



CITY OF WHITE SALMON
Planning Commission Meeting - Wednesday, April 12, 2023

COMMISSION AND ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL PRESENT

Commission Members:

Greg Hohensee, Chairman
Ross Henry
Michael Morneault (Excused)
Seth Gilchrist (Excused)
Tom Stevenson (Absent Excused)

Staff:

Jeff Broderick, City Land-Use Planner
Erika Castro Guzman, City Associate Planner

Planning Consultants:

Alex Capron, Consultant Planner
Bri Hines, Consultant Planner

CALL TO ORDER/ ROLL CALL

Chairman Greg Hohensee called the meeting to order at 5:39 p.m. A quorum of planning commissioner members was not present. Three audience members attended by teleconference.

PUBLIC HEARING

1. Draft Shoreline Master Plan and Critical Area Ordinance

Chairman Greg Hohensee opened the public hearing at 5:41 p.m.

Presentation

The Land-use Planner, Jeff Broderick, introduced The Watershed Company and Washington Department of Ecology planners.

The purpose of this presentation is to review the draft Shoreline Master Plan and Critical Area Ordinance, as to where it applies to the city land. The meeting's goal is to provide background of the Shoreline Master Program (SMP) update, including project history; and provide an update on upcoming steps and status for separate City-wide critical area work.

Where the Shoreline Master Plan primarily applies to lands within 200-ft of the Columbia River, the Critical Area Ordinance will identify all other waterway within city limits. The draft plan at this time contains minor revisions, to assure consistency with State law. Dept of Ecology must review the proposed amendments/edits prior the city council. The anticipate finish date is June 2023. Recommended changes are required based on state law, if not accepted by the city it may extend the timeline, at this time there are no anticipate issues.

No changes or additions have been made to the original amendments discussed on February 22, 2023. The amendments include:

1. Legislative amendments including:
 - A. Exemptions
 - Forest Practices
 - Substantial Development (Exemption Cost Threshold)
 - B. Exceptions
 - Add statutory exceptions section
 - C. Shoreline Restoration Relief

- Setback reduction option for associated development
- D. Definitions
 - Development
 - Floodway
 - Nonconforming uses, structures, and lots
- E. Federal applicability
- 2. Critical Areas Regulations in Shoreline Jurisdiction
 - A. Ensure critical areas tract measures remain in-effect.
 - B. Review existing wetland buffer requirements consistent with the 2018 guidance from the Washington State Department of Ecology
 - Reference up-to-date 2014 wetland rating system & minimization measures
 - Habitat corridor requirements
 - C. Re-locate Heritage Tree section to zoning code.
 - D. Add WDNR references seismic hazard area guidance
 - E. Clarify buffer averaging requirements

Anticipated timeline of key events:

- Planning Commission Meeting — February 22, 2023
- Joint Ecology/City Meeting Public Comment — March 20, 2023
- Joint Ecology/City Meeting Public Hearing — April 12, 2023
- Respond to Public Comments — April 2023*
- Submittal to Ecology for Initial Determination — May 2023*
- Local adoption of the SMP — June 2023*

**Dates are tentative*

Discussion

Chairman Greg Hohensee asked about the possibility of raising the average high watermark on the Columbia River, which is controlled by surrounding dams. Alex Capron, Consultant, said that restoration activities, such as extracting fill from the shoreline, can shift the ordinary high watermark. He said that this is a rare event, and typically isn't as common on a river environment as it is in a marine shoreline.

Public Comment

Chairman Greg Hohensee opened the public comment portion of the public hearing at 6:06 p.m.

Chairman Hohensee entered into the record one written public comments that was available for viewing during the meeting and thereafter.

- Tricia Sears, WA DNR, emailed 03/31/2023 4:00 PM

Chairman Greg Hohensee closed the public comment portion of the public hearing at 6:11 p.m.

Discussion

The Planning Commission recommends the Draft Shoreline Master Plan, as presented, to move forward to the City Council for further public comment.

Commissioner Ross Henry asked if there are access rights for the public along the Columbia River, including the White Salmon River. Alex Capron, Consultant, stated that he is currently working

with the City of Stevenson to develop an integrated shoreline public access and trails plan. He shared that there is documentation that anything water of the ordinary high watermark is public, but anything above that is subject to whoever owns the underlying land.

Commissioner Ross Henry discussed the issue of access to the Columbia River in Oregon, which is recognized at the state level. Alex Capron, Consultant, said there is an ecology shoreline user guide with a chapter on public access, which outlaws the common law doctrine that is established by case law and allows the public rights of access for navigation and recreation within the water themselves.

FINAL ANNOUNCEMENTS/REMARKS

Planner Jeff Broderick stated that the next Planning Commission meeting on April 26th that will be a listening session for staff to understand where the Planning Commission would like to propose changes to housing code. He added that later in the spring, staff will look at what may be proposed and then brought forth to the public for consideration.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:19 p.m.



Greg Hohensee, Chairman



Erika Castro Guzman, City Associate Planner