



APPROVED: April 21, 2008

**CITY OF ALBANY
PLANNING COMMISSION
City Hall Council Chambers, 333 Broadalbin Street
Monday, March 3, 2008
5:15 p.m.**

MINUTES

Planning Commissioners present: Paul Davis, David Faller, Lolly Gibbs, Cordell Post, Wayne Rackham, Dala Rouse (arrived at 5:37 p.m.), Mark Spence, and Scott Whitney

Planning Commissioner absent: Michael Styler

Staff present: Planning Manager Don Donovan, Planner III Heather Hansen, and Administrative Assistant I Tracy Swett

Others present: Three others were in the audience, including Economic Development Director Dick Ebbert (arrived at approximately 5:40 p.m.)

CALL TO ORDER

Chair David Faller called the meeting to order at 5:15 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG

ROLL CALL

**LEGISLATIVE PUBLIC HEARING, Case File Number CP-01-08
(Chapter 3-Economic Development amendments/EOA Update)**

Faller called to order a public hearing on Planning file CP-01-08, proposed text amendments to Chapter 3-Economic Development of the Albany Comprehensive Plan in the Economic Development Background Summary section, and adoption of the 2007 Economic Opportunities Analysis Update as a background report to the Comprehensive Plan.

Staff Report:

Planner III Heather Hansen summarized the staff report. She explained that Statewide Planning Goal 9 Economic Development requires cities to provide an adequate number of sites of suitable size, type, location, and service level for a variety of industrial and commercial uses that are consistent with comprehensive plan policies. Both Albany's Comprehensive Plan and Strategic Plan contain economic development goals with similar strategies to ensure an adequate supply of commercial and industrial land for growth and expansion. Periodically the City inventories the commercial and industrial land within the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) and compares the inventory with expected demand. The Economic Opportunities Analysis (EOA), which is what the analysis is called, was last completed in 2000.

Since then economic trends have changed; development has occurred, reducing the amount of available land; and environmental constraints that limit development potential were not factored in with the 2000

EOA. The City contracted with Winterbrook Planning to update the EOA in 2007. The timeframe for the updated EOA is 20 years, 2007 through 2027.

The proposed amendments to the Comprehensive Plan focus on the background section in the Economic Development chapter. They incorporate the updated information from the EOA Update. Additional changes include incorporating the City's Strategic Plan goal of a healthy economy into the Comprehensive Plan text, updating the economic profile, and replacing the trends and projections. Staff also proposes to adopt the EOA as a background document to the Comprehensive Plan.

Hansen explained the information would be used by staff to determine the types of employment sites that will be needed inside the UGB. Site-specific recommendations are not included at this point. Sites will be reviewed individually and public input will be sought later. Staff will use the amended information to determine the need and use to support incoming applications from property owners seeking zone changes, as well as provide the basis for a UGB amendment should one be pursued.

She said the EOA Update conclusions found that the City has an adequate number of small sites, 5 acres or less, but there is a lack of adequate sites greater than 5 acres. One way to add sites would be to redesignate residential lands or expand the UGB. The recently completed Housing Needs Analysis found there is a surplus of residentially zoned land.

She reviewed the consultant's recommendations, including one industrial site in the 100- to 150-acre range; one to two industrial sites, including a business park site, in the 20- to 50-acre range; one to two commercial sites for a community shopping center or large format retail in the 20 – 50-acre range; one to two medium industrial sites for smaller manufacturing uses; and one medium commercial site in the 5 – 20-acre range for health services or larger neighborhood retail. The recommendations were discussed during a Planning Commission work session in December 2007. General support was received at that time, however the Commission identified the large commercial site for further discussion. Some felt 50 acres was too large, others felt more sites were needed.

Commissioner Mark Spence asked for information on the exact acreage that the recommendations involved. He cited the recommendation for one to two sites of 20 to 50 acres would require redesignation of between 20 and 100 acres. Hansen said Table 15 in the EOA memo (page 49, in agenda packet) identifies a total of 100 acres is needed.

Commissioner Lolly Gibs asked for an example of a 20-acre commercial development. Hansen showed a list on the overhead projection titled Local Examples of Commercial Development (Exhibit A, in agenda packet) which compared building size to site size of several local and regional developments including Home Depot, Costco, North Albany Village, Heritage Mall, and Keizer Station. Hansen explained that the portion of Keizer Station currently visible from the interstate is about 80 acres.

