

PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES
Monday, March 13, 2017
6:00 PM

Planning Commission Members Present: Scott Anderson, Karen Ashley, Chris Ford, Valerie Hoy-Rhodehamel, Shawn Van Pelt

Staff present: Nick Hogan, Ben Shumaker

Community members present: David Bennett, Lana Kidner, Steve Kidner, Kevin Lucas, Rose Lucas, Sharon Madsen, Ben Sciacca, Vickie Sciacca

Call to order: 6:00 PM

Preliminary Matters

1. **Chair Selects Public Comment Option: #1**
2. **Minutes: Hoy-Rhodehamel** moved and **Ford** seconded for approval of the minutes from February 13, 2017 as presented. Unanimously approved.
3. **Public Comment Period** (For items not located elsewhere on the agenda): None offered.

New Business

4. **CUP2016-02 (Sciacca Wedding Venue) - 6:04 PM Planning Commission review and Public Hearing**

a. Review Purpose of Meeting – **Shumaker** discussed the November 2016 Planning Commission review of this unlisted use, and the decision to allow review as a Conditional Use. He noted this is the first proposal to review.

b. Appearance of Fairness Disclosures – **Shumaker** reviewed the requirements of the Planning Commission members to act fairly and with impartiality and provided examples of Fairness Disclosures. He asked if any Commission members had any financial interest in the outcome of this decision, any ex parte communication with any members of the community which would influence their decision on this item, or any if there were any other reasons that would prevent them from being fair and impartial. . No disclosures were made by any commissioners and there were no challenges to their appearance of fairness.

c. Presentation by Staff – **Shumaker** presented the staff report, noting the document provided the required findings of fact, applicable points of the Comprehensive Plan, staff recommendations and possible outcomes for Commission actions. He commented his recommendation is to approve the application and read through the conditions listed in the draft permit. He did note the Conditional Use permit would be reviewed in October of even numbered years and so, if approved, this permit would be subject to review in October 2018 unless a different date was desired by the Planning Commission.

d. Presentation by Applicant – **B. Sciacca** discussed their vision to provide low key, intimate/small scale wedding venue on their property. He confirmed they would remain full time residents in the home, and will be present during wedding events because he's very

concerned about keeping low profile with guests. He noted they have been living in the neighborhood 25 years and has always strived to be a good neighbor. He explained he and his wife are very pro-business supporters in the community and believes what they want to offer will be a benefit to community. He did acknowledge the concerns of his neighbors and hopes to address them at this meeting.

e. Public Hearing was opened at 6:11 PM – **Anderson** reviewed the rules for public comment, explaining that it is not a question-and-answer period, but a time when members of the public will be offered 3 minutes to address the proposal. He noted that he may hold the record open at the conclusion of this meeting if there are questions or concerns that remain.

Madsen commented she purchased her home from Mr. Sciacca in 1992 and because he retains an easement on her property, she is very concerned about the proposed use. She stated her insurance agent advised her the added commercial traffic could cancel her homeowners insurance and it could be impossible to replace with the added commercial wedding venue traffic over her property. She added Mr. Sciacca should hold additional liability insurance in case injury of guests while crossing the easement. She also commented her concern over increased noise resulting from regular outdoor weddings, aesthetic, health and safety concerns from the use of port-a-potties, decreased property value and increased traffic in the neighborhood. She also stated the Sciacca's lot is too small to ensure a wedding venue would be in harmony with the area. She added, she would like a legal document protecting her from any/all possible injuries which could possibly happen on her property.

Lucas commented he wants Mr. Sciacca to be successful but discussed his concerns, which included owner supervision of the property during events, alcohol consumption, and noise. He added he spoke with Mr. Sciacca directly and was relieved to learn they only wanted to host small events. He also commented that the Sciaccas need to keep in mind that neighborhood noises will happen which may impact ceremonies as well. He appreciates the limitation on the frequency of events and the October 2018 permit review but expressed a desire for additional conditions, including 1) some mechanism for neighbors to voice concerns as they arise, 2) liability insurance, 3) septic review, and 4) noise-related conditions.

