

## **ASTORIA PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING**

Astoria City Hall  
August 25, 2015

### CALL TO ORDER:

President Pearson called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.

### ROLL CALL:

Commissioners Present: President David Pearson, Vice President McLaren Innes, Kent Easom, Sean Fitzpatrick, Daryl Moore, Jan Mitchell and Frank Spence

Staff Present: Interim Planner Mike Morgan, Community Development Director Kevin Cronin  
The meeting is recorded and will be transcribed by ABC Transcription Services, Inc.

### APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

President Pearson asked for approval of the minutes of the July 28, 2015 meeting.

Commissioners and Staff noted the following corrections:

- Acting President Innes should be changed to Vice President Innes throughout the minutes.
- Page 2, paragraph 9, next to last sentence – Commissioner Mitchell's name was misspelled.
- Page 2, paragraph 9, last sentence – The word "the" was misspelled.
- Page 3, paragraph 2, first sentence – Interim President should be changed to Vice President Innes.

Commissioner Easom moved that the Astoria Planning Commission approve the minutes as amended; seconded by Commissioner Mitchell. Motion passed unanimously.

### PUBLIC HEARINGS:

President Pearson explained the procedures governing the conduct of public hearings to the audience and advised that handouts of the substantive review criteria were available from Staff.

### ITEM 4(a):

CU03-04 Permit Extension request for Conditional Use CU03-04 by Elisabeth Nelson for a temporary use permit for one year, to August 26, 2016 to operate the Astoria Conservatory of Music in the existing church structure at 1103 Grand Avenue in the R-3, High Density Residential zone.

President Pearson asked if anyone objected to the jurisdiction of the Planning Commission to hear this matter at this time. There were no objections. He asked if any member of the Planning Commission had any conflicts of interest or ex parte contacts to declare.

Commissioner Fitzpatrick declared a potential conflict of interest. He is a member of the church's congregation, but believed he could make an unbiased decision. He offered to recuse himself. However, the Commission and Staff agreed this was not necessary and Commissioner Fitzpatrick said he would vote.

Commissioner Moore declared a potential conflict of interest. He and his children have taken classes at the Astoria Conservatory of Music. However, he believed he could still vote impartially.

President Pearson asked Staff to present the Staff report and recommendation.

Interim Planner Morgan reviewed the written Staff report. No correspondence had been received and Staff recommended approval of the request.

President Pearson opened the public hearing and confirmed there was no presentation by the Applicant. He called for any testimony in favor of, impartial to, or opposed to the application. Hearing none, he closed the public hearing and called for Commission discussion and deliberation.

Vice President Innes said she fully supported the temporary use because it was a unique source for good training in the community.

Commissioner Fitzpatrick believed the Conservatory made a good neighbor because it does not cause parking issues and the students do not cause problems in the neighborhood. He noted that the space occupied by the Conservatory was built as a church school in 1938 and this is a good continued use for the space.

Commissioner Moore said as a student, he agreed with Commissioner Fitzpatrick and supported the request.

Commissioner Mitchell believed the Conservatory was a great use for the church. Music is something one expects to hear from a church and she would be surprised if there were any complaints from the neighbors. She asked if renewing the permit annually was the best way to handle this situation.

Interim Planner Morgan said he had spoken to former Planner Rosemary Johnson about this. He believed a Code change would be appropriate. Staff could recommend a specific code amendment that would allow this use without causing problems in the rest of the R-3 zones. He confirmed the applicant had to pay a fee each year to apply for the extension.

Director Cronin added that the new City Planner will be tasked with recommending annual code updates to City Council on a regular basis.

President Pearson believed the application met all of the criteria the Planning Commission had been asked to review.

Vice President Innes moved that the Astoria Planning Commission adopt the Findings and Conclusions contained in the Staff report and approve Permit Extension request for Conditional Use CU03-04 by Elisabeth Nelson; seconded by Commissioner Spence. Motion passed unanimously.

President Pearson read the rules of appeal into the record.

#### ITEM 4(b):

CU15-02                      Conditional Use CU15-02 by Frank Linza to operate a bed and breakfast in an existing single family dwelling at 364 Floral in the R-3, High Density Residential zone.

President Pearson asked if anyone objected to the jurisdiction of the Planning Commission to hear this matter at this time. There were no objections. He asked if any member of the Planning Commission had any conflicts of interest or ex parte contacts to declare. There were none.

