HERMISTON PLANNING COMMISSION

Regular Planning Commission Meeting **September 8, 2021**

Chairman Saylor called the meeting to order at 7:00PM. Present were Commissioners Caplinger, Doherty, Sheffield, Sargent, Hamm, Fialka and Burns. Commissioner Rebman was excused. Staff in attendance were Planning Director Clinton Spencer and Heather La Beau.

Minutes

Commissioner Caplinger moved and Commissioner Sargent seconded to approve the minutes of the August 4, 2021 regular meeting. Motion passed unanimously.

Hearing- Conditional Use Hermiston School District 4N2810DD Tax Lot 300 600 S 1st St

There were no conflicts of interest declared and Chairman Saylor opened the hearing at 7:02 and read the hearing guidelines.

Planning Director Spencer presented the staff report. The expansion proposal for the high school includes a new two-story building, two greenhouses and parking lot redevelopment.

Testimony

Kelsey Zlevor 160 E Broadway Eugene- Ms. Zlevor is a planner with Cameron McCarthy. The 2019 school bond allocated the annex building at the high school as well as the two elementary schools and softball fields that the planning commission has already reviewed. Ms. Zlevor summarized the project and approval criteria. The applicant accepts the conditions presented by staff.

Dr. Tricia Mooney 305 SW 11th St- Superintendent Dr. Mooney anticipates students parking in the Orchard Ave lot as well as other areas. She stated there are not staff resources available to assign and monitor parking spaces. The school plans to designate areas for faculty parking. High school staff is attempting to control the crosswalk traffic at the W. Highland & S First St intersection. The beginning of each lunch period, staff has students cross in larger groups.

Nathanael Werner 1140 SW Simpson Ave #200 Bend- Mr. Werner is an architect with BBT Architects. There could be additional outlets or mechanisms put in place to move traffic out of the Orchard Ave lot quicker. Parking management of students in other lots may help. Ingress and egress in only from Orchard Ave for this lot. There is not an option for connecting this lot to the other lots, as a goal was to reduce traffic flowing onto 1st St and W Highland Ave.

Larry Gilbert 160 E Broadway Eugene- Mr. Gilbert is a principal landscape architect with Cameron McCarthy. The redesign of the parking lot greatly improves pedestrian access and movement and this will improve the overall circulation of the traffic.

Jose Aparicio 125 SE Court Ave Pendleton-Mr. Aparicio is a project manager with Wenaha Group. He has seen the effectiveness of identifying faculty parking at a recent project at a high school in Washington. The behavior of the students has to follow the rules.

Commissioner Hamm moved and Commissioner Fialka seconded to make the project file part of the record. Motion passed unanimously.

Commissioners discussed pedestrian traffic, security, student parking management program, and parking lot circulation.

The hearing was closed at 8:29PM.

Findings of Fact

- The Hermiston High School is serviced by three public streets; W Highland Ave, W Orchard Ave, and S 1st St. S 1st Street is classified as an urban major collector. W Orchard Avenue is classified as an urban minor collector. W Highland Avenue is classified as an urban minor arterial.
- The high school has driveway access to each street abutting the site. Driveways onto W Highland Ave and S 1st St are access controlled and limited to entrance or exit movements. One driveway onto S 1st St is full access and one driveway onto W Orchard Ave is full access.
- Crash history for the W Highland Ave/S 1st St intersection shows a higher than expected number of crashes during the last five years (13 crashes were reported). No one type of crash is predominant. Safety improvements may improve the overall function and safety of the intersection.
- Traffic volumes at W Highland Ave/S 1st St are highest during weekday afternoon times between 4:45 and 5:45 PM. However, relatively comparable volumes are seen during weekday morning and school afternoon peak hours.
- Westbound traffic at the W Highland Ave/S 1st St intersection sees significant queues during weekday morning, midday, and school afternoon hours. Observations show that the traffic queue extends eastward across the railroad crossing approximately 420 feet east of the intersection. Traffic entering Highland from the 395/Highland intersection encounters this standing queue and increases the queue length. The intersection operates above LOS D for the bulk of the day, but brief periods fall to LOS F.
    - The westbound vehicle delay occurs for a relatively short period each day and dissipates as school related traffic volumes decrease.
    - Midday peak hour vehicle queues form due to excessive delay attributable to pedestrian activity at the intersection as students leave and return to campus for lunch.
    - Pedestrians were observed to cross in large groups that stretch across multiple legs of the intersection causing long delays.
    - One incident in the crash history involved a pedestrian incident.
- The intersection of W Orchard Ave/S 1st St sees congestion during weekday AM and PM, and school PM peak hours due to the proximity of the intersection to the Orchard/395 signal. When the signal is green for Orchard Ave movements, congestion eases but then builds again waiting for the next signal cycle.
- The driveways accessing S 1st St contribute to the congestion at the W Highland and W Orchard intersections as all vehicles using the S 1st Street parking lots must travel to either intersection to exit the facility.
- A signal warrant analysis performed for the W Highland Ave/S 1st St intersection shows that of the nine criteria meriting installation of a signal, the intersection meets only one criterion, that of crash history. The standards of the MUTCD note that "…satisfaction of a signal warrant or warrants shall not in itself require installation of a traffic signal."
- Signalization of the W Highland Ave/S 1st St intersection will require installation of communication equipment for the Highland/395 intersection and will potentially require installation of crossing arms and safety equipment for the railroad crossing.
- The Hermiston School District states that the high school annex under consideration will not generate a near-term increase in student enrollment. As a result of the expansion proposed, eight modular classrooms will be removed and 13 permanent classrooms will be constructed, resulting in a net increase of five classrooms.
- Signalization of the W Highland/S 1st St intersection is not proportional to the impact of the development proposed by the school district or any single development. Signalization will have a benefit beyond the scope of any single property and will be a regional benefit. Therefore, it is appropriate for a condition of approval which requires the school district to provide a waiver of

