

UMATILLA COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
Meeting of Thursday, September 26, 2013
6:30 p.m., Umatilla County Justice Center, Media Room
Pendleton, Oregon

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COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Randy Randall (Chair), Gary Rhinhart, Tammie Williams, David Lee, Don Marlatt, Suni Danforth.

ABSENT: John Standley, Don Wysocki.

STAFF: Richard Jennings, Julie Alford, Connie Hendrickson

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NOTE: THE FOLLOWING IS A SUMMARY OF THE MEETING. A RECORDING OF THE MEETING IS AVAILABLE AT THE PLANNING DEPARTMENT OFFICE.

CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Randall called the hearing to order at 6:30 p.m.

Approval of Minutes:

Commissioner Rhinhart made a motion to approve the minutes of the August 22, 2013 hearing as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Williams and the minutes were approved by consensus.

Chairman Randall read the opening statement. He called for abstentions, biases, conflict of interest or declarations of ex parte contact. There were none.

New Hearing:

CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT, #C-1227-13 application submitted by ROHRMAN MOTOR COMPANY, TOM DENCHEL, PRESIDENT. The applicant requests a conditional use permit for "Other Uses Similar" to establish a car dealership on Assessor Map 5N 28 27-DB tax lots 402, 500, 1206, 1360 and 1400. The majority of this property is zoned Light Industrial (LI) and a smaller portion is zoned Rural Service Commercial (RSC). The property is adjacent to the east side of OR Highway 395 North and between Klaus and Robnet Roads. Approval of the request would result in the construction and development of a Chrysler, Dodge, Jeep, Ram dealership with sales, service and maintenance of motor vehicles. The standards of review for the conditional use permit are found in the Umatilla County Development Code, Section 152.303 (A) (17), Section 152.612 (D) and (E), Section 152.615 and Section 152.616 (VV).

Staff Report:

Senior Planner Richard Jennings said the property for the proposed car dealership is on Highway 395 and Klaus Road north of Hermiston. There are several parcels equaling close to eight acres which make up the proposed development. The majority of the property is zoned Light Industrial (LI) but a portion of the property is zoned Retail

Service Commercial (RSC). A truck service/repair shop is a permitted use in the Light Industrial zone but a car dealership is not so this conditional use permit request is for Other Uses Similar. A car dealership with a shop is similar to uses allowed in the Light Industrial zone.

The findings in the Commissioners' packets identify the details of the criteria the applicant must meet. The only precedent condition of approval placed on the application was for the applicant to pay the advertising cost for the required public notice in the newspaper. As the hearing progresses additional conditions can be required if the Commissioners think it is necessary.

Applicant testimony:

The attorney for Rohrman Motor Company, David Hadley, 130 SE 3rd St., Hermiston, Oregon began by introducing the gentlemen with him as property owner Don Headding, Denchel Group member Nick Kennedy and Denchel Group business partner Tim Buffington. Mr. Hadley identified the property on the map for the commissioners pointing out that the parcels surrounding the LI parcel were zoned RSC. The land has had a variety of uses in the past which property owner Dan Headding would be talking about when he addressed the Commissioners. There are four dedicated approaches to the property and the Denchel Group was working with ODOT (Oregon Department of Transportation) to obtain access permits to determine optimum traffic flow.

Applicant testimony:

Dan Headding, 440 W. Harper Road, Hermiston, Oregon referred to the map of the property on the wall as he pointed out the parcels that he purchased in 1999. He gave a history of the different uses on the land including a used car lot and trailer sales operated by the previous property owner. Mr. Headding started and later expanded a forklift business, a hydraulics company and a shop for forklift repairs. At one time, his business had employed as many as 25 employees but with the downturn in the economy he had to scale back his operation.

Mr. Headding said he and the Denchel Group are currently putting together a lease agreement for a portion of the land. Commissioner Marlatt asked if Mr. Headding would continue to operate his business on the lots and Mr. Headding said he was in the process of winding down his business.

Commissioner Rhinhart asked about the source of the water supply for the property and Mr. Headding said it was a municipal water source. He went on to say that the Denchel Group would be submitting an application with DEQ (Department of Environmental Quality) for the installation of a new septic system in order to accommodate the new office and showroom. Discussion followed.

Commissioner Danforth asked if there were plans to combine the individual tax lots into one. Mr. Headding said that until the end of the lease, the Denchel Group had an option to purchase the property. If they did purchase the property they would probably want to

combine the tax lots at that time. He went on to say that if he retained ownership of the property he might combine some but not all of the property.

Applicant testimony:

Tim Buffington, 555 Hwy 395, Hermiston, OR is a co-owner of Tom Denchel Ford. Mr. Buffington said that they own a Ford dealership in Hermiston and would like to continue to grow business in Umatilla County and the surrounding communities in an effort to maintain their participation in the benevolent activities in which they have been involved. The goal of the Denchel Group is to create more jobs in Umatilla County. This is a big investment and will employ about 45 or more people.

Mr. Buffington said there will be a sales showroom, accounting office, shop and parts department and a reception area and customer lounge. When the project is completed the property will be aesthetically pleasing with new structures, lighting, signage and they would be flying the American flag.

There were no opponents and no comments from public agencies. Mr. Jennings said he had spoken with Tom Lapp from ODOT but they had not provided written comment.

As a follow-up to the description of what the new facility would look like, Mr. Hadley shared a photo of the proposed office building which would be attached to the new show room explaining that it will be a modular office structure. Mr. Buffington added that Chrysler had a stringent set of guidelines for sign requirements and the new signs will be very attractive.

Commissioner Rhinhart asked when they expected the store to be open for business. Mr. Buffington stated that they received notification on September 25th that they were an official Chrysler dealer and were planning for a November 1st opening. Because this is a new business startup and there are many details to attend to, that date could be pushed back.

Chairman Randall closed the hearing for deliberations. Commissioner Williams said that after the recent presentation by the Planning Department regarding the cleanup of Hwy 395, she thinks it is a great project to help move toward the goal of beautifying that area. Discussion followed.

Commissioner Rhinhart moved to approve Conditional Use Permit #C-1227-13 with the outlined conditions and to accept the findings as written. Commissioner Marlatt seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Other business:

Chairman Randall informed the audience that the next scheduled Planning Commission hearing would be on Thursday, October 24, 2013 at 6:30 p.m. in the Justice Center Media Room. He also announced that there would be a joint Board of Commissioners/Planning Commission meeting on Thursday, November 14th to discuss the Building Codes program.

Mr. Jennings explained that the county is proposing to assume the State Building Codes program for areas within the counties' jurisdiction. The Planning Department will be submitting the required paperwork to start the process of the assumption of the program to the Building Codes department on October 1st. There will be two public meetings held to receive comments. The first of those meetings is November 14th in Pendleton and the next one will be on December 5th in Hermiston. There are many details to work through during this process but the goal of the assumption of the program is to make improvements and to help streamline the permitting process.

Chairman Randall adjourned the meeting at 7:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Connie Hendrickson
Administrative Assistant

Adopted by the Umatilla County Planning Commission on October 24, 2013