All of the Commissioners confirmed for Staff that they were familiar with the site. Director Cronin noted the importance of visiting a site, especially when Staff is recommending denial of a request, as being on site puts the application into context.

President Pearson asked Staff to present the Staff report and recommendation.

Interim Planner Morgan reviewed the written Staff report. Staff recommended denial of the request due to inadequate parking. The Applicant recently had a survey completed, is attempting to find additional parking spaces, and therefore has requested a continuance. Extensive correspondence had been received, including letters from two neighbors and a petition containing between 12 and 15 signatures from neighboring property owners. All correspondence has been entered into the record.

Vice President Innes asked if the owners were required to live in the property. Interim Planner Morgan explained that the zoning ordinance requires an owner or manager to live in the bed and breakfast. The Applicant has



stated he does live in the building at 364 Floral. He also owns the property at 366 Floral, but he has certified that he plans to live at 364 Floral and manage the bed and breakfast.

President Pearson asked if Staff had information on combining parking spaces on multiple properties owned by the same person. Interim Planner Morgan said if there was adequate parking on 366 Floral, the Applicant could utilize the space on that property to satisfy parking requirements for 364 Floral. However, the driveway between the two properties only satisfies the parking requirements for the house at 366 Floral. A total of seven parking spaces would be needed for both properties. Therefore, even with the two properties combined parking was still inadequate.

President Pearson opened the public hearing and called for a presentation by the Applicant.

Frank Linza, 364 Floral, Astoria, said he purchased the property at 366 Floral over three years ago and realized the property at 364 Floral was a problem. He told the owner he wanted to purchase the property so he could make everyone happy and had noted the renters would have weekend parties, which created a dangerous situation on Floral. He purchased the property at 364 Floral in January 2015. He and his wife decided the best way to control the traffic to the property would be to control who enters the house and where people park. He renovated the house several months ago and applied for a lodging permit. He has had several guests in the house over the last two months and has received no complaints. No one knows the guests are at the house because he controls the situation. The house is beautiful and represents Astoria. For 30 years, his family operated a business in Aspen, Colorado and worked with that City and tourists. He believed this experience would make him an excellent representative to the City of Astoria. While he had not been able to go door to door, he had spoken with several of his neighbors about his plans to attempt to monitor traffic. Some people believe he is putting in a Super 8, but this is not true. He lives at 364 Floral and his wife owns and lives at 366 Floral. This has worked well so far, but he is a little bit short on parking. The survey was completed on Friday, August 21<sup>st</sup> and he met with Interim Planner Morgan to discuss options. He believed he had an excellent opportunity to lease property from the City and private landowners within 200 feet of the home. He hoped the Commission would table the discussion until September so that he could show the Commission a lease for at least three parking spaces within 200 feet of the home. If the Commissioners took the time to visit the property, they would understand that the view from the property makes it a spectacular bed and breakfast. In the 3½ years he has lived in Astoria, he has realized there is a huge shortage of housing, especially during salmon season. He is limiting traffic and prohibiting boats and trailers. The house is just a quaint bed and breakfast on a dead end street. He did not plan to have wedding rehearsals or any other big events because he wants to limit the cars on the property to one or two. He wants to keep the area quiet instead of turning it into a million dollar business.

Commissioner Easom asked if Mr. Linza had applied for a lease with the City.

Mr. Linza explained that he had just received the survey at 5:30 pm on Friday, August 21<sup>st</sup>. He has not had time to meet with the City to discuss a lease. The potential to lease property from the City exists because Floral was supposed to go through to Columbia. Landslide issues prevented the City from going through with that plan. He pointed to the dead end on the Power Point Presentation and explained that the area between Floral and Columbia was unincorporated City property that could be leased for an extended time and he could put in a gravel parking lot. There is also some private land in the area. He was unable to contact the owner over the weekend because the owner is currently out of state. This is why he has requested the hearing be continued for one more month.

Commissioner Mitchell asked if Mr. Linza planned to live next door to the three-bedroom bed and breakfast.

