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Planning Department Newsletter



REVIEW OF PLANNING DEPARTMENT ACTIVITIES IN 2007

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In 2007, the planning department experienced another in a series of very busy years. Our staff worked on several long-term projects and also processed a substantial amount of land use permits. This article recaps the major activities of the department over the past year.

Urban Growth Area Reevaluation: Given the extent of recent real estate development in Pullman, the City Council requested that planning staff reexamine the city's urban growth area (UGA) to ensure that it will accommodate anticipated growth in the community. Staff produced a report last January that provided preliminary population forecasts for up to 50 years into the future (the forecast for the year 2057 was 46,000 people). This report concluded that, for that 50-year time horizon, the city would need to add at least 2,500 more acres of residential land and several hundred more acres of industrial property to keep up with demand if the community continued to grow at its present rate. In June, the Planning Commission held a public input session to solicit citizens' comments on the subject of community growth; about 20 people attended this forum to offer their opinions. Throughout the year, city staff communicated with Whitman County officials regarding the best means to manage land use and public service delivery in the greater Pullman area. The UGA reevaluation process will continue with additional public meetings in 2008.

"College Hill Tomorrow" Program: In an effort to improve conditions in the College Hill neighborhood bounded by Stadium Way, Grand Avenue, and Main Street, the City Council retained consultant Studio Cascade, Inc. of Spokane to conduct a study of issues and possible solutions for the hill. Last April, the consultant released a report summarizing the results of its study. This report offered a number of suggestions, including better coordination of city and WSU law enforcement activities, establishment of a comprehensive on-street parking permit system, more definitive zoning district classifications, consideration of architectural design provisions, protection for the newly designated historic district centered around the north portion of Monroe Street, adoption of a WSU master plan update in writing, and development of a full-scale neighborhood plan for the area. Shortly after this report was released, the Council and Planning Commission held a joint meeting and requested that staff prepare a neighborhood enhancement strategy. In keeping with this directive, the Commission conducted a kick-off meeting for the "College Hill Tomorrow" program in October; at this session, approximately 40 people provided input on matters related to the neighborhood. Later in the year, staff began interviewing stakeholder groups to obtain more details on issues and potential solutions. Following these interviews, the city will conduct an open house to

gather input on various alternatives for improving the neighborhood.

Downtown Parking: Late in 2005, a mixed commercial/residential project with limited off-street parking was proposed in the downtown area. This proposal was eventually withdrawn, but it prompted concern from Pioneer Hill residents that developments such as these might create parking congestion in their neighborhood. (Currently, there is no requirement in the zoning code for downtown land uses to provide off-street parking.) In February of last year, the Planning Commission initiated a study in this regard. Among other things, this study examined the number of dwelling units in the central business district and their associated off-street parking spaces, the amount and usage of off-street parking spaces in city-owned lots, and the findings of a survey of 14 cities in the region pertaining to downtown parking regulations. The Commission also held three public meetings on this topic in the second half of 2007 to accept public input and discuss possible recommendations to the Council. At its November 28 meeting, the Commission agreed to four recommendations that promoted enhanced enforcement of parking regulations, better identification of parking opportunities downtown, exploration of a parking permit system for downtown residents, and establishment of design standards if an off-street parking regulation is imposed for residential uses in the central business district. Upon receiving these suggestions in December, the City Council requested more specificity from the Commission on this subject by March of 2008. The Commission has already conducted a meeting this month to organize for this effort.



Downtown parking was a frequent topic at Planning Commission meetings in 2007.

Amendments to Environmental Regulations: Washington state law requires the city of Pullman (and several other comparable jurisdictions) to review and, if necessary, revise its critical areas ordinance (CAO) by December 1, 2007 to ensure that the best available science is applied to the protection of wetlands and other sensitive

environmental resources. To meet this schedule, planning staff initiated the CAO review process back in the summer of 2006. With the aid of a \$13,200 grant from the Washington State Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development, planning staff in 2007 conducted pertinent research, solicited public input, and drafted several ordinance revisions that were first reviewed by the City Council on June 13. These proposed changes involved appeal procedures, allowance for staff interpretations, aquifer recharge area report requirements, and publication/code reference updates. Since the draft appeal procedures demanded changes to the city's State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) regulations, staff also proposed modifications to the SEPA appeal section and related provisions. On November 6, the Council approved the suggested revisions to both the CAO and SEPA standards.

