

From: Camon Talen <c.talen42@yahoo.com>
Sent: Sunday, December 3, 2023 5:09 AM
To: Jackson Ewing; cpdinfo
Subject: Evergreen Park PUD text amendment; 23-2792

From:
Camon Talen, resident of Olympia WA and employee of the Olympia Hotel at Capitol Lake.

Email pertaining to: Evergreen Park PUD text amendment; 23-2792

Specifically:
Olympia Hotel at Capitol Lake
2300 Evergreen Park Dr. SW.
Olympia, WA. 98502.

Dear Community Planning and Development,

This email pertains to the rezoning of the Olympia Hotel at Capitol Lake from commercial to residential.

Since I work at the hotel for the last 13 and a half years I am clearly against the rezoning.

I'm one of over 70 employees of the Olympia Hotel at Capitol Lake who are quite distressed, afraid, angry, and bitter about the current situation, and we are all against the rezoning. As stated, I've been working at the hotel for almost 13 and a half years. There are other employees who have been there 30 years and longer. Since we all work at a hotel, none of us ever imagined the the hotel would close and that we all would be out of work.

There were over 70 employees at the hotel.
I don't know the actual count now.
Once word came out that the hotel was closing some have moved on to wherever their lives might lead. They lost hope in a future.

Since I'm a resident of Olympia I'm sharing my voice and opinion about this.

The following thoughts and opinions are not just my thoughts and opinions but thoughts and opinions shared by most of the hourly employees of the Olympia Hotel at Capitol Lake.
I'm not writing this letter just for me, but for everyone who works at the hotel.

It's too bad that I don't think my voice matters, especially since it appears that the decision to rezone has already happened and the upcoming council meeting is just a formality to pretend that everything is being done officially.

I'm calling this email 'How the Grinch Stole Christmas.'

This past May, 2023 the employees of Olympia Hotel at Capitol Lake received word that a representative of the hotel's ownership submitted a proposal requesting a zoning change from commercial to residential.

The representative being a Mr. Philip Stewart, who I have been told represents California Investments, LLC.

This knowledge became known to the employees of the hotel allegedly from a member of the council who likes to eat breakfast at the hotel's restaurant on Sunday morning. This individual allegedly informed a server of the submitted proposal.

An unsubstantiated rumor also states, allegedly, that offers of 'monetary donations' to individuals on the council have been made (allegedly) to encourage them to change the zoning and to expedite the zoning change by cutting through any government/legal red tape that could interfere with the zoning change, allegedly.

I have no idea if this is actually true or not.
Like I've said, unsubstantiated rumor.

The hotel's general manager later confirmed with the employees of the hotel that there actually was a proposal submitted for rezoning.

Not too long after, some time in June, the council member, allegedly informed the restaurant server during another Sunday breakfast that the proposed zoning change had already been approved by the council without a public hearing of any kind, allegedly.

On November 3, 2023 we employees of the Olympia Hotel at Capitol Lake were informed that the property had been sold.

In the past the employees have always been informed that the property was up for sale and when it had been sold.

Not so in this case. It came completely out of the blue that the hotel had new owners.

A week after being informed that the hotel property has been sold the employees were informed that the hotel was going to be officially close as of December 14, 2023 and every employee there will be out of work.

Amendment: on November 29, 2023 we were told that the official closure is now December 21, 2023. We were told this is due to a wedding party that had rented a meeting space over a year ago for a party that was scheduled to take place after the original closure date. They sued, so the hotel closure was pushed back a week to accommodate the party.

California Investments LLC allegedly haven't been forthcoming with any information about the transition. The hotel's general manager has been telling the employees that California Investments LLC hasn't been telling him anything and is keeping him completely in the dark.

It's as if they are trying to keep the whole situation secret from the public.

This lack of information and transparency also includes the unions of the hotel.

We are a union property.

My union, Unite HERE! Local 8, has told us very little. Allegedly California Investments LLC hasn't been sharing any information with the unions, either.

The sudden closure announcement has created a situation that violates the union contract with Unite HERE! Local 8.

Per union contract the owner of the hotel was required to provide a 90 days advanced notice of closure to the employees.

That never occurred.

I await to see what other union violations that California Investments LLC is willing to do.

My union is doing what they can during this transitional period to help the employees of Olympia Hotel at Capitol Lake, including negotiations for a severance package of some kind.

The union has been unable to tell us how the negotiations are progressing so far.

Other employees of the hotel are members of the Teamsters union. I do not know anything about their contract involving closures and terminations.

If the decision to rezone the property from commercial to residential hasn't officially been decided yet, then why has the hotel already been officially sold to a company that plans on turning it into multifamily low income housing and the hotel officially being closed after the upcoming council meeting that's supposed to make it's final decision on the rezoning proposal?

