



COUNCIL REGULAR SESSION

Wednesday, February 16, 2022

APPROVED MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT

Mayor Rick Scholl
Council President Doug Morten
Councilor Patrick Birkle
Councilor Stephen R. Topaz
Councilor Jessica Chilton

STAFF PRESENT

John Walsh, City Administrator
Kathy Payne, City Recorder
Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder

Jenny Dimsho, Associate Planner
Jacob Graichen, City Planner
Tina Curry, Event Coordinator

OTHERS

Brady Preheim	Shauna Stroup-Harrison	Angela Wayman
Art Leskovich	Vicky Njust	Dan Theull
Jeanne Morain	Larry Scott	Jane Garcia
Rhonda Kirtland	Jen Massey	Officers from St. Helens Police Department
James Shober		

CALL REGULAR SESSION TO ORDER – 7:12 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

- ◆ Jennifer Massey. She is a 25-year resident of St. Helens. Her family has lived here for generations. She and her husband raised two daughters here and they are a small business owner. She has been a certified safety and risk professional for the last 25+ years. She has been employed as a Safety Health and Environmental Administrator for the United Association, which includes the entire US and Canada, about 370,000 construction workers. Her profession does not embrace "the sky is falling methodology." It's a holistic evaluation of the potential risk factors. She has spent a lot of time in Oakland and LA. She was concerned at the time about all the homeless and suspicious individuals. She currently works at an office in Southeast Portland. It is far worse than any part of Oakland or LA. In the last four weeks, they have had one attempted assault, two employees were assaulted, and a broken window. She and her daughter work in that facility. The citizens in St. Helens don't want our town to become Portland. She observes the same changes in St. Helens that she saw in Portland. The remnants of Portland are spilling over here. Graffiti is becoming more prevalent. She has had her car at St. Helens Auto Body for eight weeks trying to get it repaired after being hit and run by an uninsured, unlicensed motorist, who had a federal warrant in Portland. Someone cut off the fence last week and stole four catalytic converters, one of which was hers. She will not have her car for the foreseeable future. Richardson's Furniture just had a truck broken into last night. She runs all over the town. She sees suspicious individuals more often. More people seem to be under the influence of drugs. It's unnerving. Neighbors share

videos of prowlers on Ring. It feels very unsafe. She locks her doors more than she ever did before. The town is changing and growing. She has no issues with affordable housing. What is the plan to protect property and citizens? Is there any validity to a homeless shelter going into the current Food Bank or somewhere else? If they are not aware of it, she is requesting they have someone research it and report back. St. Helens has always been a small town, community feel. Her family has been here since 1928. Increasing population can come with an undesired price if it's not managed appropriately. If they're going to allow more people, more densely populated housing, then they must increase the safety and health resources to protect the community. Otherwise, it's a disrespect to the current residents who call this home.

Mayor Scholl asked where she heard that about the Food Bank building. Jennifer heard the rumor from a valid source. It's near her home. She'll see if she can find out more. She doesn't want it on her backdoor. Mayor Scholl asked Planning if zoning would allow that. Associate Planner Dimsho said it's Industrial there. Mayor Scholl said there are a lot of criminals everywhere. They take their policing very seriously.

Council President Morten said they were the first city in the State to pass no camping in Parks or on public property. Portland is finally starting to clamp down on no camping.

- ◆ Dan Theull, attorney for St. Helens Police Association. They are a new member of the Oregon Fraternal of Police. He sent a letter about staffing concerns to the Council and City Administrator Walsh. There are several members of the Police Department here tonight. If they don't act soon, they will have a crisis within 24 months. He highlighted some numbers from the letter:
 - Within two years, they will lose between 4-6 officers to retirement.
 - The timeframe to train new officers is two years. That is without delays sending officers to the academy for training. There is a backlog at the academy right now.
 - If the City does not add officers now, they will not have the ability to provide 24-hour protection.
 - In 2012, a report suggested they should have 25 patrol officers. That excludes police administrators; school resource officers, which they currently don't have because of staffing; and detectives. Right now, they have 11 patrol officers and two and a half patrol sergeants. The others are a chief, lieutenant, and one and half administrative sergeants.
 - The two police detectives are currently working on about a dozen internet crimes, including child pornography cases. One of those cases required a detective to review 500,000 to one million child pornography images. That took months of employee time to handle one case. They don't have the staff to handle that number of cases.
 - The chief recently requested three officers. He suggests adding five. He understands the financial impact. To replace the officers leaving in two years, they need to hire replacements now.
 - The City is not meeting the collective bargaining agreement with the limited bodies on now. He is urging Council to add bodies.

