



City of Rockaway Beach

Planning Commission Meeting Minutes

Date: Thursday, December 19, 2024
Location: Rockaway Beach City Hall, 276 HWY 101 - Civic Facility

1. CALL TO ORDER

Planning Commission President Hassell called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

3. ROLL CALL

President: Bill Hassell

Commissioners: Sandra Johnson, Nancy Lanyon, Pat Olson, Zandra Umholtz (arrived at 5:06 p.m.), and Stephanie Winchester

Council Members: Charles McNeilly, Mayor; and Mary McGinnis, Planning Commission Liaison

Staff Present: Luke Shepard, City Manager; Mary Johnson, City Planner; and Melissa Thompson, City Recorder

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Start time: [05:02:21 PM \(00:01:10\)](#)

a. November 21, 2024 Meeting Minutes

Johnson made a **motion**, seconded by Olson, to approve the November 21, 2024 Meeting Minutes as presented.

The **motion carried** by the following vote:

Aye: 5 (Johnson, Lanyon, Olson, Winchester, Hassell)

Nay: 0

5. PRESENTATIONS, GUESTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS – None Scheduled

6. STAFF REPORTS

Start time: [05:03:33 PM \(00:02:22\)](#)

City Planner Johnson provided the following updates:

- Approvals in 2024 included 37 new dwelling units, 3 accessory dwelling units (ADUs) and 10 conversions; the Planning Commission held 7 public hearings.
- City is moving forward with grants for Lake Lytle restrooms and work with the Marine Board.
- In early 2025, the City will have a community workshop for the Senate Bill 406 work that is being done with Cascadia Partners, followed by ordinance adoption, subdivision updates and a Comprehensive Plan amendment.
- City Council has assigned the Commission to look at how STRs can provide ADA accessibility.

7. PUBLIC HEARING

a. #VAR 24-3: Consideration of an Application for Variance at 282 South Anchor Street to Decrease the Number of Required Parking Spaces to Construct a New Mixed-Use Building

Start time: [05:04:55 PM \(00:03:44\)](#)

Hassell announced that the Planning Commission shall now consider an Application for Variance by conducting a public hearing. He provided sign up instructions for those who wished to provide public testimony.

At 5:07 p.m., Hassell opened the public hearing.

McNeilly and McGinnis excused themselves from the meeting.

Umholtz joined the meeting at 5:06 p.m.

Opening Statements/Testifying Instructions:

Hassell read opening statements, public hearing disclosure statements and procedures in accordance with state law, and testifying instructions. He explained that the Applicant is Jeffrey Wong, and is seeking approval for a variance at 282 South Anchor Street in Rockaway Beach (Tillamook County Assessor's Map # 2N1032CC Lot #14700). The Applicant is seeking a variance to decrease the number of required parking spaces to construct a new mixed-use building. The Applicant plans to construct a new building consisting of a commercial space on the ground floor, four residential units on the second floor. The Applicant is requesting a decrease in the number of required off-street parking spaces from 10 to 2.

Hassell invited Commissioners to make declarations of bias or conflict of interest. No declarations were made. Hassell asked if any member of the audience wished to challenge a Commissioner on the basis of bias. A member of the audience stated that Umholtz was a member of the Lions Club and that she should recuse herself. Umholtz confirmed that she was a member of the Lions Club, and stated that there was no conflict of interest, as the decision would have no potential or actual financial affect on her or her family.

Hassell invited Commissioners to declare any ex-parte contacts. Lanyon declared that she drives by the property. Olson stated he was familiar with the property and had seen it recently. Johnson, Hassell and Umholtz declared that they frequently drive by and are familiar with the property.

Staff Report:

City Planner Johnson summarized her written staff report and shared a slide presentation. (A copy of the staff report and presentation is included in the record for the hearing.) Staff analysis of the application included a recommendation of approval with conditions to ensure emergency response will not be impeded and compliance with the City's road approach standards.

