

CITY OF THE DALLES PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

Thursday, July 22, 2010

City Hall Council Chambers

313 Court Streets

The Dalles, OR 97058

Conducted in a handicap accessible room

CALL TO ORDER:

Vice-Chair Ahlberg called the meeting to order at 6:34 pm.

BOARD

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Ron Ahlberg
Mark Poppoff
Benjamin Hoey
Ted Bryant
John Nelson

BOARD

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Bruce Lavier
Chris Zukin

STAFF PRESENT:

City Attorney Gene Parker
Senior Planner Richard Gassman
Administrative Secretary Brenda Green

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

It was moved by Bryant and seconded by Poppoff to approve the agenda as submitted. The motion carried unanimously; Lavier and Zukin absent.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Commissioner Bryant stated that on page two, his comment about the Wendy's employee should have read "the employee also informed him that she thought the picture of the sign was from another Wendy's restaurant".

It was moved by Bryant and seconded by Hoey to approve the minutes of July 1, 2010 as modified. The motion carried unanimously; Lavier and Zukin absent.

PUBLIC COMMENT: none

QUASI-JUDICIAL PUBLIC HEARING:

Application Number: CUP 159-10 of Northern Wasco County Parks and Recreation **Request:** To obtain approval to build an outdoor skate park. **Location:** Property is located at 602 W 2nd Street and is further described as 1N 13E 4AA tax lots 500 & 600. Property is zoned "P/OS" – Parks and Open Space

Vice-Chair Ahlberg asked if Commissioner Hoey would read the rules for conducting a public hearing, which he did. Ahlberg asked the Commissioners if they had any bias, conflict of interest, or ex-parte contact. None were declared. There were no challenges from the audience. Ahlberg declared the public hearing open and asked for the Staff Report.

Senior Planner Gassman presented the Staff Report. He began by clarifying the exact location of the proposed skate park on the Thompson Park property, pointing out that a neighbor had been confused by the map that had been sent out. Gassman stated that staff will work on making the maps less confusing for future applications.

Senior Planner Gassman stated that a skate park is considered “other” activity that is conditionally allowed in the Parks and Open Space Zone. He explained that since a building is not being constructed, staff is recommending that a Site Plan Review be included with the Conditional Use Permit.

Senior Planner Gassman shared staff’s opinion that the location was the best place in town pointing out that the high visibility of the area should prevent some of the problems the previous skate park had. He then went over the suggested conditions of approval, specifically discussing the fencing requirement along Second Street and Cherry Heights, the requirement that the applicant work with the City Engineer for a redesign of the access to the property from Cherry Heights, the need for a storm water disposal plan and the condition that stated that if the applicant wants to utilize the facility during hours other than daylight hours, they would need to get special permission from the Planning Director.

There was a general discussion about providing lighting that would discourage vandalism and other unwanted activities without encouraging use of the facility after dusk or creating glare on neighboring properties and rights of ways.

Commissioner Bryant asked about parking options if he wanted to view the Lewis and Clark Monument. Senior Planner Gassman stated that there was a parking lot directly below the monument on Second Street with an ADA accessible trail to the monument.

Vice-Chair Ahlberg pointed out that the restrooms at the pool building were only open seasonally and questioned at what point a requirement for building restrooms would come into play. Senior Planner Gassman explained that the code only requires the addition of restrooms when a building is built. Ahlberg expressed his concern that without nearby restrooms, visitors would be utilizing the bushes. Gassman responded by pointing out the high visibility and the expected high utilization of the selected location which staff felt would both help to deter unwanted activities.

Commissioner Nelson inquired about providing more parking spaces for bicycle riders and groups of people such as families. He shared that Hood River had to later add more parking spaces at their skate park. Senior Planner Gassman explained that the code did not provide for parking requirements for cars or bicycles which is why he did not require any on the recommended conditions. He pointed out that the parking spaces shown on the plans are by the choice of the applicant.

Public Testimony:

Proponents: Scott Green, 414 Washington St, Ste1D introduced himself as the Executive Director of Northern Wasco County Parks and Recreation. He gave the history of the previous skate park which

had been placed in a remote part of Thompson Park, then shared the reasons behind the push towards this current skate park proposal including a community survey that was completed and the fundraising that had been done.