Councilor Chilton asked if he noted the five officers in his letter. Dan did not include that. The number of retiring officers increased since the time he wrote the letter. He knows there will be at least four and maybe six officers retiring in 2024.

Councilor Birkle did not receive an email from Dan. He did take advantage of the opportunity to do a ride along. Officer Coy said it was a slow night, but it sure didn't seem that way. It was a great opportunity to engage with Coy. He is also concerned about the impact the retirements will have on staff. They are being heard. Dan appreciates that. It's so important to have good relationships between the officers and elected officials. There has to be hundreds of applicants to get just five qualified applicants. Agencies all over Oregon are short-staffed.

Mayor Scholl thanked the officers in attendance for their service. They have committed to hiring one position. They take policing very seriously. A year ago, they spent a million more than the Columbia County Sheriff's Office. It's not on deaf ears but they do have a limited budget.

- ◆ Angela Wayman. She would be happy to take over fireworks. She met with Mayor Scholl in November to discuss what needs to be done. She did leave her name and number with a receptionist at the Elks but never heard back. Mayor Scholl stated at a previous meeting that she was asking the Elks for money, but she wasn't.

Mayor Scholl received a call from an Elks Board member who asked who Angela was and that she was seeking donations for fireworks. They are already really far behind. Western Fireworks needed a decision.

Angela would still like to be a part of the fireworks. She has helped with 13 Nights on the River, fireworks, and Spirit of Halloweentown in the past. People have talked about wanting more money spent on the show. She suggested a classic show as a fundraiser, which would include cars, motorcycles, etc.

Councilor Chilton thanked Angela for coming. She would like to allow her to participate and allow more input.

Angela did not come forward last year because she had two people tell her that she would not be allowed to do it. Mayor Scholl said she should have come to Council to ask about that. The proposal she submitted is not adequate to operate a show. Councilor Chilton pointed out that this is not the correct forum to discuss that. She suggested Angela bring a PowerPoint presentation with her proposal. Councilor Birkle suggested Angela work with City Administrator Walsh.

Angela repeated that she's willing to take it over or help this year.

- ◆ Shauna Stroup Harrison. She is very concerned about the policing issue. The City is pushing tourism and density. The police showed up tonight and said they wouldn't be able to withstand the lack of personnel. The Council needs to consider adding positions. Break-ins are occurring almost nightly.
- ◆ Brady Preheim.
 - He watched part of their show this afternoon. It's very entertaining and is like watching a movie, so he brought popcorn.
 - Councilor Topaz wants to change the Waterfront Plan after they've had drawings and a plan for five years.
 - He is still opposed to the police station and how it was funded. He is in favor of police. They need to add more police officers and not buildings.
 - What happens when someone is promoted to Assistant City Administrator and then demoted? It doesn't seem right that they kept their salary but not the duties. Those funds could pay for fireworks instead of stealing it from tourism.
 - Where is the tourism contract? Someone wanting to do fireworks should have stepped up months ago. The Tourism Director can do them. The City has already decided they would pay for it. They need to start fundraising now for next year.
 - Concerned about the homeless. He didn't know about a potential homeless shelter moving into the current Food Bank location. He lives near there and hopes that it doesn't happen.
 - The derelict boat is gone.
- ◆ James Shoher. He is concerned about housing going in and adding tourism, but not adding police officers. They may need to cancel the police station and figure out something else. He would prefer having more officers instead of a new station. Do they plan on doing road improvements on Pittsburg Road?

Mayor Scholl responded that the application was for an annexation. It's not for a development yet.

