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**MINUTES  
WARRENTON PLANNING COMMISSION NOVEMBER 12, 2020  
CITY HALL, COMMISSION CHAMBERS**

**Planning Commissioners Present:** Chair Paul Mitchell, Christine Bridgens, Ken Yuill were present in the commission room. Mike Moha, Tommy Smith, Lylla Gaebel, Chris Hayward was not present.

**Staff Present:** Interim Planning Director Mark Barnes, Building Clerk Janice Weese. New Planning Director, Scott Hess was present in the audience. The Public Works Director, Richard Stelzig, and the City of Warrenton's Attorney Spencer Parsons were present remotely.

**Flag Salute**

**Comments on Non-Agenda Items:** No one spoke

**Approval of Minutes:** Mr. Yuill moved to approve the October 8, 2020 minutes with corrections. Ms. Gabel seconded. All in favor.

**Public Hearing Open**

**Subject of Review:** A continuation from the October 8, 2020 Planning Commission Meeting of an appeal filed by Scott Widdecombe for an extension that was requested by Pacific Seafoods.

**Disclosure by Commissioners:** All commissioners answered no to all questions or conflicts.

**Staff Report:** Mr. Barnes spoke up and said that since there have been no changes to the approved site design and conditional use permit, and the applicant has not applied for a building permit; feels that the applicant has demonstrated that the criteria in all the applications has been met so the one year extension that Pacific Seafood is requesting should still be granted to November 19, 2021.

No questions from staff.

*"Making a difference through excellence of service"*

**Testimony by the Applicant:**

Mike C. Robinson, Pacific Seafoods Attorney Portland, OR 97209

Mr. Robinson agrees with the approval from Mr. Barnes. He also addressed Mr. Widdicombe's comments and pointed out that Mr. Widdicombe did not address the approval process in his letter to the Planning Commission nor did his comments have anything to do with the extension. Mr. Robinson also expressed concern on Mr. Widdicombe's remark in questioning if Pacific Seafood will comply with OSHA standards and requirements. Mr. Robinson stated that Pacific Seafoods will cooperate with all of OSHA's requirements.

**Testimony in Opposition:**

Scott Widdicombe  
Warrenton, Or  
97146

Mr. Widdicombe expressed concerns on the type of housing Pacific Seafood is presenting for their workers and the floor plan of the dorms. Is concerned that the average resident does not understand land use rules and regulations. Discussion continued on how small the dorms were, transportation for the workers and living conditions of the workers in the dorms. Mr. Widdicombe stated that he is not opposed to the housing but feels that more information needs to be available to the public. Mr. Widdicombe is still thinking of an appealing this.

Entered into the record, a floor plan of Pacific Seafoods dormitory floor plan brought by Scott Widdicombe.

**Public Hearing Closed****Discussion Among Commissioners**

Mr. Moha spoke up and said that he is in agreement to grant the extension to Pacific Seafood based on the 5 criteria. Mr. Yuill and Mr. Mitchell agreed with the staff report.

**Motion by Commissioners**

Ms. Gaebel motioned to uphold the extension of Pacific Seafoods request to November 19, 2021. Mr. Yuell seconded. All in favor.

**Public Hearing Opened**

**Subject of Review:** Continuation from the October 8 Planning Commission Meeting for The

Scoular Company (Tom Wortmann) fishmeal processing facility.

**Disclosure by Commissioners:** Tommy Smith, Paul Mitchell, and Lylla Gaebel spoke up and said they did speak with other people about these applications. They all felt they could make a decision without any bias.

**Staff Report:** Mr. Barnes said that there are two remaining issues, the bird strike and the development agreement between the city and the applicant. There has been additional information from the Port of Astoria, a letter from Sprague, a bird control company, a letter for Seagull Control Systems and the Coast Guard. Mr. Barnes spoke with Mr. Thompson with the FAA, and he indicated that they are reviewing this but are not finished yet. There are still issues with the wastewater disposal system and has infiltration and maintenance problems that have not been addressed yet. Both of these issues need to be resolved to approve this. Mr. Barnes said if The Planning Commission cannot resolve this then you find some conditions to get over this situation or deny the application and let it be appealed. Also, the applicants can request more time to work on this and continue on the December meeting. It is up to the applicant to request the extension.