remonstrance against the formation of a local improvement district for the construction of a future signal.

- Recommendations have been made by the traffic engineer to mitigate the deficiencies resulting from existing traffic operations at the site. Recommendations are incorporated into this report in a supplemental memo from Kittleson & Associates dated August 24, 2021.

Conditions of Approval

1. Applicant shall comply with all provisions of §92.12 of the Hermiston Code of Ordinances relating to the control of blowing dust during all phases of construction.
2. All new areas for the standing and maneuvering of vehicles as shown on Sheet L2.00 shall be paved prior to occupancy of the annex building.
3. All stormwater drainage shall be retained on site.
4. The driveway onto S 1st Street proposed for removal as part of the east overflow parking lot improvements shall be replaced with curb, gutter, and sidewalk meeting city specifications and design of improvements shall be approved by the city engineer.
5. The widened driveway from the north parking lot onto W Orchard Ave shall be designed in accordance with City of Hermiston standard plans and specifications and shall be approved by the city engineer.
6. The Hermiston School District shall construct on-site design and parking management measures to reduce school-generated trips along the S 1st Street corridor. These measures shall include the following modifications to the northernmost student parking lot surrounding the southeast side of Weber Field:
    a. Relocate the existing S. 1st Street driveway to the northern most lot frontage in order to increase driveway separation along S 1st Street and eliminate an existing offsetting driveway situation.
    b. Remove the modular classrooms and reestablish internal parking lot connections to the main parking lot to the south.
    c. Restripe the east overflow parking lot as shown on Sheet L2.00.
    d. Establish approximately 35 new staff parking stalls and designate them solely for staff.
    e. Establish a formal student parking management plan.
7. Prior to issuance of Certificate of Occupancy for the Annex building, Hermiston School District shall execute and record a waiver of the right to remonstrate against the formation of a local improvement district or other proportional share funding mechanism for transportation improvements that include signalization of the W Highland Avenue/S 1st Street intersection and related improvements, including but not limited to railroad crossing interconnect if constructed.
8. Parking lot lighting shall be designed in accordance with 157.179(D) and shall not reflect or project glare onto nearby residential uses on the north side of W Orchard Ave.
9. Parking improvements approved as part of the softball field construction in June of 2020 shall be completed as required by the planning commission as part of the softball approval.

Commissioners discussed various aspects of the student parking program, including

- Level of complexity
- Monitoring and review of the program
- Program approval
- Title of the program/plan

Commissioner Sargent moved and Commissioner Burns seconded to approve the Findings of Fact as written. Motion passed unanimously. Commissioner Burns moved and Commissioner Caplinger seconded to approve the Conditions of Approval as amended (6e). Motion passed unanimously. Commisioner Fialka

moved and Commissioner Hamm seconded to approve the Conditional Use with the amended Conditions of Approval. Motion passed unanimously.

Planner Comments and Unscheduled Communications

Construction has begun on the Dollar General store on W Highland Ave. January 2022 is the anticipated completion date.

The elevator shaft has been erected for the new City Hall building.

Five locations in the City have been selected to place Soofa digital signs. The signs will include news feeds, wayfinding information, and advertisements. Installation should be complete by the end of the year.

Adjourn

Chairman Saylor adjourned the meeting at 8:42PM.