



COUNCIL WORK SESSION

Wednesday, February 16, 2022

APPROVED MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT

Mayor Rick Scholl
Council President Doug Morten
Councilor Patrick Birkle – 1:07 p.m.
Councilor Stephen R. Topaz
Councilor Jessica Chilton

STAFF PRESENT

John Walsh, City Administrator
Kathy Payne, City Recorder
Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder
Jacob Graichen, City Planner

Jenny Dimsho, Associate Planner
Crystal King, Communications Officer
Tina Curry, Event Coordinator
Bill Monahan, City Attorney

OTHERS

Steve Toschi
Amy Bynum
Jason Moos
Paul Vogel
Jeanne

CALL WORK SESSION TO ORDER – 1 p.m.

VISITOR COMMENTS - *Limited to five (5) minutes per speaker*

- ◆ Steve Toschi. Three comments:
 - Requesting additional resources for the Planning Commission. City Planner Jacob Graichen and Associate Planner Jenny Dimsho are tremendous resources, brilliant, and dedicated to their jobs and citizens. They work tirelessly. However, they have limitations. With the upcoming budget review, he encourages additional resources for Planning. It would aid the City in the short and long term. The City continues to grow and is complex.
 - Requesting additional time for people to respond to the Riverfront Development RFQ. It would give people more time to research and bring ideas.
 - There is a public hearing tonight for an annexation of property off Pittsburg Road. He recommends zoning it R7. No one was a proponent of R5. The Planning Commission did not consider or deliberate on R5.
- ◆ Tina Curry. Reviewed her report.
 - Shoutout to Jeff Kemp of Pacific Stainless Steel for allowing the City to use their docks to offload the tram last week.
 - Receiving a lot of calls right now from people wanting to purchase tickets for Spirit of Halloweentown. She is trying to create the schedule and offer tickets earlier this year. Vendor spaces are already sold out.
 - Same for 13 Nights on the River
 - She has been meeting with Judy Thompson about 4th of July
 - There is a lot of community member involvement

- Should have a complete agenda by the end of next week
- There will be events all day, from 10:00 a.m. – 10:00 p.m.
- Need Council's input to finalize plans for fireworks
 - Are they allowing tailgating on the Waterfront?
 - Will the fireworks be set off from a barge, Sand Island, or on the Waterfront property?

Mayor Scholl encouraged Tina to reach out to Columbia River PUD. They expressed interested in donating funds for fireworks.

DISCUSSION TOPICS - *The Council will take a break around 3:00 p.m.*

1. Semi-Annual Report from Columbia Economic Team (CET) - Paul Vogel, Executive Director

Paul Vogel reviewed his report. A copy is included in the archive packet for this meeting.

- Thanked Council for their membership
- Reviewed collaborative partnerships and projects
- 2021 Columbia County Small Business and Non-Profit Grant Program
 - Completed in January 2022
 - \$490,000 disbursed
 - 62% increase in non-profit applications
- Compared 2020 and 2021 grant application statistics
- Reviewed projects in partnership with St. Helens
 - South County Roundtable tentatively scheduled for March
 - Travel Oregon Destination-Ready collaborative
 - St. Helens Manufacturing Complex
 - St. Helens Industrial Park
 - Port tenant expansion at Multnomah Business Park
 - Active with Main Street program
- Reviewed County-wide projects
 - OMIC
 - Industrial prospects
 - Local/regional expansions
 - Coordination with local partners
 - Business expansions
 - NEXT Renewables
- Keep it Local update
 - Successful holiday campaign
 - Updating website
 - Free Digital Education program
 - Small business and consumer surveys
 - Collaborating with Chambers and Main Streets
 - Planning for Small Business Week
 - Small Business Resource Center partnership
- Reviewed the new Small Business Development Center
 - Introduced Jason Moos as the new director

Council President Morten thanked Paul for the report. He talked about the history of CET and how far it has come. Cities are trying different things to help the economy. One of the reasons he voted in favor of purchasing the Boise Cascade property was that it came with a 40 million gallon/day water permit for industrial and agricultural use. He would like to see brainstorming to use those assets. Water is more

valuable than fossil fuels. Paul was not aware of the permit. They have a lot of industrial land but much of it is privately owned. That site is increasingly drawing attention because it's publicly owned.