Mr. Linza said he set up separate quarters in a large shop area as his bedroom. His living quarters are separate from the rest of the house at 364 Floral and his wife lives at 366 Floral. He is in Astoria all the time, but his wife is still transferring with her job. She works for Providence Health Care and would like to get a job at Seaside, but a full time opportunity has not yet come available. She is in Astoria on weekends. Her transfer is just a matter of time because she has an interview scheduled at Providence Seaside. He waited patiently for three years to obtain this property. He has seen a huge difference in the flow of traffic. There were four or five renters in the house with no parking available. Since he has taken control of the house, congestion has eased up. His biggest problem is that Google shows that Floral Street goes through. Drivers are constantly turning around and he would like to work out something with the City that allows drivers to turn around easier.



Commissioner Moore said the Staff report indicates lack of parking is the primary reason for recommending denial of the request. The Applicant is suggesting he may have a resolution to the parking issues. He asked if the Applicant's proposal included on-street parking in front of both of the houses as part of the solution.

Mr. Linza said no. He has removed all of the fencing on both properties and installed pavers to provide off-street parking. He preferred the houseguests not use on-street parking. He owns the whole corner, but is two or three parking spaces short of meeting the requirements. He will try his best to obtain these additional parking spaces from the City or private property owners. Parking on the pavers in front of the house adjacent to the street would be included in the total required parking spaces. His drawings show that all of the required parking spaces would be off-street parking. He understood parking is a premium in the area and he has tried his best to get his neighbors to move their junk cars. However, he believed the situation could be controlled.

President Pearson called for any testimony in favor of the application.

William (Jake) Chadney, 350 Floral Street, Astoria, said his house was at the end of the street. After reading an article in the *Daily Astorian* about Airbnb, he suggested Mr. Linza turn 364 Floral into a bed and breakfast. He used to call the property the pirate house when people from Fort George Brewery lived there because they flew a flag with a skull and crossbones. He liked the people that lived there, but the house was a big nuisance because the residents would park near his house and his neighbor's house, making it difficult for them to get in and out. He bears the brunt of what occurs at the end of the street because everyone turns around in front of his house. Even though the street is a dead end, there is no cul-de-sac or provision in the road to accommodate turning around. Drivers usually end up using his driveway to turn around. A bed and breakfast will only be used part of the time instead of 24/7 and provide a way for Mr. Linza to control who is on the property. This is why he supports the application. He knew Mr. Linza had guests at the property a couple of times, but they were not noticeable. There were a lot of trucks at the property during the construction process, but this is to be expected during a renovation. He believed a bed and breakfast would simplify the situation in the neighborhood by having people on the property part-time instead of full-time. He believed that renting the house could cause more problems.

President Pearson called for any testimony impartial to the application.

Tom Gill, 407 Floral Street, Astoria, said he signed a petition opposing the application, but he intended to make impartial comments and pose questions he would like the Commission to consider. He thanked the Planning Commission for their service and for conducting this public hearing. He admired Mr. Linza's work ethic, believed he had great taste, and that he had done a beautiful job on both houses. He understood after speaking with Mr. Linza that the house at 366 Floral was intended as a place for Mr. Linza to retire and the house at 364 Floral was intended for visiting family members. Now, his plans have morphed into this commercial enterprise and he wondered where the plans would go from here. The Staff report indicates the driveway to the east of the property at 364 Floral is 26 feet long. He did not believe two automobiles could fit within 26 feet, except maybe compact vehicles. In the ten years he has lived on Floral, he has rarely seen two vehicles parked in that driveway. When there were two vehicles in the driveway, they almost always overlapped into the right-of-way of the street. The southwest portion of Floral is a very narrow fill for a causeway where two cars cannot pass each other. He was concerned that an obstruction would prevent fire equipment from getting down the street. Any traffic increase would be a matter of concern. The street makes a very tight curve at 407 Floral and extends down a hill to a neighborhood where small children play in the street. There have been a few instances of drivers speeding. He understood that Kingston Avenue has been platted for the space at the end of Floral Street. An attempt to vacate the space was not approved by the City, so he did know if the space should be considered for additional parking.

President Pearson called for any testimony opposed to the application.

Al Mackey, 372 Floral Street, Astoria, said he was known as the unofficial mayor of Floral Street. He believed the end of the road was the only viable location for a bed and breakfast. A bed and breakfast should not be located along the street because of parking issues and accessibility for emergency vehicles. He asked the Planning Commission to deny the request. He has lived on Floral Street for about 80 years and knew quite a bit about the history of the neighborhood. He told the story of a church, built in the neighborhood in the 1920s, that had to be torn down because it was difficult for people to walk up the hill to get to the church. He had admired the church's engineering and architecture, but it did not have any posts supporting its sides. He reiterated that Mr. Chadney's



house was the only viable location for a bed and breakfast because it is located at the end of the street and Mr. Chadney would be on site to ensure the business would be run properly.