Commissioner Bryant referenced the letter from Mr. Green that had been included with the application and asked if he had specific numbers to back up the statement that a skate park will reduce the number of skateboard related injuries. Green replied that he had not brought that information with him. He then gave examples of types of injuries skateboarders sustain and a few specific examples of injuries that had happened in The Dalles. Green shared that based on surveys there are approximately 400 active skateboarders in The Dalles.

Commissioner Bryant asked if bicycles would be allowed in the skate park. Mr. Green responded that the park would be open to BMX style bicycles and in-line skates as well as skateboarders.

Commissioner Hoey brought up the issues with the previous skate park, then asked what had been learned from that attempt as well as how the new facility would be different. Mr. Green went over the history of how the new location was chosen. He pointed out the differences between the old and new park including visibility, quality of construction material, and support of the community. Green went over the amenities that they would be adding such as parking, landscaping, and drinking water. He informed the Commission that the Kiwanis Club had volunteered to help with maintenance of the skate park including garbage pick-up and graffiti removal. Green added that community members including local youth had been instrumental in the location choice and that they would also be a part of the group that will design the structure.

Mr. Green responded to a previous comment about restroom access by explaining that all park restrooms are closed November through March and that ADA accessible portable toilets are provided at the parks during those times. He stated that they plan on placing one near the skate park location.

Commissioner Nelson asked if there was a plan for more permanent restrooms closer to the skate park in the future. Mr. Green replied yes. He explained that there is a master plan for the park and part of that plan includes structures that will include restrooms which will be located closer to the skate park area and will be open year round.

Commissioner Nelson stated that he did not agree with the statement that the proposed location is highly visible. He agreed that it was visible from Cherry Heights but that due to topography he felt it was not visible from Second Street.

Mr. Green assured the Commissioners that he had an agreement with City Police to perform regular walk throughs. He also described the planned security lighting at the skate park as well as the security cameras that were currently being used in Thompson Park.

Vice-Chair Ahlberg asked if the construction of the structure was going to be on top of the current land or if the structure would be dug down into the land. Mr. Green stated that the goal was to dig down and not elevate the area any further. He described the test pits that had been dug to verify that the structure could be set down but stated that the final decision would be based on the design that the committee chose.

Vice-Chair Ahlberg questioned if there was a plan for drainage. Mr. Green described how the skatepark would be designed with drainage in mind. He explained that it would either hook into existing drain lines, utilize bio-swales or a combination of methods. Green stated that he would prefer to utilize bio-swales, pointing out that they would add to the landscaping of the area.

Commissioner Bryant wondered about potential injuries to skateboarders as they were on their way to the park considering they could be crossing busy streets and intersections. Mr. Green did not have a plan for safety outside of the park but pointed out that not having a skate park means that skateboarders use the rest of the city as a skate park. He felt that focusing skateboarders towards one area will cut down on issues in other parts of the city. Green went over a few of the safe pathways to the skate park such as the sidewalks on Second Street, and the bridge that goes over Mill Creek. He shared that the future plan is for the friends of Mill Creek to put in a trail through that area.

Commissioner Nelson pointed out his concern for noise and asked if events would be held at the site. Mr. Green stated that there was the possibility of having events in the future; such as an annual competition. Green pointed out that the park would follow the same guidelines as other parks in regards to park hours being dawn to dusk and noise levels being governed under the City's noise ordinance.

Frances Connolly, 412 W 4th St, The Dalles stated that she was a neighbor of the park and had originally planned on complaining about the skate park location, but after getting to the hearing found out that the location would actually be on the upper parking lot. She stated that she was fine with that location and that she was fine with events being held there. She did ask what time noise would be cut off. Vice-Chair Ahlberg stated that testimony had been that park hours would be dawn to dusk so noise could potentially be until dusk. Connolly asked if a specific closing time could be set.

