



TO: Longview Planning Commission

FROM: Steve Langdon, Planning Manager

HEARING

DATE: October 4, 2017

SUBJECT: CASE NUMBER PC 2017-4: Zoning code amendments to allow City water, sewer or drainage pumps to be permitted outright in the City's residential, commercial and industrial zoning districts and exempt them from setback requirements

TYPE OF

DECISION: Legislative

BACKGROUND

At the request of the City's public works department, the Planning Commission initiated a zoning amendment process to allow City water, sewer or drainage pumps to be permitted outright in the City's residential, commercial and industrial zoning districts and exempt them from setback requirements.

The City is in the process of replacing various pump stations around the City. Many of the existing pump stations were placed underground including the electrical control panel. It is not considered safe to have someone working on an electrical control panel in a confined underground damp space. Thus, for new pump stations, standard practice is to locate the control panel in a small building. There is not always room in the right-of-way to place the building so the building might need to be placed on a privately-owned or publicly-owned lot. Currently, the majority of the zoning districts only allow public utility structures (poles, cabinets, etc.) and not buildings (a structure that has a roof).

The proposal also would exempt pump stations from needing to meet the zoning districts setback requirements. The water, sewer, and drainage lines are usually located in the street right-of-way. The associated pump station building and equipment need to be near the utility line. Setback requirements are contrary to that need.

PROPOSAL

The specific proposed zoning code amendments are attached as Exhibit A.

S.E.P.A. Determination

An Environmental Checklist for the proposed zoning code revisions was reviewed pursuant to the State Environmental Policy Act and a determination of non-significance was issued on September 14, 2017. [E 2017-13 SEPA checklist] The comment period for the SEPA checklist ended on September 28, 2017. SEPA documents are attached as Exhibit B.

Additional Information

Pursuant to Chapter 19.81 of the Longview Municipal Code, a legal notice was published in the Longview Daily News on September 20, 2017 and October 1, 2017.

Citizen Correspondence

As of this writing, the City has received no written comments.

Comprehensive Plan Goal and Policies

Goals, Objectives and Policies

The Comprehensive Plan does not contain any specific goals, objectives and/or policies that address city pump stations. However the comprehensive plan contains a multiple goals, objectives and policies relating to land use compatibility including the following:

Goal PF-B Maintain and enhance the current high standard of sewer and water service, storm drainage, recycling, and solid waste collection in the City.

Objective PF-B.1 Implement the approved Water System Plan for the Longview Kelso Urban Area, through inclusion in the City Capital Improvement Program and biennial budget as appropriate.

Policy PF-B.2.2 Continue rehabilitating sewage collection systems to reduce infiltration and inflow as recommended by the General Sewer Plan to ensure that wastewater treatment systems are used efficiently and their design lives extended.

Policy PF-B.3.10 Protect and enhance existing flood storage and conveyance functions and ecological values of floodplains, wetlands, and riparian corridors.

STAFF DISCUSSION

Much of Longview is relatively flat topographically. Systems are built to take advantage of gravity flow as much as feasible but in flat areas pump stations are needed when slopes cannot be continued. Utility system dynamics limit where these pump stations can be efficiently located. The proposal will provide more flexibility in where pump stations can be specifically located in areas where a pump station is needed.

City policy requires public works staff to work with neighboring property owner to ensure any pump station buildings have minimal impact to the neighbors.

STAFF FINDINGS

Staff has examined the merits of the proposal to amend the Longview Zoning Code and makes the following findings:

1. Because much of Longview is relatively flat topographically, utility pump stations are needed.
2. Putting electrical controls underground is no longer considered a best practice because of safety concerns. Therefore, above ground structures or buildings are needed to house pump station control systems.
3. There is not always room in the right-of-way to place the building so the building might need to be placed on a privately-owned or publicly-owned lot. The water, sewer, and drainage lines are usually located in the street right-of-way. The associated pump station building and equipment need to be near the utility line. Setback requirements are contrary to that need.
4. The proposed code amendments allow more flexibility in where pump stations can be located. This increases the opportunity for the efficient placement of the pump stations and to locate the building where it can have the least impact on the neighborhood.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission recommend to the City Council to adopt the subject zoning code amendment.

EXHIBITS

- A. Proposal
- B. SEPA Documents

Report Date: September 26, 2017