Seems like a conspiracy to me, but that's just my opinion.

The rezoning and closure of the Olympia Hotel at Capitol Lake will cost the city of Olympia millions of dollars in revenue annually.

The hotel has hosted many different groups due to the meeting spaces available, one space able to have over 500 people in it.

As I understand it, hotel is unique in that regard not only within the county but within 50 miles. I've been told that no other hotel in the area has meeting spaces such as ours, and the closest hotels that would have meeting spaces are in SeaTac.

The hotel would normally host many groups and guests staying there during the legislative session which usually starts in the middle of January every year. All these groups and people will have to stay elsewhere, more than likely outside of the county.

The Olympia Hotel at Capitol Lake is also the only hotel in the area to have an outdoor swimming pool. The hotel brings in many guests during the summer months simply because of the swimming pool.

An unsubstantiated rumor is that the hotel property is going to be converted into multifamily housing so that it can be turned into a homeless shelter.

I'm not going to share my extremely negative opinion about tweakers and other drug addicts, but if that rumor is true I'm sure that the offices/businesses/apartment building in the area of 2300 Evergreen Park Dr SW will be very unhappy about having a homeless shelter like the former Days Inn in Lacey near them.

Turning the hotel into what I like to call a 'tweaker town' (that's what I call the homeless camps, such as the one referred to as 'The Jungle') sounds like a pretty good reason for California Investments LLC to remain silent and intentionally refuse, allegedly, to keep others informed about what's going on, especially considering the uproar that doing so would cause with the surrounding community.

During the Olympia Site Plan Review Committee meeting on April 26, 2023, Philip Stewart made the following statement (according to a news article posted by the 'The Journal of Olympia, Lacey, &

Tumwater: "The intent would be to do minimal changes to the building itself, and no major infrastructure work involved."

Here's a link to this article:

<https://www.thejoltnews.com/stories/owner-proposes-to-convert-olympia-hotel-at-capitol-lake-to-apartments,10371>

Intent is pretty far from reality and truth.

The hotel's electrical wiring and plumbing are over 50 years old and will need to be completely replaced to bring them up to modern day standards and codes, along with the fact that none of the rooms are wired for the use of appliances such as ovens.

None of the rooms have anything that resembles a kitchen.

The wiring and plumbing isn't the only issue the Olympia Hotel at Capitol Lake has.

I've been told that it will cost \$250,000 to fix and upgrade the outdoor swimming pool just to bring it up to code, and that's just to bring the pool up to code. It still requires considerable repairs.

The swimming pool has been closed for the last two summers due to the fact that California Investments chose not to invest the money to repair and upgrade the swimming pool.

We were told to tell guests that the pool was closed for renovations even though the employees knew that the pool had been permanently closed.

Then there is the broken elevator, which California Investments was unwilling to spend the money on to fix/replace because they knew that they were selling the property. The elevator broke down several months ago.

There are quite a few things wrong with the hotel and California Investments more than likely hasn't been willing to share since they're trying to sell the property. Allegedly.

What I can say to Sage Investment Group; Caveat Emptor.

It's widely believed among the employees at the hotel that California Investments LLC sold the property simply because they didn't want to spend the millions of dollars and unknown amounts of time to renovate the hotel and bring it up to modern day standards and codes.

That's what all the previous owners of the property have done.

They found out how much it will cost to repair and update the hotel and decided to sell it because they don't want to spend the money.

The employees of the Olympia Hotel at Capitol Lake have found out that Sage Investment Group has purchased the property.

We found this out because the Teamsters union did some digging and they informed the maintenance department, who passed on the information to the rest of us.

As I've said before, California Investments LLC hasn't shared any information with the employees of the hotel at all.

Still, why keep it secret?

Based off of newspaper articles from the Centralia Chronicle, and Sage Investment Group's own website, the company doesn't seem very interested in actually creating permanent affordable housing. Not if they sell the properties that they convert after a few years to others companies to do with as the please.

Here's a link to the news article from the Centralia Chronicle:

<http://www.chronline.com/stories/centralia-city-council-denies-request-to-rezone-former-hotels-properties-for-free-market,327490>

Here's the link to Sage Investment Group's website:

<https://sageinvestment.com>

Centralia denied their rezoning request.

Of course, that happened after Sage Investment Group bought property in Centralia causing an unknown number of employees their jobs.

The Olympia Hotel at Capitol Lake is a great hotel that offers a lot to the local community.

Closing it will be a great loss to the community.

The hotel just needs an investor willing to put the time, finances, and effort to make it a better hotel.

Unfortunately that doesn't seem to be the case, and unfortunately the city and a lot of people will pay the cost in a different way.