Councilor Topaz pointed out that the Library could be a resource for business services with their multiple computers. Paul agreed that it's a good space for workshops.

Mayor Scholl asked if the meeting in March is the City County Dinner? Paul was not sure. They can certainly be combined.

Mayor Scholl is glad to see Opportunity Zones being used. He agreed with Council President Morten about the large availability of water on the industrial property. Paul appreciates that the City is developing the property mindfully. There's a lot of potential and the need for patience.

Councilor Topaz pointed out that LA is beginning to reuse their grey water due to shortages.

Mayor Scholl thanked Paul for his report and service to the community.

2. Review Community Grant Applications Received

Review of the requests submitted and the funds available. A copy is included in the archive packet for this meeting.

Council President Morten is in favor of supporting homeless and mental health by granting the full request from Columbia Community Mental Health (CCMH). He is also in favor of supporting United Way.

City Recorder Payne reported that they have about \$1,500 in the budget for grants. After reviewing upcoming expenses, Mayor Scholl suggested they go up to \$2,000.

Councilor Birkle declared that he will be participating with Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) in the upcoming recruitment.

Councilor Chilton declared that she is employed by CCMH. However, this will benefit clients and has no monetary gain for herself.

Councilor Topaz pointed out that the Library already does a lot for the Dolly Parton's Imagination Library. United Way seems to be trying to do the same thing. Councilor Chilton clarified that the program is sponsored by United Way and the Library is a partner.

Discussion of granting the following funds:

- CCMH - \$684.70
- United Way - \$500
- CERT - \$500
- Riverside Community Outreach - \$400

Councilor Chilton asked how they respond to applicants who requested but did not receive funds. Council talked about being clear about what funds are available.

All the applications submitted this time were new. Council discussed changing the grant process to take place once a year, rather than twice, like how they offered State Revenue Sharing in the past. Councilor Chilton is in favor of offering the grants once a year. She would also like a report that lists who has received funding in the past when they receive new applications. City Recorder Payne acknowledged that past recipients were required to include a report of how the funds were spent when they applied, which could be done again.

Mayor Scholl suggested that Tumbleweed Studios reach out to Parks & Recreation Manager Shanna Duggan about partnerships.

Councilor Topaz has concerns about funding the homeless. He is in favor of funding a training program, but not supporting people who don't want to work. He knows they need to support mental illness.

It was the consensus of the Council to accept grant applications around this time each year, with flexibility throughout the year as needed.

3. Potential Right of Way Dedication off Barr Avenue - *Jacob*

City Planner Graichen reviewed the potential right-of-way dedication. A copy of his report and maps are included in the archive packet for this meeting. Planning Commission is unanimously in favor of the dedication. It would allow a right-of-way for a street and sewer access. He is requesting Council give consent if they are okay with the concept. If so, he will return to a later meeting with a request to dedicate the right-of-way.

Discussion of wetlands. The wetlands shown are based on a wetlands analysis and are significant to the City, per the Comprehensive Plan Goal 5 process. It's not an option to eliminate them. If they were to eliminate them, they would be capping off critical drainage.

Councilor Chilton asked how many houses will go there. Graichen said it will probably be less than 10. Right now, this is just an annexation, so they won't know until a subdivision application is submitted.

Councilor Topaz asked if there is a preferred placement of streets. Graichen said it varies based on location.

4. Discussion of "Alterations" to the Courthouse Plaza, a Designated Landmark - *Jacob*

Graichen reviewed his report. A copy is included in the archive packet for this meeting. The Plaza is a unique feature for the City, drawing tourism and events. It's also a historical landmark. They have to think of it differently than any other property in the City. If a historical landmark is altered, it requires review by the Historic Landmarks Commission (HLC). It was tested with the vertical signage placed there. The Planning Commission, acting as the HLC, unanimously agreed that it was an alteration.

Council President Morten said the Plaza was redesigned in 1998 or 1999. It was stopped because a business owner was opposed. Graichen confirmed that the law changed in 2008 when the City became a Certified Local Government, and Codes had to be amended. He is not aware of the redesign from the late 1990's.

Graichen pointed out the crucifix pattern in the photos that could be restored, allowing for more pathways and less mud during events. Mayor Scholl is in favor of removing the trees to match the photo from 1910. The existing trees have a shelf life.