Applicant Presentation:

Wong provided personal background information. He explained the best use of the property for his fishery business and the community would be a community commercial kitchen that other operators and businesses could also utilize. Wong shared a slide presentation. (A copy of the presentation is included in the record for the hearing.) He explained his intent to was to prioritize workforce housing for his employees, as well as for first responders, traveling medical staff, educators and food production. Wong noted that he applied with Tillamook County Housing Commission for a grant, and they supported the project. Wong explained that he made a proposal to work with the Lions Club to redo their building and they declined. Wong stated that there were 86 transient parking spots available within a 3-block radius of the property. Wong proposed that he could make improvements as a goodwill gesture to some parking areas in the public right of way. Wong noted that the project aligned with several items in the City's Strategic Plan.

Lanyon inquired about ensuring the residents will be the workers he has prioritized. Wong responded that he would have to confer with legal counsel, but could vet applicants.

Umholtz inquired if he could carry a contract with hospitals to provide housing. Wong responded that he thought he could, and could set aside a unit for traveling nurses. Umholtz noted that she was part of the County houseless action committee. Umholtz inquired about timing of truck deliveries when the commercial kitchen was being rented. Wong responded that he could schedule his deliveries to accommodate kitchen tenant's parking needs. Umholtz inquired if Wong proposed that 8 spaces be provided through public spaces. Wong confirmed that he did. He suggested that he could attempt to lease spaces, but was concerned that it would affect rent prices. Umholtz noted that decisions must be made based on the current Zoning Ordinance.

Commissioner Johnson appreciated the efforts toward affordable housing. Johnson expressed concern about the commercial space. Wong acknowledged that he would like to allow community members to come to the property to pick up fish fillets. Wong explained use of the commercial kitchen. Wong clarified for Johnson the areas that were referenced in an email from Public Works Superintendent Dan Emerson. Johnson asked if the commercial area could be converted into a restaurant if the building were sold. Wong responded that he hadn't thought about selling, and it wasn't the intention, but it might be possible. It was noted that due to the zoning, the lower space would remain commercial.

Public Testimony in Favor:

Parker Sammons, Tillamook County Housing Coordinator, board member of Habitat for Humanity and member of the Houseless Action Network, testified in support, stating that the project

represented the type of workforce housing that is sorely needed in the County. Sammons noted that the project received financial support from the Housing Commission.

Todd Spencer testified that he wanted to hear both sides. Spencer shared that he had regular tenants and observed that most residents and employees in town had limited parking needs. Spencer stated that we need small cheaper units in this town, and the positives outweigh the negatives.

Testimony in Opposition:

Jerry Stanfill, resident and member of Lions Club, testified in opposition. He expressed concerns about enforcing parking regulations in the area. Stanfill expressed additional concerns that the variance would cause a loss of parking for the Lion’s Club, City employees, and the bus stop. Stanfill expressed concern that elderly Lions Club members and those with disabilities would have to park too far from their building.

Gloria Tarnasky resident and member of Lions Club, testified in opposition. Tarnasky stated that it would cause drastic parking issues for the Lion’s Club activities, including day meetings, bingo nights, Hope Chest board meetings, blood drives, and weekly functions. Tarnasky expressed concerns that it would impact those with handicaps who need to park in front of the building, and would exacerbate an existing parking problem.

Terry Bowman, resident, testified that it was a pretty good plan, but he still had concerns about the parking spots in front of the Lion’s Club that they needed for food distribution and community services.

Ron Hemberry, resident, expressed concern that future developments may exacerbate parking issues and lead to safety hazards.

Dave Farr, resident, agreed with the need for affordable housing, but didn’t believe the plan would work due to the off-street parking. He expressed concerns that it would turn into short-term rentals. Farr requested that the record be held open for an additional 10 days for written testimony.

Sue Wilson, Lions Club member, stated the plan was unrealistic and that essential parking for Lions Club members, many of whom are elderly, would be compromised.

Staff Response:

City Planner Johnson shared a slide and reiterated the variance criteria the Commission must take into consideration for their deliberations and decision.