Cheryl Allen, 368 Floral Street, Astoria, confirmed that the Planning Commission had read all of her letters, including one that was submitted Friday, August 21st. She now understood why her retaining wall had been violated. The letters explain how she feels about this application. She purchased her house in 1994 and has lived there since 2003. She never had any problems with the residents from Fort George. They were respectful and parked on the street where parking was available. No one ever parked in front of her house. The pictures show there have been major parking problems in the last few months. The garbage trucks have traditionally turned around on Elsie and with the double parking, delivery drivers are unable to make it down the street. When she had her kitchen redone, Home Depot had to drive a forklift up the street because they were unable to get their truck to her house. Fire engines have never been on Floral Street at Christmas time because they are unable to get up the street. Parking is an issue. She believed Mr. Linza did an outstanding job on both houses. Originally, when he bought the house next to her it was to be used as a retirement home. Later, when he bought the second house, he said he wished he had not put so much money into the first house. The bed and breakfast idea came up within the last month. Mr. Linza had suggested she have a bed and breakfast, but her home only has two bedrooms and no parking. There is one parking space across the street, next to land leased from the City by Mr. Matthew. Her daughter was parking her car there and she knew it should not have been. Mr. Matthew called the police to her house to ask that the car be removed. She has two dedicated parking spaces in front of her house, which was built in 1918. She was very concerned about the drainage of her property. She had sent pictures to the Planning Commission and said she wrote the letters because she tends to ramble. She was totally against the bed and breakfast. There have only been a few times someone double-parked in front of her, preventing her from getting to work. She loves her house and the bed and breakfast will change the integrity of the neighborhood. All summer, a dog was barking 20 or 30 feet from her house. She does not say anything to her neighbors. When she watches her grandbaby, the baby could run into the street in the blink of an eye. Unfamiliar people coming up the street have no idea how small the street is. People that are not from the area whiz up the street. If anyone should have a bed and breakfast, it should be the man who owns the house across the street from her because he lives in Germany. She agreed with Mr. Chadney, but said most of the turn-arounds were done on Elsie directly across from her lot. This is how it has been for years. She did not understand why permits were not involved. When she told Community Development Director Cronin what was going on in her side yard, he said she needed a permit because her water lines run almost underneath her walkway. Her insurance company was looking into the situation. She did not understand how so much work could be done without permits. The bed and breakfast was not Mr. Linza's original plan, but he saved the house by doing such an awesome job at the renovation.

Commissioner Spence asked Ms. Allen to show him where Elsie is on the map. She pointed to Elsie and noted her house, her two parking spots, and the place her daughter parked. She said the garbage men have never been to that part of the street, at least since 2003 when she began living there full time. She added that if Mr. Linza had begun living in his house full time, it was only within the last two weeks. She confirmed the Commissioners had seen the pictures she submitted to show the double parking and said it has occurred all summer. She used the map to show where the garbage men turn around, noting that she can see them from her bedroom window. She woke up one morning to find her entire side yard being compromised, so she asked Mr. Linza to conduct the survey. Her house was built in 1918, so it is old. However, the side yard is not useable because it is not safe.

Interim Planner Morgan confirmed that Elsie was a City street.

Ms. Allen said she had the original plans and other documents for the house at the intersection of Elsie and Floral Streets and explained where the private property was located in relation to the right-of-way.