### **Applicant Testimony**

Tom Wortman  
Omaha, NE

Mr. Wortmann introduced himself and his team for this project. Their view on the Development Agreement has two issues; number of EDU's and the surcharge that occurs. They would like flexibility on the surcharge usage to lower the monthly fees. They are doing a wastewater treatment analysis to try to reduce the EDU's. It is acceptable to the city to do this from the emails he has received from The Public Works Director. One of the parts of the Development Agreement is that the city can turn off the sewer access of their facility on a variety of reasons like rainfall and surcharging. Mr. Wortmann wants to sign the agreement but needs more information to do that, thinks they are close. Mr. Wortmann went on to say that they take the issue of bird strikes very seriously. They are working with the port on various designs on mitigating the bird risk.

Keith Rowney, Manager of Bird Control Services for Sprague Pest Solutions  
Oregon City, OR

In looking at the plans and the design for the facility, Mr. Rowney stated that there is no exposed fish carcass or other things that would serve as food or appeal to the seagulls. Since the seagulls are attracted by sight and not by smell, there should not be an attraction for them looking for food because the facility design has no storage outside, they are sealed and enclosed. Additional discussion was made on the bird wires that are used over the top of the roof and how they are placed to discourage birds from landing.

Richard Carroll, President at Pacific Northwest Marine Products LLC.

Kirkland, WA

Mr. Carroll is a consultant on fishmeal processing and bi-products. Decided to go with the bio-ultra system because it goes with the water treatment system requirements and with the water capacity that Warrenton has. This is a seasonal operation between May and October. Mr. Carroll went on to say that one of the nice things about bio-filters is that they usually use the same biological processes that Warrenton's wastewater treatment use. It takes the components that might cause odor and converts them to nitrogen and releases them in the atmosphere. The building is completely contained and the air in the building is changed about 6 times an hour. Anything that goes out, goes through this system. The potential of odors coming from this plant is extremely low. If there is no food or odor that birds can access, then there is no potential of bird strikes. Mr. Carroll also mentioned that because the raw material is handled in insulated totes, he does not believe the facility would be a major concern for affecting the surrounding businesses. The material will be refrigerated until it is processed. The intent is to process everything within 24 hours.

Discussion continued on the fish bio-product facilities in Alaska that are near to the commercial airports and Coast Guard facilities with no hazards or complaints that they are aware of.

#### **Applicants in Favor**

Robert Stevens - Retired Captain United States Coast Guard, Vice-President Port of Astoria Port Commission  
Warrenton, Or 97146

Feels that the Scoular Company is a complete turnaround of how the fishmeal processing plants were handled years ago. In 1971 when Mr. Stevens was stationed in the Gulf of Mississippi, there was a huge fish delivery that came in bulk every 3 to 4 months every year; it was unloaded in huge tubes then into their trucks to be shipped off. There was a great amount of dust all over the ship and pier that they swept up with brooms from the waste. Feels that is why the Coast Guard is frightened of how the facility in Warrenton will handle the bird situation and animals. He stated that The Port of Astoria Charter wants to promote commercial interest and support growth for the county and surrounding cities. Mr. Stevens went on to ask the commissioners for approval for the proposed Scoular Plant in The Airport Industrial Park to meet these goals and to generate jobs. Mr. Stevens went on to discuss the threat of bird strikes.

Feels there is not a way to forecast specific things that will generate an excess of birds in an area or not. Mentioned that the detailed contract with The Port of Astoria and Scoular states that if Scholar does not maintain their contract, the Port of Astoria will hold them accountable and take action to force compliance. Mr. Stevens cannot guarantee that there will not be any bird strikes, they are a part of aviation.

Ryan Helligso  
Astoria OR 97103

Mr. Helligso wanted to add that the number of jobs in construction work will create 45,000 manhours of construction. The average wage of \$50.00 an hour is about \$2, 500.00 in payroll.

