

MEETING MINUTES
Benton County Planning Commission
Public Hearing
September 3, 2024

Benton County Planning Commission Vice Chair Hamann called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm. The meeting was open to the public virtually via a published Zoom link.

COMMISSION MEMBERS

Nicholas Fowler, *Chair (virtual: joined at 6:07 pm)*
Greg Hamann, *Vice Chair*
Andrew Struthers
John Wilson
Evelyn Lee
Ed Fulford
Catherine Biscoe (*joined at 6:04 pm*)
Sara Cash (*virtual*)

STAFF

Petra Schuetz, *Interim Director and
Planning Official*
Alyssa Thompson, *Recorder*
Inga Williams, *Associate Planner*

Vice Chair noted a **QUORUM** was reached.

MINUTES

Commissioner Struthers **MOVED to KEEP THE MINUTES OPEN** from August 13th, 2024, until clarification can be provided for the following sections:

- paragraph regarding "change of use" from page 4 of meeting packet, suggesting it should be expanded for clarity on what constitutes a change of use.
- Additional clarification was requested on the sentence discussing "significant upgrade to the facilities" and the impact on drainage patterns and road reliability.

Commissioner Wilson: **SECONDED**

Motion carried, 6-0.

DELIBERATIONS: Appeal | St. Martin's Church Expansion | LU-23-051

Motion to Deny the Application:

Commissioner Bisco **MOVED to DENY THE APPLICATION AS SUBMITTED**, citing incomplete information and failure to meet requirements concerning road conditions and impact on adjacent properties.

Commissioner Lee: **SECONDED**

MOTION CARRIED

Commissioners discussed the details of the road conditions and the applicant's burden of proof. Concerns about planning based on promises rather than evidence were reiterated.

Discussion Points:

Road Conditions and Traffic Impact:

- Existing gravel road, described as a narrow 11 feet wide, may not be adequate for increased traffic resulting from the proposed expansion of the church.
- Potential for serious interference with surrounding residential properties.
- Questions regarding the proportional impact of road wear due to traffic, acknowledging that the road is currently affected by heavy vehicles like garbage trucks and delivery vans, not just passenger cars.
- There was also concern about the cost of required road improvements and whether the code permits such requirements.

Fire Safety and Water Availability:

- Concerns about the adequacy of water supply for future fire suppression, given the current water supply of 20,000 gallons.

Impact of Expansion on Community Character:

- Need to consider the church's role as a current member of the neighborhood and the impact of expansion on the neighborhood's character.
- The church's parking limitations may restrict the amount of traffic, and that wear and tear on the road, is more significantly caused by heavier vehicles rather than passenger cars.

Rebuttal and Final Comments:

- Commissioner Biscoe rebutted by stating that road improvements and fire risk management issues have not been adequately addressed in the application. She questioned whether the applicant met the burden of proof for the proposed expansion.
- Commissioner Wilson highlighted the potential issue of imposing an undue burden on the applicant and its impact on the conditional use permit decision.
- Commissioner Fowler commented on the road challenges and noted that the church's operations should be considered within the current neighborhood context. He added that the wear and tear on the road was predominantly caused by heavier vehicles.

VOTE on the motion to **DENY** the application as submitted:

- Commissioner Struthers: No
- Commissioner Lee: Yes
- Commissioner Fulford: No
- Commissioner Wilson: No
- Commissioner Biscoe: Yes
- Commissioner Fowler: No
- Commissioner Cash: Yes

- Commissioner Hamann: No

MOTION DOES NOT PASS: 3-5

Commissioner Struthers **MOVED** to **AMMEND** St. Martin’s Orthodox Church Conditional Use Permit with amendments to conditions of approval,

- removing conditions number 1 and 4, as listed in the staff report.
- Require an 8-foot fence along the north and east sides of the property, as listed in the appeal requests.

Commissioner Wilson **SECONDED**.

VOTE on the motion to **AMMEND** conditions of approval:

- Commissioner Struthers: Yes
- Commissioner Lee: Yes
- Commissioner Fulford: Yes
- Commissioner Wilson: Yes
- Commissioner Biscoe: Yes
- Commissioner Fowler: Yes
- Commissioner Cash: Yes
- Commissioner Hamann: Yes

Commissioner Struthers **MOVED** to **APPROVE** St. Martin’s Orthodox Church Conditional Use Permit with the approved amendments.