She then showed an overhead titled Types of Big Box, including discount department stores, category giants, outlet stores, and warehouse clubs (Exhibit B, in agenda file) to show each category's typical building size.

Faller said the staff report stated the Heritage Mall site was 32 acres but the overhead (Exhibit A, in agenda file) listed the site as 28 acres. Hansen said the 28-acre reference was only the main building. The remaining 4 acres included the out-parcels. Planning Manager Don Donovan said Pizza Hut, Red Robin, and the strip of retail stores to the west with Selco Credit Union were the out-parcels. He added that roughly each 100,000 of square footage (single-story building) needed 10 acres of land.

Spence asked if there was a formula to calculate the percentage of parking area. He wondered if the ranges given took into account multi-tiered parking. Hansen said multi-tiered parking is more common in high-density urban centers due to cost of land and population. More rural developments are generally comprised of single-story parking. Donovan said roughly 75 percent of a site is utilized for parking in Albany. Discussion followed.

Hansen showed another overhead titled Big Box Clusters (Exhibit C, in agenda file), including power centers, regional center, shopping center with regional examples of each.

Commissioner Paul Davis said the consultants identified a need for sites 5 acres or more. The way to do that would be to redesignate residential lands or add land to the UGB. Table 15 seems to indicate the way to redesignate would be with surplus sites in the 1- to 5-acre range. Hansen said not entirely. She put up the Suitable Employment Lands map on the overhead (Exhibit D, in agenda file) and pointed to an area east of the parcel commonly referred to as the Piano property which is currently residential but is referenced as industrial in several planning documents.

Spence said Table 15 (page 49, in agenda packet) referenced four sites in the 5- to 20-acre range currently in the inventory, but he could not locate those on the Suitable Employment Lands map (Exhibit D, in agenda file). Hansen said properties designated Commercial Light and Commercial General on the map are accounted for in the figure presented in Table 15.

Donovan explained that what the documents do is set the stage for the City to designate commercial and industrial land. There are three ways to implement the consultant's recommendations. The first would be to implement within the South Albany Area Plan that is currently on hold pending the outcome of these hearings. The second method would be for the City to proactively designate land should a need to do so be identified. The third mechanism is to use the EOA and Comprehensive Plan goals and policies to as the basis for findings in favor of property owner requests for zone changes.

Davis said the document did not include discouragement of big box retailers. Hansen agreed; she said only site size was identified as a concern during the Planning Commission's work session. Donovan said the idea of discouraging big box was still a choice and some people seemed to indicate a desire to do so at the joint City Council/Planning Commission work session in September 2007.

Hansen also said her research on the issue found that some communities do not prohibit big box retail, but rather limit building footprint. Exceptions to the limit are then granted if other community goals are achieved such as two-story structures with 50 percent of the parking contained within the structure, financial support for bus service, salary thresholds are met, etcetera.

Commissioner Cordell Post said he thought size limits with exceptions are common in areas where similar stores are within a short driving distance, citing Gresham and Portland. Albany residents drive at least 30 miles to shop those types of stores. Given the populations of both Albany and Corvallis and Albany's status as "Hub City," land should be made available.

Public Testimony:

John Pascone, 266 Crocker Lane NW, spoke representing the Albany Millersburg Economic Development Corporation (AMEDC). He said he agreed with most of the consultant's recommendations but was concerned that the impact from wetlands was understated. He suggested if property is rezoned, the City should consider setting aside larger sites so mitigation can be done onsite rather than off.

He was also concerned that limiting property size for commercial development may ignore economic trends and market factors and limit the feasibility of sites.

Janet Steele, 1540 Patrick Court NW, spoke as a President of the Albany Chamber of Commerce. She agreed with Pascone regarding restricting commercial and industrial properties. She said that local business owners need larger stores to anchor them and draw people in.

Davis asked if the EOA recommendations regarding site sizes are too small. Steel said the recommendations were for one to two sites in the 20- to 50-acre range, but someone mentioned limiting the size to 30 acres. She felt restricting the size to 30 acres would limit more than just big box stores. She said there was a need for shopping in the area.

