City of Hood River Planning Commission Public Hearing April 5, 2021 via Zoom Videoconference 5:30 p.m.

MINUTES

I. CALL TO ORDER: Chair Mark Frost called the meeting to order at 5:30

PRESENT: Commissioners Mark Frost (Chair), Sue Powers, Tina Lassen, Megan Ramey, Amy Schlappi, Erika Price, Bill Irving

ABSENT:

STAFF: Planning Director Dustin Nilsen; Senior Planner Kevin Liburdy; Planner Jennifer Kaden

II. PUBLIC HEARING:

File No. 2020-31

Proposal: A Conditional Use to permit a Mixed-Use Development comprised of 30 residential dwellings and 1,300 square feet of commercial space.

Location: 1306 Taylor Avenue: Northwest intersection of Taylor Avenue and 13th Street; Legal Description: 3N 10E 35AD Tax Lot 2300. The property is zoned General Commercial Zone (C-2). **Applicant/Owner:** Surround Architecture/Argonaut Investments

Planning Commission Chair Mark Frost read the procedural script and asked the Commissioners to disclose any bias or conflicts in this matter. Commissioner Erika Price had no disclosures.

Commissioner Ramey noted that the project owner was her realtor in a past transaction but not related to this project; she said she noticed a narrow sidewalk on Taylor St cluttered with mailboxes; two years ago she was part of a ODOT working group to identify undocumented crosswalks including one at Taylor & 13th.

Commissioner Powers noted that she made a site visit and drove east on Taylor. No conflicts. Commissioner Lassen noted she has a friend who lives on Taylor who drives a large vehicle Commissioner Schlappi had no conflicts or bias. She walks by the intersection daily and notes that it's a difficult intersection for pedestrians. Commissioner Bill Irving recused himself noting that he's employed by the project owner. Chair Frost had no disclosures.

Chair Frost asked for challenges from the audience; there were none. There were no challenges from commissioners.

STAFF REPORT: Planning Director presented the staff report for the project which proposes 30 residential units and 1,300 s.f. of commercial space. He described the project and application materials as well as comments received from neighbors. He described the proposed parking as 20 on-site parking spaces and payment of a fee in-lieu for the remainder per the Heights Business District. He noted that the residential portion of the project is considered 'needed housing' per state law so only clear & objective standards can be evaluated.

One item of note in comments receive relate to creating a residential parking district and the request to require it as a condition of approval. Nilsen said the authority for creating a residential parking district lies with City Council so the applicant has no authority to create it, nor does the Planning Commission or planning department. He suggested considering a recommendation to Council for the request.

COMMISSIONER QUESTIONS:

Lassen asked about a requirement that the units are used for 'needed housing.' Nilsen clarified the state's definition of needed housing to include condominiums. He explained how the units might qualify for short-term rentals which cannot use the fee in-lieu for short-term rental parking.

Lassen asked if the city has the ability to deed restrict the units for permanent residents. Nilsen said no.

Ramey asked a process question as this project compares to the Cohousing project which was a permitted use vs. conditional use. Nilsen said evaluation is limited to clear & objective standards based on ORS 397.307 which says the city cannot deny a project based on subjective or discretionary standard.

APPLICANT PRESENTATION: Ben Stenn, 525 E. 3rd., introduced himself as a partner owner of the project and noted that the existing house has been housing restaurant employees. He understands the significant need for employee housing. This building provides a number of smaller units within walking distance of many places of employment.

Maui Meyer introduced himself as the other partner at Argonaut Investments. They have done a number of development projects with the eye toward housing to allow people who work in Hood River to live in Hood River.

Mark Vanderzanden, Surround Architecture, shared a PowerPoint presentation. He described the project as important for the community because there are not many locations as suitable for multi-family housing within walking distance of employment. The project is designed for residents of Hood River. Project goals include efficient floor plans, low energy costs. Vehicular access is on Taylor Avenue. The 30 apartments are a mix of 1 and 2-bedroom units. Improvements include curbs, sidewalks, crosswalk, underground utilities, landscaping, and street trees. He stated that the traffic analysis meets city requirements. He described the design of the building and floor plans. The landscaping includes 'green screen' planted walls to screen the parking level from 13th Street and Jackson Park.