Commissioner Wilson **SECONDED**.

VOTE on the motion to **APPROVE** LU-23-051 St. Martin’s Orthodox Church Conditional Use Permit with the approved amendments:

- Commissioner Struthers: Yes
- Commissioner Lee: Yes
- Commissioner Fulford: Yes
- Commissioner Wilson: Yes
- Commissioner Biscoe: No
- Commissioner Fowler: Yes
- Commissioner Cash: No
- Commissioner Hamann: Yes

MOTION PASSES: 6-2

PUBLIC HEARING: LU-24-013 | Telecommunications Tower Replacement | Mary’s Peak

Inga Williams Presented Staff Report:

- The staff report detailed the existing conditions on the site, which includes three existing 100-foot metal self-supporting towers and 2 defunct structures.

- The proposal involves demolishing old structures and consolidating them into a new single 100-foot tower.
- The site is located on forest conservation land, with most of the property managed by the National Forest Service and a small portion by the city of Corvallis.

Discussion:

- The staff noted that the site is already developed and has existing telecommunications infrastructure.
- The proposed new tower would replace two defunct structures, consolidating them into a single new one.

Applicant's Presentation

David Behrens with Silke Communications:

- Presented the need to replace a deteriorating 50-foot wooden tower with a new 100-foot tower. The upgrade aims to enhance safety and efficiency.
- The new tower will also replace an old smaller tower and a telephone pole, improving overall infrastructure and safety.
- Addressed questions about the tower's purpose and clarified that no additional lighting is required.

Aaron Broderick: Engineer

- Supported the replacement, highlighting safety concerns and the benefit of a modern, engineered tower over outdated structures.

Commissioner Wilson **MOVED** to **APPROVE** LU-24-013 Telecommunications Tower Replacement.

Commissioner Struthers **SECONDED**.

VOTE on the motion to **APPROVE** LU-24-013 Telecommunications Tower Replacement

- Commissioner Struthers: Yes
- Commissioner Lee: Yes
- Commissioner Fulford: Yes
- Commissioner Wilson: Yes
- Commissioner Biscoe: Yes
- Commissioner Fowler: Yes
- Commissioner Cash: Yes
- Commissioner Hamann: Yes

MOTION PASSES; 7-0

PUBLIC HEARING: LU-24-022 | Telecommunications Tower Replacement | 11-06-19-0200

Inga Williams Presented Staff Report:

- The staff report detailed the background, location, and proposed conditions for the telecommunications tower.
- The site is on forestry property owned by Starker Forest, Inc., zoned forest conservation.
- The proposed tower will be a 150-foot monopole aimed at improving wireless coverage and capacity.

Applicant Presentation

Sarah Telschow, Acom Consulting Inc. | Representing Harmony Towers and Verizon Wireless

- The project aims to enhance wireless capacity and public safety.
- Verizon is expanding its network to improve service along Highway 20.
- The proposed facility is designed to be minimally intrusive and compliant with all relevant codes and standards.
- The applicants agree with staff recommendations and conditions.

Commissioner Struthers **MOVED** to **APPROVE** LU-24-022 Telecommunications Tower Replacement.

Commissioner Lee **SECONDED**.

VOTE on the motion to **APPROVE** LU-24-022 Telecommunications Tower Replacement

- Commissioner Struthers: Yes
- Commissioner Lee: Yes
- Commissioner Fulford: Yes
- Commissioner Wilson: Yes
- Commissioner Biscoe: Yes
- Commissioner Fowler: Yes
- Commissioner Cash: Yes
- Commissioner Hamann: Yes

MOTION PASSES; 7-0

Final Decision Announcement for all decisions made:

- The final decision may be appealed to the Board of County Commissioners within 14 days of Planning Commission decision.
- Notice of decision will be mailed to all individuals who testified or submitted comments.

Vice Chair Hamman **ADJOURNED** at **7:45 pm**.