DELIBERATIONS

1. Deliberations - Annexation of Property located Southeast of the Intersection of Pittsburg Road & Meadowview Drive (Morain)

Councilor Birkle is in favor of the annexation and the Planning Commission recommendations. Council President Morten agreed. He concurs with the staff recommendation. Councilor Chilton acknowledged the work the applicant put in to add value for not just herself, but also for the community. She agrees with the staff recommendation. Councilor Topaz and Mayor Scholl both agreed with the Planning Commission recommendations as well.

Motion: Motion made by Council President Morten and seconded by Councilor Topaz to approve the annexation as recommended in the staff report. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Scholl, Council President Morten, Councilor Birkle, Councilor Topaz, Councilor Chilton

ORDINANCES – Final Reading

2. Ordinance No. 3280: An Ordinance to Annex and Designate the Zone of Certain Property at 58389 Columbia River Highway

Mayor Scholl read Ordinance No. 3280 by title. Motion made by Council President Morten and seconded by Councilor Topaz to adopt Ordinance No. 3280. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Scholl, Council President Morten, Councilor Birkle, Councilor Topaz, Councilor Chilton

APPROVE AND/OR AUTHORIZE FOR SIGNATURE

3. Request for Full Reconveyance for CAT Loan Payoff at 425 N. 11th Street (Kooyman)
4. [RATIFY] Contract for Water Assistance Provisions between Community Action Team, Inc. and the City

Motion: Motion made by Council President Morten and seconded by Councilor Topaz to approve '3' and '4' above. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Scholl, Council President Morten, Councilor Birkle, Councilor Topaz, Councilor Chilton

CONSENT AGENDA FOR ACCEPTANCE

5. Planning Commission Minutes dated January 11, 2022

Motion: Motion made by Council President Morten and seconded by Councilor Topaz to approve '5' above. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Scholl, Council President Morten, Councilor Birkle, Councilor Topaz, Councilor Chilton

CONSENT AGENDA FOR APPROVAL

6. Riverfront Development Request for Qualifications (RFQ)
7. Council Work Session, Executive Session, and Regular Session Minutes dated February 2, 2022
8. Animal Facility Licenses
9. OLCC Licenses
10. Accounts Payable Bill Lists

Motion: Motion made by Council President Morten and seconded by Councilor Chilton to approve '6' through '10' above.

Discussion.

Councilor Topaz talked about the Riverfront Development. There were adjustments as it went along and what they were able to do. Councilor Birkle said they are only asking for qualifications. Councilor Topaz asked if they are qualified to talk to us. Councilor Birkle responded that the Council would determine if

they are qualified by reviewing their submittals. Mayor Scholl said they would likely be doing the work. There is another process for the work to be done.

Walsh clarified that the only difference in the packet is an extension of the date. All the screening criteria and expectations have stayed the same.

Discussion ensued about the process of an RFQ. Councilor Topaz said there are two steps. Walsh said there are more than two. Associate Planner Dimsho added that this is the first step. Councilor Topaz said they are going to choose someone who they think can do the job, then qualify them to do the work, and then give them permission to do the work.

Vote: Yea: Mayor Scholl, Council President Morten, Councilor Birkle, Councilor Topaz, Councilor Chilton

WORK SESSION ACTION ITEMS

January 5, 2022 Council Work Session Minutes

Mayor Scholl reported that the motion made to amend and approve the minutes at the last meeting was not seconded.

Motion: Motion made by Council President Morten and seconded by Councilor Chilton to amend the January 5, 2022 Council Work Session Minutes to include the number of employees who were surveyed.

Vote: Yea: Mayor Scholl, Council President Morten, Councilor Birkle, Councilor Topaz, Councilor Chilton

Grant Applications

Mayor Scholl reported that the grant applications were reviewed during the work session. He wishes they had more money to give. Council discussed granting the following:

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

Motion: Motion made by Council President Morten and seconded by Councilor Topaz to approve the grant amounts as listed above. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Scholl, Council President Morten, Councilor Birkle, Councilor Topaz, Councilor Chilton

Mayor Scholl apologized to the other nonprofit applicants.

Right-of-Way Dedication on Barr Avenue

Motion: Motion made by Council President Morten and seconded by Councilor Topaz to approve the concept for the right-of-way dedication on Barr Avenue. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Scholl, Council President Morten, Councilor Birkle, Councilor Topaz, Councilor Chilton

Tailgating and Fireworks Launch Location on 4th of July

Mayor Scholl said he was misunderstood about the tailgating concept. He doesn't drink but is still an advocate for tailgating and the experiences people have.