Ellen Levy, 420 Floral Street, Astoria, said her comments might be considered impartial. She was concerned with traffic and parking. When she visits Mr. Mackey, she must drive all the way to the end of the street, turn around at the last house, and come back down the street to park west of the house at 376 Floral. There is no other place to turn around. When one of the houses was being worked on, a kid fell off the roof and broke his leg and hip. The ambulance and fire truck were not able to get down the street because it is so tight and only has one lane. The street is on a hill, so if a driver goes off the road, they end up on Alameda. She questioned how Mr. Linza would control traffic if one of his guests wanted to bring a fishing boat on a trailer. There is no way for a boat or recreational vehicle to turn around on Floral Street. She asked what kind of vehicles would be parked on



the property, small cars or trucks with extended cabs or beds. She also wanted to know if guests would be asked in advance of their arrival what kind of vehicle they would be bringing. There is no room for errors and there is no parking. Gossip has indicated that three properties, 366, 364, and the house at the very end of Floral, are potential bed and breakfasts in the making. She asked if approving this application would set a precedent. She was concerned that her residential neighborhood would become a commercial area. Making a gravel lot would require tree removal, but the trees are the only thing holding the hill in place. She asked who would be responsible for a landslide if the trees were removed to put in a parking lot. At the end of Floral at the stop sign, there is only 1½ lanes because the people who live on the southwest side of the street park on the street. Drivers cannot see cars making a right hand turn to go up Floral. She asked who would control the extra traffic and traffic of people not familiar with the area. The City will have to change the street at the stop sign because there is no room for error, especially in the winter. If a car misses the stop sign, it will end up at the river. If the City is going to add traffic in this area, the City will have to make plans.

Cheryl Allen, 368 Floral Street, Astoria, said the hill behind the red house has slid within the last 13 years and the area is a very dangerous, known slide area.

Dennis Cranston, 403 Floral Street, Astoria, said his house was near the narrow causeway. It was built in 1966 by a fishing captain named Mr. Brooks. Floral Street was a dirt road at the time and he appreciated the street improvements done by the City since then. At one time, he had rented a 10-foot U-Haul truck and the power steering had stopped working. He used the map to show where he attempted to turn around, noting that eventually he was able to turn around with a 14-point turn. He said the picture did not show the cars parked in the area. Drivers cannot get through when cars are parked there. One of the garbage trucks does come down the street and is able to turn around because it is a smaller truck. The larger garbage trucks, UPS trucks, and FedEx trucks turn around in his driveway or in the old Chinook extension, where the City decided not to build a road because of landslides. Traffic is a problem and he was concerned about the type of people that would come in for the bed and breakfast. He recently used Airbnb to rent accommodations at Core Condo Group in San Diego, California. The trip was his son's bachelor party and 12 men were partying in the rental until 5 am. Situations like this really do occur. He was also concerned about the construction of the house. The electrical systems are probably not of commercial quality since the house is a residential property. He believed the electrical systems should be commercial, but understood this was likely part of the permitting process. He also believed he should speak on behalf of those who cannot speak. Floral Street is mostly green space and each year, three or four deer have babies and use a little path through the area. The deer are like children. When strangers come zipping down the road, even at 20 miles per hour, the deer do not have a chance. He believed the City should consider the deer as part of the tourist attractions. Everyone in the neighborhood feeds the deer and they are part of the community. He believed the wildlife should be considered.

President Pearson confirmed there were no more public comments and called for the Applicant's rebuttal.

Mr. Linza said the great thing about this meeting has been the opportunity for him to hear from each of his neighbors because he had not been able to go door to door to speak with them. He is a licensed and bonded contractor and had all new wiring installed in both houses. He upgraded the house at 364 Floral with handrails and extra lighting. He has 30 years of experience and has worked with the City of Aspen. He has provided quite a bit of off street parking. Elsie is the neighborhood's turn-around. All summer, he had asked his neighbor kindly to move her junk car. He was able to back up his 22-foot truck and 24-foot trailer in the neighborhood, but needed help to avoid hitting the car while backing up. He finally had to figure out how to have the car moved because he was so fearful of hitting it. He questioned why his neighbor parked the junk car in the public parking across the street even though she had two parking spaces in front of her house. He has spent a lot of money upgrading the houses and working on the parking issues. However, it seems as if some people are just fighting him tooth and nail. He approached Ms. Allen about his idea for a bed and breakfast three months ago and she indicated she had no problems with it as long as he took care of the parking. She has been mad since he removed a stump, which he did not understand. He was trying to work with all of his neighbors. He wants the bed and breakfast so he can control the area, not make money.

President Pearson called for closing comments of Staff.

Staff noted the Applicant had just received the survey and would like a continuance. Applicants are required to obtain permits for any City work that is to be done or a change of occupancy. The City cannot require any major



upgrades unless a property is being changed from residential to commercial. Most permits for work on residential properties are approved administratively.

President Pearson closed the public hearing and called for Commission discussion and deliberation.