William Isom, Executive Director Port of Astoria  
Astoria, OR 97103

Mr. Isom wanted to point out 2 things. He feels that the Secular Company has been a great partner through this process. They are professional and have shown a willingness to address all the concerns that the port, city, and neighboring properties has had. Mr. Isom expresses how vital this airport industrial development is for the port and airport. This project will not represent a general departure away from aviation at the airport as stated in a letter by Mr. Smith of The Coast Guard. The port has signed a long-term lease with LifeFlight. The port wants to improve the air site facilities and services that they offer. Mr. Isom feels that the Port and Secular has gone through great lengths to make sure this project is done in a safe way.

Discussion was made on Mr. Yuell's concerns on how the revenue is generated by the lease agreement, and if the revenue stays with the airport or the slush fund.

Gary Cobes, Airport Manager  
Chinook WA

Brought up the fact that the airport has had 12 reported bird strikes in the last 20 years: from January 1st, 2000 to the present. Two of those strikes were not caused by pilots, but by two carcasses that were on the ground. The airport lies next to Youngs Bay and the Columbia River where there are birds. Any part of the airport that is not paved is pretty much a wetland. The airport already has a bird issue that they are dealing with. Mr. Cobes expressed that the Secular Plant will not cause any additional accumulation of birds that are not already at the airport.

Matt Mcgrath, Deputy Director of Port of Astoria  
Astoria, OR 97103

Discussed the third paragraph of the letter that was written from Mr. Smith of The Coast Guard. Mr. Mcgrath spelled out that in that paragraph these are things that should not be used in the type of land use where the Secular Plant will be. He feels that the Port has done its due diligence on this. They would not even consider this project if they thought there would be a significant increase of bird strike risk. Feels that Secular has done an exceptionally good job of providing all of the information and expert testimony and the understanding for both the Port, LifeFlight and The Coast Guard to assure them that this is not going to pose any increase in bird strike risk for them.

Wil Caplinger- Consultant Scoular Project  
Astoria, OR 97103

Discussed how the Planning Commission could approve this project if a Development Agreement is not in place. Guided the Planning Commission to look at the Site Review Criteria in the Warrenton Municipal Code in the last section of 16.212.060.

### **Public Hearing Closed**

### **Discussion Among Commissioners**

Mr. Mitchell spoke up and said that the Scoular Company has proven their ability in how their process is filtered through the system that they are using to eliminate the smells. Feels this is not an issue. Having the bird specialist helped him make his decision. Supports the project with conditions. Mr. Barnes and Mr. Parsons chimed in and carried on the discussion of the approval criteria that are on conditions and findings that need to be satisfied before an agreement can be made. Mr. Stelzig spoke up and said that they are still in negotiations with Secular regarding EDU's and working on what the monthly charge would be. They are still analyzing how often does their system surcharge so that Mr. Wortmann will know what he is signing. There are still important issues that need to be addressed. Feels that if everyone is working on these issues then maybe in the next 2 weeks the agreement should be pretty close. Discussion was made on if the hearing should be continued to the December 10, 2020 meeting.

### **Mr. Mitchell reopened the Public Hearing**

Mr. Wortmann feels comfortable granting the extension for 30 days.

### **Public Hearing Closed**

Mr. Yuill spoke up and wants to put in the bird wires as one of the conditions. Also wants Mr. Stelzig to be able to finish the agreement.

Ms. Gaebel motioned to extend the hearing to December 10, 2020 meeting at the request of the applicant and on the advice of staff. Mr. Yuill seconded. All in favor.

### **Staff Announcements and Project Updates**

Mr. Barnes introduced Scott Hess as our new Community Development Director. Welcome Scott!! Mr. Hess updated the commissioners that an application has been made for a marijuana text amendment to the Comprehensive Plan to the site located west of Hwy 101. On the agenda for next month Fort Pointe Subdivision is being reapplied for, and an application for a caretaker's residence. Also, a text amendment regarding the appeals process.

Meeting Adjourned

  
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Attested and Submitted by Janice Weese, Building Clerk

  
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Approved, Paul Mitchell Planning Commission Chair