

CITY OF CLARKSTON
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
April 21, 2014

CALL TO ORDER: 6:00 P.M., Clarkston City Hall, McCroskey (acting chair)
ROLL CALL: Bob Gilbertson, Margo McCroskey, Jim Merrill
John Murray, excused

Staff: Jim Martin, Vickie Storey, Chief Hastings

McCroskey announced that Larry Moser has resigned from the commission.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Minutes of the March 3, 2014 meeting were approved on a motion by GILBERTSON/MERRILL. Motion carried.

PUBLIC HEARING:

Proposed Changes to the Zoning Matrix, additional Definitions, Recreational Marijuana

McCroskey opened the public hearing at 7:02 p.m. PWD Martin reminded the commission and the audience that the purpose of the hearing is to take testimony on the proposed changes to the zoning code. He pointed out that the items in the matrix that are shown in red are the changes being considered at this hearing.

McCroskey invited anyone who wanted to speak to come to the podium and state their name and address.

Kelly Jackson, 1045 Liberty Drive, spoke about medical marijuana. He showed samples of asthma inhalers. He said they cost about \$300 and they don't work. He commented that long term use can cause death. He said his doctor recommended he try medical cannabis extracts. He said it cured his asthma and allowed him to go back to work and only costs \$40 for a vial and you don't have to use it every day. He said there is no THC in the product he uses, it is the CBD's from the plant. He said it is not legal to purchase now, but when it is, it will be labeled with the THC content. He said it also works for arthritis, glaucoma and other diseases. He said 400 families have moved to Colorado so they can obtain it for their children with epilepsy. Jackson showed a jar of crème with cannabis extract in it that is used for treating arthritis. He commented that when it is legal to sell in Washington, he believes that people from Idaho will be coming over to purchase the product. Jackson said he is an applicant to open a retail shop in Clarkston. He suggested an advisory board to help regulate how business is conducted.

Chief Hastings asked about the zones that would allow retail sales. PWD Martin said it is in Downtown Commercial, Service Commercial and Port Commercial. Jackson asked about the Stonehouse Coffee location on Highland. Martin said that is in Medical Commercial and would not be allowed.

John Evans, representing the Boys and Girls Clubs, 1414 Highland, said the County's maps show some overlap of the city limits. He asked how that will impact the allowed areas. Merrill said if it falls within the state buffer, that will take precedence. He is concerned that a business might be located close to the Club.

Sherry Greenup, a member of EPIC and a parent, said she spent seven years as Asotin County Substance Abuse and Mental Health coordinator. She said that marijuana has been shown to be a gateway drug and leads to other drugs. She reminded the commission that while it is legal to possess, there is nothing that requires the city to allow its sale and growth. She said that legalizing marijuana gives a false impression that there is no harm. She is opposed to allowing its sale in areas that children and adolescents frequent. She said if sale is allowed, it should be confined to a less conspicuous location. Having the sale legal and visible makes it seem like it is okay.

Chief Hastings said he agrees that the small commercial zone at 13th & Highland is not a good location because of the location of the Boys & Girls Club and Highland School and it is primarily a residential area. He feels allowing it in that area would change the character of the neighborhood.

McCroskey closed the Public Hearing at 6:30 p.m. on a motion by Merrill/Gilbertson.

Martin said the next step would be for the commission to discuss and develop findings of fact and a recommendation.

REGULAR BUSINESS:

Discussion of Proposed Changes.

Gilbertson asked if marijuana business can be excluded from a portion of a zone. Martin said one option would be to eliminate marijuana retail sales as an allowed use in the Service Commercial zone. Martin said it would be a question for legal counsel as to whether a use could be excluded from just a portion of a zone. Merrill was concerned that after all the discussion and development of the matrix, it might be too late to change it now.

Martin said the options he is hearing is to try and restrict a portion of a zone or to change the zone for that area and make the existing businesses non-conforming.

Merrill said this is going to be a way of life and we may just have to learn to live with it.

Gilbertson asked what happens if service commercial was eliminated and applications were processed as a variance. Martin said it would be a conditional use and takes an approval process. The process is time consuming for applicants.

McCroskey asked if the 13th & Highland location is the only option in the SC zone. McCroskey said that marijuana retail sales could be removed as an approved use in SC.

The Commission asked Martin to get an opinion from legal counsel.

Kristi Sharp, EPIC, said she missed the public hearing because of misinformation about the time. She said the County Commissioners requiring a conditional use permit for any marijuana related activity. Retail sales have been restricted to the Industrial Zone to keep it away from the youth. She asked the commission to consider that.

Martin reminded the commission that all the proposed changes to the matrix are under consideration at this meeting. The commission confirmed that they have reviewed the rest of the matrix and are in agreement with those changes.

COMMUNICATIONS:

Staff:

ADJOURNMENT:

Meeting adjourned at 6:46 p.m.

Margo McCroskey, Acting Chair