Affordable Housing: In March, planning staff participated in a local affordable housing forum sponsored by the Palouse Economic Development Council (PEDC) and the Community Action Center (CAC). This forum, attended by approximately 70 people, involved a plenary session to furnish general information followed by breakout discussions on land development basics, alternative development concepts, and zoning options. In the session on zoning options, planning staff described the four principal methods employed by the city to assist with affordable housing: ensuring adequate land supply, allowing for high density, promoting flexibility in housing types, and directly facilitating affordable housing by acquiring grants and recruiting developers. As a follow-up, the City Council conducted a comprehensive discussion on this topic at a meeting in October. Planning staff took part in this dialogue with the Council, other city personnel, real estate developers, and officials from the PEDC and CAC.

Airport Land Use Compatibility: In order to protect the safe and efficient use of the Pullman-Moscow Regional Airport, both the city of Pullman and Whitman County maintain standards that limit the height of objects in the vicinity of the airport property. Also, Pullman has established regulations that prohibit certain land uses, such as housing or hospitals, from locating near the airport due to potential noise impacts. With more development occurring on unincorporated county territory as of late, the city and county learned that they have different rules and interpretations with respect to airport land use compatibility. So, in September, planning staff initiated discussions with county

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officials for the purpose of improving coordination between the two jurisdictions' policies and regulations. These deliberations will continue in 2008.

Permit Activity: Development permit activity in Pullman remained strong last year. In 2007, planning staff helped process permits for 96 new single family houses (this total includes 24 cottages at the Whitman Senior Estates assisted living center at the west end of Center Street), 173 multi-family dwellings, 29 new commercial/institutional buildings or remodels, and 26 commercial signs. The total valuation for all building permits last year was approximately \$52.8 million. Overall, these numbers are slightly less than 2006, but still greater than the average figures for Pullman since 1990. For example, the average number of single family and

multi-family dwellings permitted over the past 17 years is 59 and 151, respectively. During 2007, planning staff also administered 22 site plan review applications, 11 conditional use permit applications, 8 variances, 3 preliminary plats (involving 173 lots), 6 short plats, 1 planned residential development, 11 boundary line adjustments, 1 rezone, 1 annexation, 8 wetland reports, 18 SEPA environmental checklists, 1 shoreline permit, 1 street dedication, and 2 street vacations. In addition, planning staff also organized the annual capital improvement program and population estimate processes.

As could be expected, this heavy workload has stretched the modest resources of the planning department to their limit. In 2008, the department will continue to utilize its available means to make progress on all of its assigned tasks.

MEET NEW ASSISTANT PLANNER JASON RADTKE

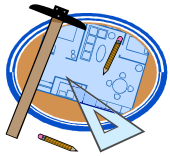
The Planning Department is pleased to announce the hiring of a new assistant planner to help advance our community development objectives. His name is Jason Radtke, and he began his employment with the city on January 2.

Several years back, Jason worked for a time as a welder/fabricator in an industrial equipment manufacturing plant. He then enrolled at Eastern Washington University to study Urban and Regional Planning. After graduating from that program in 2004, he worked as an independent consultant before accepting a position as land use planner for the Coeur d'Alene Indian Tribe at Plummer, Idaho. While employed there, he drafted land use regulations and updated the tribe's comprehensive plan. During this period, he also volunteered for Pathways to Progress, a non-profit community and economic development organization working to revitalize downtown Cheney. As an example, this past summer, he and his wife Shanell organized community members' participation in the Cheney World Record Attempt and Children's Renaissance Fair, involving the construction of a giant castle made out of cardboard. Just recently, Jason learned that his castle was determined to be the world's largest cardboard

sculpture by officials from both The Book of Alternative Records and Guinness World Records.