Councilor Chilton is in favor of restoring the crucifix pattern. It will help with the mud and brings it back to a historic look. The signs were put on a cement platform, which suggests permanency. The signs could be moved to the sidewalks. Graichen said it would need to go to the HLC.

Councilor Birkle talked about the permit process for signs not being followed. Do they need to follow the same rules for street signage? Councilor Topaz said yes. Councilor Birkle pointed out that one of the persons on the sign even voted saying this is an alteration. It's the permanent nature that is a concern.

Mayor Scholl asked if there is any historical reference to sidewalks all the way around. It would be nice to have flagpole locations. Council President Morten said the plan he spoke of earlier eliminated the interior parking and replaced it with sidewalks. Mayor Scholl asked Graichen to investigate removing the interior parking. Graichen talked about the attention this piece of land gets. They need to remember the historic resources.

Councilor Topaz talked about a vacuum irrigation system. It sucks the water out, so it doesn't get muddy. Council President Morten said they have that at the Augusta National golf course.

Walsh pointed out that there are Urban Renewal Agency funds for upgrades to the Plaza.

Mayor Scholl asked Graichen to talk to the Museum Association about returning the Plaza to what it used to look like.

Council President Morten suggested they consider container trees if they become an issue. They are not as messy.

5. Review Draft Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for Riverfront Development - John

Walsh reviewed the RFQ. A copy is included in the archive packet for this meeting. He is excited about the timing of this with the street and utilities plan. They did this in 2017, and unfortunately, did not receive any submittals until it was over. They are in a much different place now with plans and the economy. It will be kicked off with the video telling the City's story.

Councilor Topaz talked about the Code for the zoning of the property. There was a 50-foot-wide zone on the front end. The pictures in the RFQ don't match the 50-foot zone. Walsh responded that it is an average and can flex in and out.

Councilor Topaz said he spoke to a developer who looked at the property this week. That developer spoke to some other developers, and they have some problems with information that has not been told to them when they look at the property. Councilor Chilton asked Councilor Topaz if he is making them aware of the information. Councilor Topaz responded that he is only telling the Council. He has been called a liar by Council and he doesn't say anything to the developer that he tells Council. He has known one of the developers longer than he has lived here. There are jokes about what's between 3rd and 4th Street. They said the City has really messed up there. They understand some of the things the City has done, which is why they have problems with this.

Mayor Scholl does not want to bring Councilor Topaz's stormwater concerns for his house, which is between 3rd and 4th Street, into this project. The Council has been very patient and considerate with Topaz. It has been Topaz who goes off. He needs to be aware of his own behavior and actions. They are not trying to hurt him. They are trying to better each other.

Councilor Topaz said there was a problem in 2009. These are contractors who have big projects. This is not a big project. He is telling Council that they see a problem and Council is calling him a liar. Mayor Scholl said that no one is calling him a liar. Councilor Topaz argued that he has. Mayor Scholl wants to allow Walsh to continue his report. He is holding information secret and doing business on the side with his contractor buddies. Councilor Topaz argued he doesn't have business going on the side.

Councilor Birkle said Councilor Topaz is not revealing the information for the Council to determine the problem. It does not help to say he has knowledge that is pertinent to a decision that Council needs to make. Mayor Scholl said that Councilor Topaz likes to destroy things the City has going. He tried to sue the City but lost, there's a historical creek that has always flooded in that area. There is a beautiful presentation and video. They are moving forward despite what Councilor Topaz says. He encouraged the community to do their own research and bring concerns to the Council if there is validity to it, and if not, they should take what Councilor Topaz says with a grain of salt. Councilor Topaz asked Walsh to confirm that an RFP went out and there were no responses. Mayor Scholl pointed out that Topaz is not respecting the Council and their time. Topaz confirmed that is correct.

Walsh hopes that this can be positive and celebrated.

Mayor Scholl agreed with Steve Toschi to have more time for the public to review it by changing from 30 days to 45 days. That gives developers more time to view the site and ask staff questions. Council President Morten agreed. Councilor Birkle heard those same concerns and agreed with it being extended. How is it marketed? Walsh said it will go in the DJC on Friday. They have learned that no one does anything until the last minute. This was a way to move it along quicker.

