

**Minutes of the Planning Commission
Of the City of Portland**
Held on Wednesday, April 12, 2023 at 7:00 P.M.
In Council Chambers at City Hall

Portland Planning Commission Members Present: Fitzsimmons, Parsons, Johnston, Kmetz

Absent: Roeser, Williamson

Staff: City Manager Gorman, City Clerk Miller

Guests: Paul LeBlanc of PLB Planning Group, LLC, David Lange, Becky & Kelly Ward of Ward's Garage, John Wooden, Tim Cunningham, Pastor Duane Bower of Epic Church

Chair Fitzsimmons called the meeting to order at 7:03 P.M. with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Motion by Kmetz, supported by Johnston, to excuse the absence of Members Roeser and Williamson.

All in favor. Approved.

Motion by Johnston, supported by Kmetz, to approve the proposed Agenda.

All in favor. Approved.

Motion by Kmetz, supported by Johnston, to approve the minutes of October 12, 2022, Planning Commission meeting.

All in favor. Approved.

There was no public comment.

Chair Fitzsimmons opened the Public Hearing at 7:05 P.M.

City Manager Gorman stated the purpose of the Public Hearing is to receive public comments on the proposed draft of the Revised Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Map.

Mr. LeBlanc provided a presentation on changes made in the Draft Revised Zoning Ordinance and the Zoning Map.

Becky Ward of Ward's Garage provided a history of their business and asked for clarification of the non-conforming definition.

Mr. LeBlanc stated that if the business were to be destroyed it could be rebuilt contingent on approval as a Special Land Use by the Planning Commission. He further noted under the current Zoning Ordinance this would not be permitted.

Mrs. Ward noted the improvements they have made to their properties of the years and stated the businesses along Maple St. (except for the theatre) are more service oriented than typical of a traditional commercial downtown.

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There was a discussion.

Tim Cunningham, property owner of 227 Maple St., stated his desire to make ½ of his building into a residential use sometime in the future.

He noted that in his discussions with Mr. LeBlanc and City Manager Gorman before the meeting they advised this could be a possibility in the future if the front of the building remains the same.

City Manager Gorman noted the issue regarding the Epic Church property. Currently, churches are permitted in every commercial district. The proposed revised ordinance would allow churches in only the C-1 District and would change Epic to a nonconforming use.

There was discussion around the possibility of adding places of worship as a use in the C-2 District as a special use with some limitations or leaving it as proposed and the church would be able to continue its use.

David Lange, property owner of 117 E. Grand River Ave. asked for clarification of the C-2 and C-1 Districts.

Mr. LeBlanc explained the advantages of the change.

John Wooden, homeowner of 217 James St., asked how the change from C-2 to C-1 would affect his residence.

Mr. LeBlanc explained the unique situation with this property and noted that specific language in the ordinance allows residential use.

Chair Fitzsimmons closed the Public Hearing at 8:20 P.M.

Under New Business, the Planning Commission considered revisions to Chapter 42 of the City of Portland Zoning Ordinance and changes to the Zoning Map.

Member Kmetz suggested a correction be made to Section 15-2 (a) and (e) are not in conflict of each other.

Member Parsons asked a description of the differences between whole house rentals and Bed & Breakfasts.

Mr. LeBlanc explained the differences and there was discussion regarding short-term rentals.

Mr. LeBlanc noted he will add a provision to allow residential units in single story buildings in the C-1 District in the rear of the building, as discussed to address the property at 227 Maple St.

There was further discussion.

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City Manager Gorman thanked the public for their attendance, questions, and discussion. He noted the good faith effort on the part of the City and Planning Commission in an effort to make improvements to the Zoning Ordinance.

Motion by Kmetz, supported by Parsons, to recommend the proposed revised Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Map to City Council for approval with an amendment to allow non-street facing ground floor residences in the C-1 District, and to address the conflict between Section 15-2 (a) and (e).

All in favor. Approved.

Under Planning Commission comments, Member Parsons noted how far the Planning Commission has come in making improvements to the Zoning Ordinance, the proposed revised document is much improved.

Motion by Parsons, supported by Kmetz, to adjourn the meeting at 8:35 P.M.

All in favor. Approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Jason Williamson, Secretary