As assistant planner for Pullman, Jason will be processing land use permit applications, assisting citizens with questions regarding zoning and environmental matters, conducting research and other activities relative to long-range planning, and enforcing planning department provisions. Jason seems to be pleased with his new position. He said, "I can tell I'm going to enjoy working here—everybody has been so nice and helpful in getting me settled in." Please call upon Jason if you need help with any community planning endeavors.





Pending Land Use Applications

Displayed below are land use applications submitted to the planning or public works department or city-generated proposals for planning provisions that require a public meeting, public notice, or site plan review in accordance with the city code.

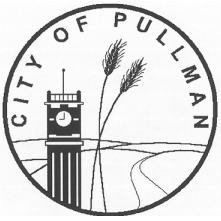
PROJECT	DESCRIPTION	LOCATION	STATUS
Zoning Code Text Amendment	code revision to allow radio and TV studios in C1 district	citywide	PC recommended approval on 1/23; possible CC meeting in February
Hinrichs Annexation	annex 37 acres to the city	west of Sunnyside Park and north of SW Old Wawawai Road	staff reviewing legal description of property
Askins Annexation	annex 35 acres to the city	Johnson Road south of the Village Centre Cinemas	annexation petition filed 12/10; staff reviewing legal description of property
Radio Palouse Wawawai Road Rezone (Z-07-2)	change prezone of 9,000-sq-ft parcel from R2 to C1	west of Sunnyside Park and north of Old Wawawai Road	PC recommended approval on 1/23; possible CC meeting in February
LDS Church Conditional Use Permit (C-07-8)	construct 16,600-sq-ft church and parking lot on 4-acre parcel	520 NW Park View Drive	BOA initiated hearing on 1/28; continued hearing to 2/25
Appeal of Wal-Mart Supercenter SEPA determination and site plan	develop 223,000-sq-ft store on a 28-acre site	south of SE Harvest Drive/ Bishop Boulevard intersection	Superior Court judge denied PARD appeal on 10/18/06; PARD filed appeal with Court of Appeals on 11/27/06
Appeal of Animal Haven SEPA determination	develop 12,000-sq-ft animal shelter on 6.2-acre site	1350 SE Old Moscow Road	staff reviewing appeal documentation
Crimson Village site plan (07-2)	develop mixed-use retail/residential buildings totaling 66,000 sq ft on 10.5-acre lot	1000 block of SE Bishop Boulevard	staff requested applicant to revise site plan
Tomason Place Apartments site plan (07-11)	establish 26-unit apartment building on 82,600-sq-ft parcel	555 NE Terre View Drive	staff requested applicant to revise site plan
Hospital Parking Lot Addition site plan (07-15)	established 37-stall parking lot	835 SE Bishop Boulevard	staff requested applicant to revise site plan
Water Tank No. 10 site plan (07-20)	install city water tank and control house on 33,500-sq-ft parcel	south of 1700 block of SW Casey Court	staff requested applicant to revise site plan
High School Storage Building site plan (07-21)	construct 840-sq-ft storage building at high school	510 NW Larry Street	staff requested applicant to revise site plan
General Aviation Airport Improvements Phase 4 site plan (07-22)	reconstruction of general aviation pavement area, replacement of underground fuel tanks with above-ground tanks, and utility work	Pullman-Moscow Regional Airport	staff requested applicant to revise site plan

KEY TO ZONING DISTRICTS: R1 Single Family Residential; RT Residential Transitional; R2 Low Density Multi-Family Residential; R3 Medium Density Multi-Family Residential; R4 High Density Multi-Family Residential; C1 Neighborhood Commercial; C2 Central Business District; C3 General Commercial; I1 Light Industrial; I2 Heavy Industrial; IRP Industrial Research Park; WSU Washington State University

KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS: CC: City Council; PC: Planning Commission; BOA: Board of Adjustment; DOE: State Department of Ecology; LC: Landmarks Commission

NOTES: 1) If an applicant fails to act on a pending application for a period of six months, said application will be dropped from the above list.. 2) Numbers in parentheses are planning staff's internal file numbers. 3) Site plan review by city staff is generally conducted for proposed construction of developments other than single family homes, duplexes, or manufactured homes; it does not apply to most construction on the WSU campus.





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