That's it, and with a great deal of sarcasm, Merry Christmas.

Sincerely,

Camon Talen.

December 11, 2023

3:10 pm

Jackson Ewing, Associate Planner
City of Olympia
Community Planning and Development Department
PO Box 1967
Olympia, WA 98507-1967

jewing@ci.olympia.wa.us

Project Name and No.: Evergreen Park PUD text amendment; 23-2792

Description of Proposal: Text Amendment to Evergreen Park PUD to allow multi-family housing as permitted use in the Commercial/Retail Zone. This would allow for additional housing units within the PUD.

Please deny the request to convert the Text in the current zoning to allow more multi-family housing as a permitted use. We need the space for future commercial development.

I have notarized the plat of Evergreen Park. Developed multiple office building and have a 5 – lot office park.

I hope that the staff will contact me regarding any history that is unclear. Time was short. I hope this gets in the system.

Drebick Investments LLC

John Drebick


Hearing notice attached.



NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
DECEMBER 11, 2023 @ 5:30 PM & State
Environmental Policy
Act Determination of Nonsignificance
(SEPA DNS)

Community Planning & Development
601 4th Avenue E. – PO Box 1967
Olympia WA 98501-1967
Phone: 360.753.8314
Fax: 360.753.8087
cpdinfo@ci.olympia.wa.us
www.olympiawa.gov

Project Name and No.: Evergreen Park PUD text amendment; 23-2792

Required Approvals: PUD Amendment

Description of Proposal: Text Amendment to Evergreen Park PUD to allow multi-family housing as a permitted use in the Commercial/Retail Zone. This would allow for additional housing units within the PUD.

Location of Proposal: Evergreen Park PUD retail/commercial zones

Applicant/Representative: Philip Stewart

Public Hearing: Monday, December 11th, 2023, 5:30 p.m.

Hybrid In-Person & Virtual Hearing (Zoom Webinar): City Hall at 601 4th Ave East in Olympia, Council Chambers
https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_Wzi-h-uiQjSLw7bB3EM2SQ

Staff Contact: Jackson Ewing, Associate Planner
Phone: 360.570.3776
Email: jewing@ci.olympia.wa.us

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

The City of Olympia Hearing Examiner will hold a hybrid, in person and virtual public hearing to receive additional public comments prior to making a decision on the above referenced project. Anyone interested is invited to attend via Zoom Webinar or in person in Council Chambers and present testimony regarding the above proposal. At the time you register and sign up, you will have the option of indicating if you want to give public testimony. To register use the link listed above.

Written statements may be submitted to the staff contact listed or to Olympia Community Planning and Development Department, PO Box 1967, Olympia WA 98507-1967 for consideration by the hearing examiner. Written statements must be received prior to the public hearing. They can also be submitted by e-mail to the Lead Planner listed above up to two hours prior to the public hearing. All public comments previously submitted are also provided to the hearing examiner for consideration.

If you require special accommodations to attend and/or participate in this meeting, please contact Community Planning and Development by 10:00 a.m., 48 hours in advance of the meeting or earlier, if possible; phone: 360.753.8314; e-mail: cpdinfo@ci.olympia.wa.us. For hearing impaired, please contact us by dialing the Washington State Relay Service at 7-1-1 or 1.800.833.6384. The City of Olympia is committed to the non-discriminatory treatment of all persons in the delivery of services and resources.

The staff report and supporting documents will be available for review through the following link 10 days prior to the scheduled public hearing. <https://olympia.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx>

NOTICE OF SEPA DETERMINATION OF NON-SIGNIFICANCE

Lead Agency: City of Olympia

SEPA Official: Nicole Floyd AICP

Date of Issue: November 17th, 2023

Appeal Deadline: 5:00 p.m., December 8th, 2023

Threshold Determination: The lead agency for this proposal has determined that this action is not likely to have a significant adverse impact upon the environment. Therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement is not required under RCW 43.21C.030(2)(C). The environmental review and SEPA threshold determination of this proposed action are based upon the environmental checklist and related information on file with the City. This information is available to the public on request.

This DNS is issued under Washington Administrative Code 197-11-340. The applicant shall not begin work until after the appeal deadline has expired and any other necessary permits have been granted.

APPEAL DEADLINE: 5:00 p.m., December 8th, 2023. Pursuant to RCW 43.21C.075(3) and Olympia Municipal Code 14.04.160(A), this DNS may be appealed by any agency or aggrieved person. Appeals must be filed with the Community Planning and Development Department at the address above within twenty-one (21) calendar days of the date of issue. Any appeal must be accompanied by the requisite administrative appeal fee.



**Nicole Floyd AICP, Principal Planner, SEPA
Official**