

COBURG COMMUNITY EDUCATION ARTICLE

Development in Coburg



More information:

The City recently released an invitation to citizens to participate in the Comprehensive Plan Update. Those interested should fill out the application and return it to City Hall. You will then be notified of future meetings and events that take place during this process.

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At the City of Coburg, both staff and City Council often get questions regarding development in the City. Our door is open and we appreciate meeting citizens and listening to your concerns. Citizens are always welcome and encouraged to attend City Council and Planning Commission meetings. Those meetings are posted on our website.

Planning and Land Use in Oregon is complicated. There are many steps between when an application is submitted and when the ground breaks on a project. We hope that the following facts will help inform and make the process a little clearer.

Oregon State Laws

By Oregon State Law, all cities must have a Comprehensive Plan and Development Code Standards. These documents guide the decision making process of the planning staff and the Planning Commission.

Comprehensive Plan

The Comprehensive Plan is a community land use plan. It includes information regarding the lands within the City which are buildable, not buildable, and any other information that would influence the ability to develop those lands. Information having to do with the infrastructure that serves citizens is also included. More importantly, the plan also includes goals and policy statements that

indicate the way the City will grow over a planning period, usually 20 years. Comprehensive plans should be updated periodically. The last update of the City Comprehensive Plan was 2005. The City will begin a new update in January 2019. Citizen involvement is important to this process and there will be many opportunities for the community to get involved. Citizens are encouraged to plan to attend open houses, informational meetings, etc.

Development Code Standards

Development Standards specify development requirements such as minimum lot sizes, setbacks, building height, etc. These standards are different according to the zoning of any one area in the community. For example the code standards to build a house in a residential neighborhood might differ from the code to build in a mixed use or industrial zone.

Process

When a development application is submitted it comes to the City planning staff. The staff looks over the permit and makes sure it is complete, and then goes through the process of establishing whether it meets code. If the application is complete then it may come to the Planning Commission for approval depending on what type of applica-



tion it is.

Notification

When an application is submitted, reviewed and then scheduled to go before the Planning Commission for review and approval, notification of the nearby neighbors is mandatory. Notification procedures are defined in the development code document. The notification process must be consistently applied. In other words, if we notify property owners near a proposed development, we must use the same standard of notification for all other development applications. City staff may not pick and choose who will be notified. The City Council can review notification standards and if they deem that we can improve those standards, then the language in the code can be changed.

Planning Commission

Planning Commission is a Quasi-Judicial body of citizens that considers and approves, or does not approve, development applications. Their responsibility is to make sure that the application meets the standards of development as stated in the code. The general public is welcome to attend and comment at planning commission meetings as public comment is a part of those meetings. Any person may come to those meetings and/or provide written comment prior to the meeting. When a person provides comment on a land use application, then they receive “standing” on the land use application.

This means that they have the ability to appeal the decision of the Planning Commission. If a person does not speak up, or provide writ-

ten comment, then they will not be in standing to appeal the decision.

Planning Commission Appeals

Only a person with standing may appeal a Planning Commission decision. This means they must have commented at the meeting or provided a written statement prior to the meeting. When an appeal is filed there must be proof of why an application does not meet the required codes. An appeal can't be considered simply because a person does not like the proposed development.

City Council Involvement

If a Planning Commission decision is appealed then it will go to the City Council for review and vote. This becomes a Quasi-Judicial matter in which the City Council becomes the judge over whether a land use application will be approved. This is why a City Councilor may tell you that they can't talk to you about an application coming before them because it is in an appeal process. As judges, they must remain unbiased prior to the discussion and vote.



Coburg Inn Mixed Use Development

What can you do?

Citizens should get involved in opportunities to participate in updates to Comprehensive and Development Code documents. Take advantage of your ability to have your voice heard as these documents are vetted, changed and approved. Talk to your neighbors and encourage them to get involved. This is how you can influence the future of your community.

What else can you do?

1. Citizens are encouraged to attend City Council and Planning Commission meetings, or read the minutes of those meetings. You then can stay abreast on what is happening in the City. Meeting minutes can be found on the City website. If you can't find them, please call and request them from City staff.
2. Citizens are also encouraged to come to City Hall and ask questions. The staff is happy to sit with any citizen and hear your concerns. Write us a letter and it will be shared with City Council and/or Planning Commission.
3. Share this information with your friends, neighbors, and family. The more informed we are as a community, the better decisions we will be able to make together.

