



CITY of RAINIER
Incorporated 1947

RAINIER PLANNING COMMISSION

November 21, 2023

REGULAR MEETING

5:30 PM

Call to Order: Meeting was called to order by Commissioner Mike Elliott at 5:31 p.m.

Flag Salute: Flag salute was foregone.

Roll Call: Those present were Commissioners Elliott, Foster, Turner, and Carpenter. Staff present was Jim Gibson, PE and Beth Spurr.

Approval of Agenda: Motion to approve the 11/21/2023 Planning Commission agenda. **Carpenter/Foster 4/0**

Approval of Minutes: Motion to approve 12/21/2021 Planning Commission minutes. **Carpenter/Turner 4/0**

Public Comment No public comment

New Business

Information: City of Rainier Development Update

City Planner, Jim Gibson, provided the commission with an update on the developments that have been done since the last meeting. The city has received & approved a few residential short plat applications. Thurston County Environmental Health has been conducting nitrate studies which have restricted subdivision applications and production until further notice. There were 24 lots sold in Trotter Downs and single-family residences built on each. A two-lot subdivision on Tipsoo Loop is in the preliminary approval and the property at 601 Binghampton St is in the demolition stage but is a proposed Brewpub but has not started the building permit application process yet.

Commissioners conducted a discussion on the updates given by the City Planner, including questions on the lot size requirements for subdivided lots, septic issues with new construction, and why we can't tell the county that we have bad soil and get government grants to put in sewer. City Planner explained that he did not have specific information on the requirements for applying for government grants or what that would entail. If bad soil was confirmed, building would most likely be on hold for at least 10 years. Commissioner Elliott stated that if the city wants to grow, the City needs to decide on if sewer should go in or not. Commissioners Turner and Foster asked if the

commission would be able to ask the City Council to reconsider sewer and Commissioner Elliott said yes.

Commissioners asked if the City received Covid funds/grants and asked the status of the round-a-bout at State Route 507 and Centre St. The City Planner said he had no information on this.

Commissioner Turner asked if landscape upkeep was included in the permitting process. The City Planner stated that it is in the code and landscape plan. The City is working with Dollar General to re-establish the trees that died off and maintaining the existing landscaping.

Discussion: 203 & 205 Binghampton Street E – Front Yard Fence Request

Commissioner Elliott asked that the discussion on 203 and 205 Binghampton Street E fences be combined into one discussion. All commissioners agreed.

The City Planner presented the commission with information on requests for a variance to RMC 18.48.040 for both addresses. The variance requests are regarding the height of fences along Binghampton Street. According to the code, fences along the front yard are to be a maximum of 4 feet high. The resident at 203 Binghampton St E has already built a 6-foot wooden privacy fence along the front yard edge of his property. He asked for a variance after the fence was built. The new owner of 205 Binghampton St E is asking for a variance to the code to build a 6-foot black chain-link fence along the front edge of his property as well.

Commissioner Elliott asked the commission if they are to grant a variance to everyone who applies, and a discussion followed.

Commissioner Foster stated that the property owner is intending to run their propane business on-site. The City Planner stated that the owner of 205 Binghampton Street E is not able to just put anything within the property behind the proposed fence. The property has allowed uses for businesses but there are restrictions.

Discussion followed on whether 6-foot fences along Binghampton Street would negatively affect the look of downtown.

City Planner stated that the code is black and white. A variance would need to be given in order to build a fence higher than 4 feet along the front edge of the property. He also stated that the applicant(s) will be at the next meeting where a decision will be made by the Commission. The options are to approve the variance request, modify and approve, or deny.

Commissioner Elliott made a motion to reconsider the variance at the next convened meeting. **Carpenter/Turner 4/0**

Information: ADU state law updates

City Planner presented the state law updates on ADU (Accessory Dwelling Units). The new state law says that every legal lot is allowed one ADU. The City Attorney looked into the updates and said that since the City does not have sewer and each property constructing a new ADU would be required to install a new septic, which is on hold due to the county nitrate studies, it does not apply to the City yet. When it does, the city code will be updated.

Information: Resignation of Commissioner Bengtson

Commissioner Bengtson resigned from his position August 14, 2023. Commissioners discussed the need to find and appoint a new commissioner to take his place.

New Item: Meeting Time

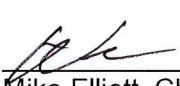
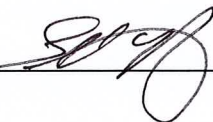
Commissioner Elliott asked that we add the meeting time to the agenda. He states that the City Council changing the meeting time to 5:00 p.m. was shameful. He states that having the Planning Commission meetings at 5:30 p.m. is a disservice to the community since many residents get off work at 5:00 p.m. and don't want to come straight to City Hall for a meeting. He wanted the time changed to 6:00 p.m. He additionally stated that if the commission wanted to keep the 5:30 p.m. time, he would resign immediately. Commissioners allowed the change, and the meeting time was changed to 6:00 p.m.

Old Business

No old business to discuss.

Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 6:21 p.m. **Carpenter/Turner 4/0**

 
Mike Elliott, Chair