Commissioner Powers asked the applicants about the traffic analysis and how the number of trips was determined. Vanderzanden said a standard engineering methodology is used based on the number of units. Powers asked about the number of bicycle parking spaces. Vanderzanden said 10 are on the ground level with another 10 on upper levels.

Commissioner Ramey asked what the rent range will be. Maui Meyer said they are targeting about \$1,000 for one-bedroom and up to \$1,800 for the two-bedroom units which he describes as 'at or below market.' Ramey asked about parking space allocation. Meyer said they are still working out the details but hope to include it in the rent with possible discounted rent for no parking. Ramey asked about balconies on the park side. Vanderzanden said they would be part of private units.

Ramey asked what the 2 intersection projects are the projects contributes trips to. Nilsen said the 2 proportionate share districts are 2nd & Oak and Cascade & Rand; the proportionate share is based on the number of trips through those intersections from the project.

Ramey asked about pedestrian crossing at Taylor & 13th. Vanderzanden said Taylor is better than 13th; improvements are governed by ODOT. The applicants will participate in a crosswalk improvement; also want to make sure any required improvements aren't re-done in near future.

Commissioner Lassen asked where the new crosswalks will be. Vanderzanden described a crosswalk across Taylor and new ADA sidewalk ramps. Lassen clarified there is no new crosswalk on 13th; Vanderzanden confirmed and said he understands it would be located south of Taylor. Lassen asked about traffic flow. Meyer said they pursued many options and still discussing with the Engineering Dept. to have a right-out or left-out only. Nilsen added that the staff report addresses the issue but there is no condition of approval related to it because the engineers are at-odds and will be resolved at permitting.

Commissioner Lassen asked how many units will be rentals vs. condominiums. Meyer said it is designed as an apartment building, rental units only. She asked whether some units will be reserved for employees of Celilo Restaurant. Meyer responded that they will do what they have ability to do to house their employees. Lassen asked about the intent relative to short-term rentals. Meyer responded that they will have a covenant to restrict STRs – their intent is to house local employees.

Chair Frost asked how many vehicles there are for the current 5-6 residents of the existing house. Stenn said he wasn't sure how many are there now; there have been as many as 5 in the past.

PUBLIC TESTIMONY:

(~6:37) Ellie Wheeler, 1406 Taylor Ave: She supports added housing but is concerned about congestion and traffic on the narrow street of Taylor. She noted 2 parks in the vicinity – Jackson Park & Friendship Park. There is no parking facility in the vicinity. She said there are existing parking issues in the neighborhood, whether or not they've been documented. She is concerned traffic will be exacerbated if restaurant uses are in the commercial spaces. She said most people have at least one vehicle and interest in an on-site spaces doesn't necessarily equate to whether they own vehicles. Most likely people will park on the street. She proposed the City establish a residential parking district and implement it with the development of this project as a pilot project without requiring a parking study and offered additional recommended details from 13th to 18th on Taylor Ave.

Chair Frost asked Wheeler to clarify whether some of the parking in the district would be available to the residents of 1306 Taylor. Wheeler said no, that property is zoned C-2 and not eligible.

Kirk Zack, 1506 Taylor Ave.: He agreed with Ellie Wheeler and said he was happy to hear there would not be STRs in the building. He's concerned about parking and safety and asked about the traffic study. He asked how construction parking would be handled.

REBUTTAL: Mark Vanderzanden addressed some of the issued raised in testimony. He said he'd refer Kirk Zack to the city to obtain a copy of the traffic study. Vanderzanden said the scope was defined by ODOT and the city. The idea of widening of Taylor Avenue might be possible and could potentially be reviewed further. Maui Meyer added that the references to restaurants are misleading and that the idea of installing a grease trap now during construction might allow for a coffee shop but that was probably the extent of what might be proposed. The goal is not to have another restaurant. With respect construction parking, Vanderzanden said they hope to have less impact in winter months and will likely need to shuttle construction workers to the site. Vanderzanden said a parking district seems like a good idea but deferred to Meyer. Meyer added that the idea of a residential parking district is good but the timing might be better after the urban renewal project is done and that a parking plan for the Heights as a whole makes sense. He will not oppose it.

