of Order were read in their entirety at the first public meeting and asked for declarations and challenges. There were none.

AVILA asked for the staff report.

STAFF REPORT

BOQUIST opened with the application requesting the Planning Commission and City Council's approval to rezone the subject properties from Interchange Commercial (IC) to General Commercial (GC)

The purpose of this rezone request is (1) to encourage and support the revitalization of underutilized properties by expanding the allowed uses that may be developed through rezoning to General Commercial; and, (2) to address conflicts with nonconforming uses such as dwellings, local retail stores, contractor businesses, and warehouse uses which are not permitted in the Interchange Commercial zone. Such conflicts will be resolved through rezoning the proposed properties to General Commercial which more appropriately fits the uses that exist on the affected properties and the overall the character of the surrounding area.

The properties affected by this proposed to be rezoned include the following:

Braseth: 1702 21st Street

Braseth: 2407 E. Q Avenue

American Best – Sandman: No Address (vacant)

American Best – Sandman: 2410 R Avenue

Zeng: 1701½ Albany Street

Zeng: 1701 Albany Street, T3S, R38E

All Air HVAC: 1703 Albany Street

Habitat for Humanity – Restore: 2304 R Avenue



Conforming Properties with Permitted Uses:

American Best – Sandman (Hotel): 2410 R Avenue

American Best – Sandman (Hotel - Vacant): No Address

Non-Conforming Properties with Grandfathered Uses, which will Become Conforming and Permitted as a Result of this Rezoning:

Braseth (Warehouse, Storage, Contractor): 2407 E. Q Avenue

Braseth (Warehouse, Storage, Contractor – Vacant): 1702 21st Street

Zeng (SF Residential): 1701½ Albany Street

Zeng (SF Residential): 1701 Albany Street

All Air HVAC (Building Contractor): 1703 Albany Street

Habitat for Humanity – Restore (Retail): 2304 R Avenue

BOQUIST continued that the zone change is following the Comprehensive goals and policies applicable.

1. Goal 1 citizen involvement – notification and public hearing process.

2. Goal 2: Land use planning – identify what the need is. La Grande is running out of available general commercial zoned lands. The rezone meets the need for General Commercial land.

3. Goal 9: Economic Development – Commercial elements that support offering additional opportunities for expansion and growth.

OGILVIE asked if new housing is allowed. BOQUIST responded not new housing but, the existing housing is grandfathered in. Back before the code was changed, when a business came in to convert a house to commercial use, the code required that conversion be permanent and the issue came up that people weren't willing to do that because they didn't want to lose an opportunity if the business didn't work out. Therefore, the code changed that an existing house can flip flop between house to a commercial use within the General Commercial zone.

FELLEY asked if that would change with the rezone for the current housing. BOQUIST commented without the rezone to General Commercial the Interchange Commercial residential is not allowed and couldn't flip flop.

FELLEY asked if losing the hotel that is conforming to the current zoning (interchange commercial) if it becomes General Commercial and someone decides they don't want a hotel anymore is that an issue or significant impact. BOQUIST responded depends on what it is being replaced with and market demands. The owner of a couple of the hotels in the zone change proposal also owns the one the hotel across the interchange which is for sale and deteriorating. As part of the sale, there is a "no compete" clause that is can't be a hotel if sold therefore, it will be demolished anyway most likely.

AVILA asked for testimony from the applicant.

APPLICANT TESTIMONY

Kaiger Braseth commented the General Commercial zone gives more opportunities.

AVILA asked for testimony in favor, opposition or neutral. There was none.

GOUGHERTY asked why was it zoned interchange commercial. BOQUIST responded it was the type of zoning established in the 70's and they may have wanted to promote this type of commercial use in this location.

There was no Commission Discussion

(PUBLIC HEARING CLOSED 6:37PM)

MORRISON made the following Motion, with OGILVIE providing the Second.

MOTION

MOTION: I move that the Finding of Fact and Conclusions set forth in the Draft Decision Order be adopted and the Proposed Zone Designation Change be recommended to City Council for approval.

VOTE

USC: Unanimous

OLD BUSINESS:

None

CITY PLANNER COMMENTS:

BOQUIST commented there is an application for a subdivision that will be going to Planning Commission on the March 14th regular session. BOQUIST commented the work session dates need to be finalized.

The group looked over the potential dates from the doodle poll and there was consensus to have a work session on February 23rd and March 7th.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:

AVILA asked if the topic of deed restriction could be listed on the Agenda for a future meeting. BOQUIST responded he could put it on the agenda for a future work session.

There being no further business to come before this Regular Session of the Commission, adjourned the meeting at 6:55 pm. The Commission is scheduled to meet again in Regular Session, Tuesday, March 14, 2023 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