

League of Women Voters of Pullman Observer Report

Name of Agency: Pullman Planning Commission Date: 1/22/2020

Observer Reporting: Helen Catanese Length of Meeting: 3.5 hours

Members Present: All others

Members Absent: Marcia Gossard

Others Present (e.g., media, public) 9 members of the public

Business pertaining to League Positions or topics of interest:

The meeting is focused on **two updates to the comprehensive plan.**

1. One to **change zoning** for a 36620 sq.ft. lot on Terre View Drive **from R2 to commercial** zoning. It is currently a home chiropractic office, and the owners want to make the transition. The staff support the change.

The commission discusses access to the lot. There is concern about an access easement with the neighboring property owner. The Director confirms that getting access from Grand avenue would require state approval and be unlikely.

Speakers in favor of the rezoning: The property owner says that the reason the office moved was damage from the flood. He seems in agreement with the office staff.

Neutral speakers: Former neighboring property owner who wrote the driveway easement. He confirms the specifics of the access agreement.

The commission unanimously agrees to approve the update to the comprehensive plan.

2. The other change is to **rezone** a 792,792 sq.ft. parcel of land on SE Clearwater Drive and SE Bypass Drive **from commercial to R4**. The property is currently vacant. The staff thinks the change should not be made, as they see the land as a valuable commercial location.

Speakers in favor of rezoning:

The property owner, who disagrees with staff's judgement. He says he is here because he was approached by a big developer who took an interest in building multi-family housing, demonstrating demand for housing in this location. He says in 9 years of development he's only sold one lot, indicating no commercial demand. He says that the developer can still go forward and place housing there under the current zoning, but they would need to put something commercial at ground level and they would prefer not to. The crux of his argument is that as a commercial lot, they could build any density of housing so long as that first-floor commercial requirement is met.

Commissioner Olsen asks whether the rezoning is a requirement for the sale, and the property owner confirms that it is.

Director Dickenson points out that the maximum density for C3 is the same as for R4, not higher.

Neutral speakers:

Another property owner argues that there is a new housing glut in Pullman. He cites 6000 beds of new upscale student housing. He says even if there is demand to build, there isn't likely to be enough demand to live there.

The commission discusses whether the need to have commercial use on the first floor is onerous or beneficial.

They ultimately vote to deny the change.

Discussion of complete streets policy:

The commission questions a city staff member on issues including snow removal.

A student from the college hill association speaks about designing streets to account for student populations.

Another resident says the policy is more sentiment than action.