Councilor Topaz asked how long a developer needs to do the work. Walsh said they are going to ask developers to share their vision, their process, approach, challenges, public engagement, how will it be funded, timeline, experience, references, etc. Mayor Scholl added that they will have the opportunity to contact the City's consultants. Walsh added they will upload all the needed documents to the website for their access. Councilor Chilton pointed out that the ideas will all come back to the Council.

Councilor Topaz talked about services being put in before the developer does their work. They shouldn't tell the developer where the services will be. Walsh said they are just plans and not built. If someone comes up with a vision that everyone likes, they can do that before they put the money into the infrastructure.

Councilor Topaz asked Walsh what considerations would be made if the developer came in with their own money. Councilor Birkle asked what he is talking about. The non-negotiables are the riverwalk and street extensions. They are talking about what goes in-between. Councilor Topaz responded that kills the project for the developer. Councilor Birkle disagrees. They are beyond the point of discussing whether the riverwalk goes in and if they extend the streets. The only discussion is what is going between the riverwalk, which has been promised to the public. They have overwhelmingly told the City that they want public access to the river. Councilor Topaz agreed with access to the river. It kills the project to say the riverwalk is non-negotiable. Councilor Birkle said it may for that developer.

Councilor Chilton mentioned that they weren't prepared last time they did this. What has changed since the RFQ in 2017? Walsh said there's been a lot more planning and the economy has improved. They're more prepared.

Councilor Topaz said that Paul Vogel pointed out how valuable the riverfront is. Councilor Birkle said it will bring people to the community and inspiration for development of the Industrial Park. It wasn't attractive before. They can make this a beautiful City on the waterfront. It's what the residents want. Council President Morten talked about how this aligns with the City's mission.

Walsh said the timeline is the most critical. He recommends keeping it but is fine extending it if needed. Mayor Scholl prefers extending it before it's published. Dimsho explained that it opens on Friday and closes March 25. That would give Council and staff an opportunity to review the submittals. They would interview selected developers on April 20, during a public meeting. Mayor Scholl suggested leaving it open until April 1. No objection from Council. Walsh added that they also reserve the right to work with more than one at a time.

Mayor Scholl wants more information about how Independence did this. It's a return on investment and not giving the property away.

Dimsho added that it will be published three times, she will share it with all the developers they have worked with in the past, and anyone can share it. They have touched basis with developers and are not going in blindly.

Break - 3:19 p.m.

6. City Administrator Report - *John Walsh*

- Congratulations for getting the RFQ out. It's a landmark.
- He proposes a joint meeting with Planning Commission and City Council to hear from OTAK and Mayer Reed about the street extension project, riverwalk project, and Columbia View Park. Discussion of a date and location to meet. The meeting will be held in the Council Chambers on Wednesday, March 16, 2022 at 5:30 p.m. Community members can come in-person or they can view on Zoom or YouTube.
- Holding weekly meetings for the Public Safety Facility. They are working on space planning.

- Communicating with PGE about moving the location of the substation on the Industrial Park property.
- Responsible Boating Community continues to make good progress
 - The kiosk is here
 - Working on a relationship with the County for enforcement of the docks and Sand Island
 - St. Helens Marina is interested in the role of Harbor Master
 - Will bring dock Code amendments to Council for review
 - IT is investigating cameras to have on the docks
- He and Finance Director Brown met with all the departments to review budget requests. They are looking at what is realistic.
- There will be a Library Director debrief after this meeting.

Councilor Chilton asked about the Community Action Team (CAT) loan payoff on tonight's agenda. Councilor Birkle said he has a similar situation. He received a loan from CAT years ago for their roof. It is an interest-free loan that they pay back. The funds go back into a pool. There is a lien on their property until is paid back. City Recorder Payne agreed. When the property is sold, the check goes to the City, the City deposits it, and then sends a check to CAT for the Revolving Loan Fund. The funds have to be administered by a City or County agency.

ADJOURN – 3:54 p.m.

RECONVENE EXECUTIVE SESSION

Respectfully submitted by Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder.

ATTEST:

/s/ Kathy Payne
Kathy Payne, City Recorder

/s/ Rick Scholl
Rick Scholl, Mayor