Repar applauded Mr. Sciacca's tenacity in business wished him success. She is concerned that this proposal will add staff burden to monitor events and onsite critical areas. She wondered whether if the frequency of weddings fits with a residential neighborhood setting and stated that use of porta potties will impact neighboring property values and questioned how many would be needed for this many guests. She also commented Ms. Madsen, and other neighbors should have a path of recourse, if the permitted activity should impact their insurance rates or coverage.

L. Kidner commented her concern is related to parking on Briggs Road.

S. Kidner noted there has been relatively no maintenance on the road and his concern is related to aggravating existing potholes. He acknowledged that the noise will be a concern both for him from the weddings and for the weddings from the neighborhood (chainsaws, lawn mowers, etc.). He is less concerned about noise but far more interested in what will happen with the cars and traffic.

V. Sciacca responded to Madsen's comments about the need for porta potties and commented they have not spoken with anyone who has informed them they would need to use porta potties as part of the proposal. She also commented the neighborhood is not quiet already as everyone can hear activities at the Fairgrounds and Skamania Lodge and added music is part of some, but not all weddings. **B. Sciacca** went on to explain the parking arrangements contained in the proposal and commented the wedding site will include the deck, carport and garage, which they plan to improve to provide event shelter. He went on to explain the septic system for their 4 bd/3 ba is more than capable of handling the proposed events. He reiterated their proposal is only for May-October. He did ask Planning Commission to reconsider a limitation to only 2 weekends per month and would like to be allowed to offer their property once per week. He said he doesn't intend to act like a bouncer for alcohol use, but he doesn't want a "big bash" venue and will ensure all laws and insurance requirements are complied with. He noted, if porta potties were necessary, they would use high end ones and make sure they are properly maintained.

Anderson asked if there was any more public comment and **Madsen** asked for more clarification on the insurance point. **B. Sciacca** commented it is common practice for wedding parties to purchase and provide their own liability insurance and the Sciaccas' would make sure they held the proper amount of insurance to cover any additional liability for the driveway easement on Madsen's property. **V. Sciacca** also added they plan to install a 6' fence between their property and Madsen.

Anderson suspended public comment at 6:39 PM.

f. Planning Commission Discussion – **Ashley** said there is a place for a small wedding venue and while a ~30 person wedding isn't likely to have a big band, she has general concerns about the overall, 2-way compatibility of wedding venue and neighborhood uses. She discussed the septic system concerns and stated liability insurance which impacts neighbors is a significant consideration. She agreed with the Sciacca's request to have more than twice monthly availability is necessary to be successful. **Van Pelt** agreed and felt it is beyond the Planning Commission's ability to monitor and enforce. **B. Sciacca** commented he is willing to limit usage to 1 wedding per weekend, but wants the opportunity to be successful.

Ford commented on the width of Briggs Road and asked about improvement plans and commented the road may not be wide enough to accommodate emergency and utility vehicles if there is event parking going on. **Shumaker** responded that the paved width is narrower than the 60' right-of-way width and addressed the draft permit's discussion of the road not being on the 6 year road improvement plan for the City, and the condition that overflow parking cannot infringe on the paved portion of the road. **Ford** further commented asked about the easement size. **Madsen** gave dimensions of the easement and the paved portion of 25 ft. **Ford** then asked if a banquet permit from the State of WA is required for each wedding for service of alcohol. **B. Sciacca** responded it is the responsibility of the renters to obtain required permits and noted there is still more research to be done, given the approval to move forward. **Ford** then discussed porta potties require maintenance and documentation. **Van Pelt** explained porta potty pump reports and practices to determine size/pumping frequency.

Anderson asked for clarity on porta potty use. **B. Sciacca** commented porta potties would remain in place through the season and pumped after each event and it would be their intention to keep those out of sight as much as possible from neighbors. **Anderson** asked if the applicants have been in contact with Environmental Health. **B. Sciacca** answered "no".

VHR asked how the 16 spaces requested were calculated and expressed concern about conflicts between parking and loading areas for catering, etc. **Shumaker** explained the proposal, and **VHR** asked for additional staff information on parking requirements. She asked if the property would be also used as a B&B and **V. Sciacca** answered "no", the upstairs of the home would be available only as a bride's changing room and not for overnight stays.

