

Planning Commission Meeting

433 Cherry Street

Monday, August 07, 2023, at 5:30 PM

Minutes

Present

Commissioners

Teresa Josephson

Lizette Custer

John VanWingerden

Jacob Williams

City Staff

Josh Clawson, Ex Officio

Carson Cortez, City Planner

Rollin Harper, City Planner

Michelle Quinn, City Clerk

John VanWingerden made a motion to approve June 20, 2023, Minutes, Liz Custer seconded, all were in favor the motion carried.

Carson Cortez, City Planner opened the public hearing for the Change of Zoning or Classification Application, Comp Plan Amendment & Site-Specific Rezone Change application submitted by Brad Hepner & Jason Heutink. This is the Whatcom County Fire District property at the south end of town, currently zoned business general. Carson stated this application is for a rezone of the property to mini warehouse to be used for a self-storage facility.

Jason Heutink, the applicant, is asking to rezone the property to business mini warehousing with a spot along the highway with a commercial building. Jason believes this would be a good asset to the town, due to the high number of rentals who need storage. The facility will be gated so people cannot just come in and out. Teresa Josephson asked if the zoning is not approved. are alternate plans for the property. Jason states with no direct access to the highway it will be extremely hard to set up different businesses. John VanWingerden is concerned about the appearance when people come into town and just see a fenced off area. Jason believes with the commercial building facing the highway and the storage units behind the building, the storage units will not be that noticeable.

Darren Leyenhorst, Sumas Avenue, does not want to see a mini-warehouse facility on that piece of property and would like to see the property remain as business general. Mr. Leyenhorst is concerned about that property being flooded and pushing runoff water onto his property.

Jessica Koehler, Harrison Street, Sumas, is concerned with the border expansion and how this may cause a housing shortage; we may need the property for more residential housing.

Meg Kreig, First Street, her concerns are integration into neighborhoods, she would like to see more thought given when integrating projects into a neighborhood; making sure the project fits the neighborhood. Ms. Krieg is also concerned about any future flooding and if these properties are built up with fill the water will be displaced onto other people's property.

Helen Solem, Rock Road, Sumas also believes there should be some thought into this project, due to the limited space left in Sumas. Ms. Solem wanted to know if this facility would bring jobs into town.

Rollin Harper, City Planner, stated there was a lot of good input from the residents, also received were two written comments that were in the packet. Rollin recommended that the commissioners of different options make moving forward; making a recommendation to the city council either approving or denying this site-specific rezone, or if the planning commission had their own idea appropriate to this site. The final possibility is making this a part of the comprehensive review due in 2025 with recommendation to incorporate this in the 2025 update process.


Carson Cortez, City Planner stated he is aware of the property in town is in short supply, he has been looking into ways the city can expand and finding solutions moving forward.


Jason Heutink asked the commissioners what businesses they would suggest will work in the business general zone; Helen Solem suggested a business park.

Teresa Josephson made a motion to close the public hearing, John Van Wingerden seconded; all were in favor the motion carried.

Josh Clawson asked the commissioners if they were ready to make a recommendation to the city council, all four commissioners denied the request to rezone the property. After more thought Teresa Josephson would like to reserve her final decision till the next meeting. The commissioners will bring forward recommendations for the property at the next meeting and then give their update to the city council. The next meeting is set for September 18, 2023, at 5:30 pm.

Jacob Williams made a motion to adjourn the meeting, John VanWingerden seconded; all were in favor the motion carried.



City Clerk

Councilmember Josh Clawson, Ex Officio