Commissioner Wayne Rackham asked if limiting the size of the parcels would also restrict traffic patterns. Steele said traffic patterns are restricted by location. When developers come in, staff work with them to make sure the transportation system can accommodate the proposed development. Most are located on Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) roads and ODOT will ensure the patterns are appropriate.

Staff Response:

Hansen said to address Pascone's concern about understating the impact from wetlands, a 50-acre site with 20 acres of wetland would be listed as a 30-acre suitable site.

Chair Faller closed the public hearing at 5:55 p.m.

Commission Discussion:

Commissioner Dala Rouse reviewed inconsistencies within page 6, including references to the Albany-Millersburg area and omission of Tangent; omission of the grass seed industry; inclusion of Wah Chang, which is in Millersburg not Albany. Hansen said the first reference to Albany-Millersburg was an acknowledgement that there is a larger employment area, but the document is meant to concentrate on the City of Albany. Economic Development Director Dick Ebbert suggested changing the reference from Wah Chang to "ATI."

Rouse asked why Highway 99 was not included on page 7 under the heading Potential Growth Industries. Hansen agreed to add it.

Rouse asked whether the reference to the EOA Update on page 8 should be 2007 or 2008. Hansen said 2007 would be more appropriate since that was when the data collection was done and changes have since occurred.

Rouse indicated she had sent edits to Donovan on the goals and policies section. Hansen acknowledged receiving the edits from Donovan, but staff did not include them as the goals were not being amended at this time. The section was included so the Commission could see the entire chapter. Donovan assured Rouse that the edits would be kept and incorporated when appropriate.

Faller agreed with Post and Steele that more shopping was needed in Albany. Rouse said she feared Albany was too close to Salem to attract more retail. Discussion followed.

Spence asked what would happen if someone wanted to develop 28 acres if the City designated 50-acre commercial sites. Donovan said larger sites could develop incrementally. Hansen said the intent of the range was to give the City flexibility.

Rouse asked what would occur if a 50-acre site is owned by someone who does not want to have the zoning changed. Donovan said it would be rare for the City to proactively redesignate land. Even as a last resort, the proposal would be part of a public hearing and the owner would have an opportunity to speak to Council before any changes took place.

Rackham asked if the Commission could recommend that the newly designated areas be located on major highways. Donovan said yes, the purpose statement for each zoning district includes goals such as location. Discussion followed.

Spence asked if there was a way to identify a preference to enlarge the UGB. He pointed out there were several light industrial lands on the eastern edge of the UGB. If the boundary were expanded, more light industrial lands could be co-located there. Hansen said it would be considered if an analysis on a UGB expansion were pursued. If the City does consider redesignating or adding a large parcel to the UGB, a market analysis would be done to ensure there is a need and the parcel did not sit vacant for a long time.

Rackham said he liked that Hansen brought up incentives and believed those should be considered by Council.

Commission Action:

Post moved that the Planning Commission recommend that the City Council approve the application for the Comprehensive Plan Map amendment that would adopt text amendments to Chapter 3-Economic Development of the Albany Comprehensive Plan and adopt the 2007 Economic Opportunities Analysis Update as a background document to the Comprehensive Plan (File CP-01-08). The motion was based on the findings and conclusions of the staff report and testimony presented at the public hearing. Gibbs seconded the motion, which passed 8:0.

Rackham asked that the motion be amended to delete the reference to the Map amendment since no map amendments were proposed. Post agreed to the amendment and Spence seconded the amendment. A vote was called and the motion amendment carried 8:0.

ACTIVITY UPDATE

Donovan said Links Club Estates will be before Council on March 26. A senior living community will come before the Commission in a few months.

Faller asked if the two cases (Thornton Lake Estates and Fabian Estates) were still under appeal at the State Land Use Board of Appeals (LUBA). Donovan said yes.

Rouse asked if the tax increment financing district was still at LUBA. Donovan said yes. The case is being handed by the Economic Development Department, not Community Development.

NEXT MEETING DATE

No Planning Commission meetings are currently scheduled at this time.

Albany Planning Commission
Monday, March 3, 2008

ADJOURNMENT

Hearing no further business, Chair Faller adjourned the meeting at 6:16 p.m.

Submitted by

Signature on file

Tracy Swett
Administrative Assistant I

Reviewed by

Signature on file

Don Donovan
Planning Manager

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