Anderson commented he is not comfortable approving the CUP until the applicants can provide more information from the County about the septic concerns and suggested the topic be tabled until next meeting. He then summarized the top three points for the Sciacca's to address by the next meeting: 1) parking, 2) Septic, 3) Insurance, 4) Frequency of Events.

Anderson recessed public hearing on this item until the April 10th Planning Commission meeting at 6:04 PM.

Old Business

5. Critical Areas Ordinance Review and Update:

Shumaker discussed ongoing staff review of the 5 critical area types on a City website explaining the update process. He went on to introduce a staff report on Critical Aquifer Recharge Areas (CARAs). The Planning Commission's review of the draft CARA regulations was general in nature and intended to address problems and questions with the proposal.

VHR has general concerns about these regulations being redundant to existing state and federal laws. She wants to avoid that and simplify where we can. Overall the Planning Commission saw a need to be protective of groundwaters and was in favor of limiting the types of uses that pose the biggest threats, especially near public wells. This includes new heating oil tanks, septic systems, and direct infiltration facilities.

Shumaker described the next steps of this process to review the draft and the Planning Commission's guidance with other City staff and finalize the draft of the regulations.

6. Zoning Code Update- Residential Planned Unit Developments:

Shumaker introduced the staff memo, which included comparisons of other communities' PUD regulations, the Comprehensive Plan's support of the concept, and several specific decision points which he wanted the Planning Commission to address.

Shumaker reviewed, at a very high level, the information included in the staff report and draft ordinance and there was general discussion of draft ordinance language, possible development incentives, and density bonuses. Specific discussion occurred on site specific density, including hypothetical scenarios about how density numbers could be calculated.

Repar commented that developers should not be given a bonus for things they should be doing anyway and asked if and how tiny homes can be included and are part of the

discussion. She also noted she supports inclusion of low income housing throughout a community instead of segregated into neighborhoods of their own. **B. Sciacca** commented, across the country, 90% of RV park residents are permanent, because housing is not affordable. He believes opening up zoning code to accommodate tiny homes will be favorable to the community. **D. Bennett** commented flexibility in the ordinance is most desirable and discussed different mixed use construction scenarios to achieve the City's desired density in new construction and said he would like to see tiny homes included in the discussion. **Shumaker** commented that tiny homes may not be specifically mentioned in the draft regulations, but the flexibility of the R-PUD concept doesn't not prohibit them.

Decision Point #1 – Does the Planning Commission accept connection to public water/sewer systems as a threshold for consideration of PUDs? YES

Decision Point #2 – Does the Planning Commission accept removing property size as a threshold for consideration? YES. If not, what size is appropriate for the lower limit? N/A

Decision Point #3 – Does the removal of unbuildable areas from total lot area meet the Comprehensive Plan language stating protection of such resources should not reduce the density which can be achieved on the site? Stated another way, does the Planning Commission agree that unbuildable areas themselves are what reduce site density, not the protection of such areas? YES.

This decision point required lengthy discussion regarding the role of due diligence in the development process.

Decision Point #4- Do the lot size, lot width, driveway length, and perimeter limits allow sufficient flexibility while still providing appropriate protections? NO. Items including absolute minimum lot area and parking remain to be discussed at the next meeting.

Decision Point #5- Has the staff draft adequately captured what should be mandatory and what should be optional in the approval of density bonuses? Pressed for time, the Planning Commission chose to stop the review of this topic and pick it up at the next meeting.

Staff Reports

7. Staff & Commission Reports: Not addressed.

8. Thought of the Month: Not addressed.

Meeting adjourned at 8:37 PM

Approved _____; Approved with revisions _____

Scott Anderson, Chair Date
Minutes by: Jennifer Anderson

Planning Commissioner Attendance

	2017											
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Anderson	X	+	+									
Ashley	X	0	+									
Ford	X	+	+									
Hoy- Rhodehamel	X	+	+									
Van Pelt	X	+	+									

+ = present; 0 = excused absence, — = unexcused absence, X = cancelled meeting