Councilor Topaz asked how many tailgate versus park? Mayor Scholl responded that about a quarter of the people tailgate and others just park there.

Councilor Chilton is fine with tailgating there. She doesn't see a reason why they shouldn't allow it. She's not aware of any problems it has caused. Pretty soon that property won't be available. She spoke with Tina to get her insight about a fireworks location. The best option is the barge. It causes the fewest problems and is the safest. Councilor Birkle agreed with the barge.

Council President Morten asked if they charged for tailgating last year and did service groups help with that. Tina said they did charge last year. Unfortunately, they were not able to get help from service groups last year. Police and fire personnel were there at the appropriate times.

Motion: Motion made by Councilor Birkle and seconded by Councilor Chilton to approve 4th of July tailgating on the Veneer property and pursue the launch of fireworks from a barge.

Discussion.

Council President Morten asked how much was charged for tailgating last year. Tina said it was \$25.

Vote: Yea: Mayor Scholl, Council President Morten, Councilor Birkle, Councilor Topaz, Councilor Chilton

COUNCIL MEMBER REPORTS

Council President Morten reported...

- He received a Valentine's letter of appreciation and treats in his mailbox from AmeriCorps and Columbia County RSVP. He was very honored by their thoughtfulness towards himself and other veterans.

Councilor Topaz reported...

- They are working on recruitment for a new Library Director.

Councilor Chilton reported...

- She recently met with Judy Thompson and discussed the Kiwanis Parade. She is excited to have it come back.
- She applied to be on the Local Public Safety Coordinating Committee with the County. She received a phone call from the District Attorney, who said they are reorganizing the Committee to include a City Council position. No objection from Council for her to represent the Council on the Committee.
- This is the third time she has brought the need to increase police staffing to the Council. She's not okay with the possibility of losing 24-hour staffing. They are growing. They owe it to citizens and police to maintain staffing. Councilor Topaz acknowledged that crime happens 24-hours a day here. They need 24-hour service. Council President Morten said there were 24 officers when he joined the Council in 2006. Now the number is lower. They are really missing an officer in the school. Students have learned to respect the officer when they're at the school. Councilor Topaz was at the police station on Monday and found out that the officer had been at the high school three times because of fights.
- They need to consider that our officers could be drawn to Portland.

Councilor Birkle reported...

- The police ride-along was eye opening. They are doing so much at once.
- He has a strong concern to keep the officers. It's having a big impact on their personal lives. They do not want to lose them in the current system. When the new apartments go in, there will be 1,000 new residents. He knows they need more Planning staff, but they need to make priorities. There is no direct connection between the officers and the new safety facility. They are not going to attract the best candidates with the existing building. They cannot ask them to change their uniforms at home. If they want high quality, they need a high-class facility. He doesn't regret the decision to build a new facility.
- He loves shorter work sessions. He had the opportunity to get his hair cut at a local business and speak to residents.
- Every day in his classroom there is a signal word. Today's word was "parallel." Tomorrow's word was going to be "degree," but he might change it to "qualifications."

MAYOR SCHOLL REPORT

- A lot of good things are happening in Columbia County
 - Columbia County Economic Team (CET) update
 - Keep it Local
 - Travel Oregon

- Business Oregon
 - Annexation of Comstock property. R7 was the right vision.
- Officers are needed. It's frustrating to not have the money to pay for everything.
- There are growing pains. They have a great staff. It starts with Walsh, who doesn't get near the credit that he deserves. He meets with department heads on a regular basis. Walsh thanked him. He talked about the police concerns. They are looking at incentive packages. Open recruitment for laterals all the time is a possibility. They have a good relationship with the Police Association. Councilor Topaz asked if they could send officers to out of state academies. Walsh said it's a combination of education and experience.

OTHER BUSINESS**ADJOURN – 8:36 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted by Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder.

ATTEST:

/s/ Kathy Payne
Kathy Payne, City Recorder

/s/ Rick Scholl
Rick Scholl, Mayor