Applicant Rebuttal:

Wong stated that he heard the concerns and that he wanted to be a good neighbor. He shared that he had removed a tree in response to concerns. He expressed a desire for his building to be a starting point for the revitalization of downtown. Wong noted that tenants would be working during

the day so would have less impact on parking in the daytime, and were likely to spend time away from home in the evening. Wong reiterated that the plan met a need for affordable housing and the work embodied the Strategic Plan.

Commissioner Questions/Close of Hearing:

Lanyon asked staff how comments received from the Fire Department and Public Works could be addressed. City Planner Johnson responded that if the Commission were to consider approving the application, she would recommend conditioning the approval that a parking plan be approved by both the Fire Department and our Public Works to ensure that safety is provided and the emergency access lanes are still available and that the right-of-way for the city standards is still being met. Commissioner Johnson shared the same concerns about those issues. Shepard commented on the challenges of staff approving a parking plan that involved the public right-of-way, noting that residents can park wherever they want.

Commissioner Johnson commented on potential safety issues due to the proximity of the Fire Department. Shepard noted that there were also informal temporary commercial loading zones on Anchor Street that would need to be considered.

Olson suggested that there was a need for further analysis of the situation.

Wong inquired about timing related to new requirements being imposed by FEMA. City Planner Johnson explained the process would take several months and property owners would receive notice. Wong said he had concerns about doing so, but had the ability to rent parking spaces it was imposed as a condition. Wong expressed concerns about the ambiguity of creating a parking plan.

There being no further testimony for the Commission, Hassell closed the public hearing for Variance No. 24-3 at 6:36 p.m.

Hassell stated that unless waived by the Applicant, the City shall allow the Applicant at least seven days to submit final written arguments, but no new evidence, facts, documents, dates, or testimony to support their application. Wong waived the right to submit additional written arguments.

Hassell called for a 10-minute recess of the meeting at 6:38 p.m. Hassell called the meeting back to order at 6:45 p.m.

Commission Motion

Johnson made a **motion**, seconded by Lanyon, to set December 30, 2024 as the date to submit written testimony and upon which the record will be closed for this Variance request. Johnson further moved to set deliberations on this Variance to 5 p.m., January 16, 2025 at Rockaway Beach City Hall.

The motion **carried** by the following vote:

Aye: 6 (Johnson, Lanyon, Olson, Umholtz, Winchester, Hassell)

Nay: 0

8. CITIZEN INPUT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

No audience member wished to comment.

9. OLD BUSINESS – None Scheduled

10. NEW BUSINESS – None Scheduled

11. PLANNING COMMISSION COMMENTS & CONCERNS

Start time: [06:48:09 PM \(01:38:08\)](#)

Lanyon commented that she was glad the city was considering projects like this.

Olson commented that it was a challenging issue. He wished all Merry Christmas.

Umholtz thanked everyone and said it had been a pleasure being part of the Planning Commission. Umholtz stated that she loved our city and expressed appreciation for the Commission and staff.

Johnson thanked Umholtz for her service on the Commission and that she would be missed. Johnson stated she wanted to bring attention to concerns raised about making exceptions for ADA-compliant short-term rental properties and hoped that the Commission could make recommendations to the City Council in the near future.

Winchester thanked Umholtz for her service, noting that she would be missed. Winchester stated that she appreciated the project that was before the Commission and looked forward to receiving additional information.

Hassell commended Umholtz for her work in housing and on the Planning Commission. Hassell acknowledged the Commission's great work and progress in the past year. He wished all a Merry Christmas.

12. ADJOURNMENT

Umholtz made a **motion**, seconded by Olson, to adjourn the meeting at 6:52 p.m.

The **motion carried** by the following vote:

Aye: 6 (Johnson, Lanyon, Olson, Umholtz, Winchester, Hassell)
Nay: 0

MINUTES APPROVED THE
16TH DAY OF JANUARY 2025



William Hassell, President

ATTEST



Melissa Thompson, City Recorder