Commissioner Easom confirmed the Applicant had formally requested a continuance.

President Pearson asked Staff to explain Criterion F on Page 5 of the Staff report. He also wanted to know how a road is determined to be narrow. Staff explained that Floral Street is about 18 feet wide, which is the bare minimum for a fire truck. There is no on street parking along most of the street. The Comprehensive Plan requires the site to have a layout adequate for transportation activities and suitability is partially determined by the potential impact of parking facilities on safety, traffic flow and control, and emergency vehicle movement. Therefore, Staff determined that without on street parking, it would be difficult to meet this criterion. The Transportation System Plan (TSP) defines standards for streets and Floral does not comply with the current standards. A new street would have sidewalks and facilities for emergency response, but Floral is old and narrow.

Commissioner Mitchell noted that the age of the community has resulted in many substandard streets. She asked if any entity in the community would have any kind of regulatory capacity over these expanded residential uses in neighborhoods. The Planning Commission recently reviewed a similar request to increase temporary housing and the housing study indicates this may be an issue the Planning Commission should consider. Interim Planner Morgan said there was no regulatory body tasked with overseeing vacation rentals and home stay lodging, but the industry regulates itself. For example, Airbnb imposes regulations on its clients that ensure safety, like requiring a fire extinguisher and posting emergency contact information on the refrigerator. If Astoria ever implemented a vacation rental dwelling ordinance, standards could be included.

Commissioner Mitchell understood that if parking is an issue, the neighborhood must tell the City. Director Cronin added that Astoria's zoning ordinance is very permissive and contains three classifications; home stay lodging, bed and breakfast, and inn. The bed and breakfast allows from three to seven units. These uses are allowed throughout the R-3 zone, which covers large swaths of the historic center of town. Traditionally, Astoria has been very friendly towards these uses. However, these uses can sometimes cause infrastructure and transportation problems. All of the streets above downtown, including Grand, Franklin, and Irving have bed and breakfasts, and the City does not have a lot of problem with them.

Commissioner Moore said he drove by the property on Saturday and the map does not tell the whole story. Along some parts of the road, he was uncomfortable driving through the narrow spots. Once he arrived at the property, he was unsure where he should turn around. He assumed there was a place to turn around, but being unfamiliar with the area, he did not know where it was. Elsie looked like a driveway and he did not feel comfortable turning around in someone's driveway, so he drove to the end of road hoping to find a place to turn around. However, he ended up backing into someone's driveway to turn around, which he felt bad about. The road is very crowded. It did not appear the yard was deep enough to accommodate off-street parking and he believed cars would extend into the road a little bit. Adding a few more cars could make the road impossible to navigate, especially in an emergency situation. He would support a continuance if the Applicant presented a parking solution that did not add cars to the roadway. However, he was not in favor of parking on the street, adjacent to the street, or in the driveways.

Commissioner Spence agreed with Commissioner Moore. He drove by the property on Friday and was also very uncomfortable driving through the neighborhood because it was very tight. People who are not supposed to be parking on the right-of-way still encroach on the street. He was concerned that fire engines and ambulances could not get up the street. The area is too tight and too dense to accommodate more vehicles. He believed that when residents had guests, they had no choice but to park on the street. He had to turn around in the driveway at the end of the street, but it was still tight because of the other vehicles in the driveway. He was not in favor of adding more traffic and vehicles to Floral Street.

Commissioner Easom agreed the parking was an issue and he believed Applicants should present complete parking plans that include the exact location and sizes of parking spaces. He was not concerned with the narrowness of the street because he had no problems getting through in his large vehicle. A family with kids would be going in and out during the week and all weekend long. He did not believe traffic from a bed and



breakfast would be substantially greater than if a family lived in the house. Tenants can be awful and getting the landlord to remove the tenants can be very difficult. Therefore, he was in favor of granting a continuance. Commissioner Mitchell added that she was as well.

Vice President Innes said she would not want to live in the neighborhood with more cars. However, she would like to allow the continuance.

President Pearson said the Planning Commission has reviewed many bed and breakfasts over the years. They are usually approved outright even though no one really wants to live next to a bed and breakfast. He was concerned about access from Floral to the site and was unsure he would vote to approve the request even if the applicant was able to park 10 cars in the adjacent lot. Visitors have expectations about bed and breakfasts that some Astoria's other sites provide, like a place to turn around, available parking, and access. However, he would consider a continuation.