STAFF RECAP: Nilsen said he had nothing to add but is available for additional questions. The traffic analysis was a Traffic Impact Analysis by Ferguson & Associates and is available in the meeting packet.

Commissioner Lassen asked about the traffic study and the left or right turn issue – is that something the traffic engineers will resolve or should PC discuss it. Nilsen said it will be determined by the City Engineer and recommends a condition that alerts to possible revision to meet the requirement.

Ramey asked Nilsen about the TSP for 13th & Taylor cross sections. The Engineering dept didn't require improvements on 13th because there is no vehicular access. He said the 13th St cross-section will be looked at in the Heights Streetscape project.

DELIBERATION: Frost noted the draft conditions of approval and asked commissioners to recap issues they want to discuss or conditions of approval. Ramey said she'd like to discuss the 13th & Taylor intersection improvement.

Ramey said she's frustrated about the lack of transportation improvements and agrees the applicant shouldn't invest in improvements are that are temporary or short-lived but she thinks the applicant has a responsibility to be a partner in the design of improvements. The intersection is unsafe. Frost concurred.

Nilsen said the timing is interesting with respect to the Heights Streetscape project which will take a closer look at the intersections in the corridor.

 $(\sim 7:11)$ Lassen also agreed the applicant should contribute. The urban renewal project will take years to make improvements. She wondered if there was some improvement that could help in the meantime like a flashing light. Ramey suggested a "beg button" to trigger the flashing beacon.

Lassen asked if they can guarantee the in-lieu fees can be used for mitigation in this area. Nilsen said crosswalk improvements is a stretch; it should be used for parking management. Nilsen said they are restricted funds for parking management. Lassen asked if the funds are dedicated to districts. Nilsen said no, there is one line item for all in-lieu fees.

Frost asked for discussion about a residential parking district recommendation. Ramey asked some clarification questions. Nilsen said there is no other adopted residential parking district and the details would be worked out in the formation with the City Council. Ramey said she favors a residential parking district designed through an equity lens. Powers said she supports the idea and recognizes challenges in working out the details including potentially re-looking at it in 2 years. Commissioner Schlappi favors a residential parking district and starting it sooner rather than later and not necessarily restricted just to Taylor Avenue. Commissioner Price favors a residential parking district. Frost supports a residential parking district and added that given the narrow-ness of the street and noted that parking on 13th along the hill raises safety concerns. Lassen said any solution should be neighborhood wide, not just Taylor. She questioned the premise because the streets are public and she has concerns about limiting who can park. She also has concerns about cyclists based on the design of Taylor and suggested parking is allowed on one side of the street. Ramey echoed the idea of parking on one side of the street. Powers

added that if there is a recommendation that it include a request to establish it soon but be subject to review/revision based on the Heights Streetscape project. Frost echoed the idea of parking on one side of the street but also worried it might lead to faster vehicle speeds.

Frost asked for other issues. Commissioners generally complimented the overall design of the project. Powers asked for clarification of ODOT's jurisdiction on 13th. Nilsen said it is an ODOT facility and any improvements need ODOT support/approval. Ramey asked if they could entertain a \$5,000 contribution to pilot safety improvements on 13th. Lassen, Schlappi and Frost supported the idea.

(~7:42) Lassen said she's concerned about a parking district condition of approval that might slow down the project. Frost clarified the idea is only a recommendation to Council not a condition of approval.

MOTION:

Powers made a motion to approve File No. 2020-31 with the findings and conditions as drafted and add a recommendation to Council to look at establishing a residential parking district. Lassen seconded the motion. Motion passed 6-0.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioners postponed consideration of the February 16, 2021 minutes.

Nilsen said there will most likely not be a planning commission meeting on April 19th.

IV. ADJOURN

Frost adjourned the meeting at 7:48 p.m.

Mark Frost, Chair

Dustin Nilsen, Planning Director

August 11, 2021 Date

August 11th, 2021

Date (Approved)