There was a general discussion amongst the Commissioners that specific hours could be added as a condition of approval. Commissioner Nelson commented that there was a sign at the park stating that it was open dawn to dusk but there were also times listed on the sign. Vice-Chair Ahlberg thought there were additional hours allowed at the tennis courts. Mr. Green shared that the tennis courts were no longer operational and that the wiring to the lights had been removed many years ago. Commissioner Poppoff voiced his concern of too much noise in the mornings. There was a general discussion that the majority of park users are teenagers and that teens tend to sleep in late.

Opponents: none

Vice-Chair Ahlberg closed the public testimony portion of the hearing.

Deliberation:

Commissioner Bryant pointed out that there had been some question as to the operating hours and asked when swim meet hours were. There was a general discussion about swim meet hours, and when the park usually quiets down in general.

Vice-Chair Ahlberg felt the restroom issue was being taken care of, but that he had some concerns in regards to parking. Commissioner Nelson suggested monitoring the parking for a year and then re-visiting the issue. There was a general discussion which concluded in the feeling that monitoring is complicated. Ahlberg felt that bicycle parking was definitely needed, and that as more facilities are

added to the park, more parking will be required.

Vice-Chair Ahlberg and Commissioner Nelson both stated that they were in support of the application but were uncertain about some of the details. Ahlberg stated that he felt a lot of the details would be worked out as more development is applied for and completed in the park.

Commissioner Nelson shared that when the first skate park had been built there was pride in it. However, gradually things broke down and the park crumbled. He felt that this project was better because of the location, the information that there is more money and community support behind it, and the fact that the structure would be of a higher quality.

Commissioner Poppoff brought up his concern that there were a lot of sharp edges on the structure and wondered if they could be rounded. Vice-Chair Ahlberg felt that the design details should be left to the experts. Poppoff suggested that the committee attempt to eliminate hazards during the design process.

Motion:

Bryant moved to approve CUP 159-10 and a Site Plan Review for Northern Wasco County Parks and Recreation to build a skate park at Thompson Park based on findings of facts, conclusions of law, and the staff recommendation with ten conditions as submitted. It was seconded by Poppoff, the motion carried unanimously; Lavier and Zukin absent.

RESOLUTIONS:

Bryant moved to adopt Resolution PC 495-10 of Wendy's restaurant denying VAR 113-10. Nelson seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously; Lavier and Zukin absent.

Hoey moved to adopt Resolution PC 496-10 of Northern Wasco County Parks and Recreation approving CUP 159-10 and a Site Plan Review with ten conditions as submitted. It was seconded by Bryant. The motion carried unanimously; Lavier and Zukin absent.

COMMISSIONER/STAFF COMMENTS

Commissioner Bryant asked for staff to clarify clear vision clearance in regard to front yard fences and described a fence at the corner of Tenth and Trevitt. Senior Planner Gassman explained the condition set out in the LUDO. Bryant shared that he felt the fence in question was non-conforming. Gassman stated he would have the Code Enforcement Officer check it out.

Commissioner Nelson reopened the question of the lighting at the Lone Pine McDonald's. Senior Planner Gassman replied that it was being worked on.

Senior Planner Gassman reported that the porch between Fourteenth and Fifteenth that had been questioned at a previous Planning Commission meeting was built without a permit and that it could not have been approved where it was built. He said the issue was being taken care of.

Commissioner Bryant inquired about goatheads. City Attorney Parker replied that the Code Enforcement Officer was working on it. He stated that they got a late start this year due to the employee change but that City Council had approved a bounty program for this year which had been started. He also reported that next year they will have a more aggressive program in place before they start growing.

Senior Planner Gassman briefed the council on the recently formed Tree Committee and shared that the

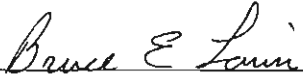
first organizational meeting will plan dates to meet and will review the current tree policy.

Senior Planner Gassman shared that he had spoke to the Wendy's representative about the Planning Commission's denial of their modified sign size request. He shared that instead of appealing the decision they plan to wait and see if the sign code is changed as part of the planned LUDO revisions.

NEXT MEETING: The next scheduled meeting is August 5, 2010.

ADJOURNMENT: The Planning Commission meeting was adjourned at 7:47 p.m.

Submitted by
Brenda Green, Administrative Secretary



Bruce Lavier, Planning Commission Chair