Commissioner Fitzpatrick said he would consider a continuance, but was very concerned about the parking. He appreciated and respected the work that Mr. Linza has done to the property. He visits a friend who lives on a section of Floral that has curbs and gutters and he was thankful he did not have to look for parking at the end of Floral.

Commissioner Easom moved that the Astoria Planning Commission continue Conditional Use CU15-02 by Frank Linza to September 16, 2015 at 6:30pm; seconded by Commissioner Moore. Motion passed unanimously.

President Pearson stated he would re-open the public hearing to take public comments at the next meeting. Staff confirmed a notice would be published in the newspaper.

President Pearson called for a recess at 8:59 pm. The Planning Commission meeting reconvened at 9:06 pm.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS/COMMISSIONERS: None.

NEW BUSINESS:

ITEM 6(a): Housing Study

Director Cronin explained that the Affordable Housing Study had been a City Council goal for the last two years. The study indicates there is a shortage of market rate and affordable housing in Astoria. The Planning Commission is tasked with providing feedback about the results of the study and make any recommendations the Commission would like Staff to forward to City Council. A City Council Special Work Session has been scheduled for September 14, 2015 at 7:00 pm. Commissioners are welcome to attend the work session, where Staff will set up panel discussion with local housing experts.

Interim Planner Morgan presented the Astoria Affordable Housing Study, which was included in the Staff report. He noted the report included data that will be used to develop a detailed plan to stimulate more affordable housing. Staff responded to questions and comments from Commissioners with the following key comments:

- The number of accessory dwelling units (ADUs) built since 2004, when the Development Code was amended to allow ADUs in all of Astoria's residential zones, is still unknown. However, Staff confirmed the number of units was low and noted some units may have been built without the City's knowledge. The number of ADUs will be added to the final draft of the study.
- The data indicates the lack of housing in Astoria is worse than expected. Commissioners and Staff discussed how quickly housing is filled when it becomes available, low vacancy rates, the way parking is affected by a housing shortage, and rental rates.
- Commissioner Fitzpatrick discussed how the lack of available housing has led in part to a dramatic increase in rental rates since 2013. He believed the recession a few years ago led many families to share housing and postpone relocating. Now that the recession was over, he believed Astoria's population was increasing as people were relocating to Astoria and adult children were moving out of their parent's homes.
  - Staff confirmed Astoria's estimated population from 2014 was 9590. Data for 2015 will be released soon. Once the population is above 10,000, Astoria will be in a different regulatory category under the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and the Environmental Protection Act (EPA).



- Staff and Commissioners discussed how ADUs could provide some additional housing, how the City handles homes that are marketed as short-term rentals, vacant homes, and the challenges of cleaning up derelict homes. While Astoria lacks new single-family houses, the City has received hundreds of applications for permits for renovations, restorations, and rehabilitations of existing homes.
- The Coast Guard's need for housing and the lack of available land to build housing puts additional pressure on the market. The City could annex land if their priority was to create additional housing. However, if the city does not expand its boundaries, more development could occur outside the city limits. Therefore, the City should consider subsidies or some type of incentive to attract developers to build affordable housing.
  - Small chunks of land within the City limits can be developed, but many of the available sites have issues that would prevent affordable housing from being developed. Commissioners and Staff discussed possible opportunities for building new affordable housing, including building mixed use structures like the proposed new library, a subdivision on Tongue Point, and using the Mill Pond model for a mixed income neighborhood.

Staff planned to present some possible solutions to City Council on September 16<sup>th</sup>. However, the City, the County, community development corporations, and the Housing Authority will need to make a concerted effort to resolve the housing issue in the region.

President Pearson noted the importance of solving the housing problem without filling Astoria with vacation rentals.

Commissioner Moore wanted to know what the implications would be if Astoria grew beyond a population of 10,000 and asked if it was possible to maintain the current population. Staff believed the CSO projects and wastewater treatment plant would be impacted the most.

Staff added that most of the Comprehensive Plan has been updated, so the City will have to decide how many resources to use. The next step will be a City Council work session to discuss the study on September 14<sup>th</sup>. Staff hopes Council will create a task force and formally accept the study.

#### ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:02 pm.

#### **APPROVED:**




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Community Development Director