



COUNCIL REGULAR SESSION

Wednesday, January 03, 2024

APPROVED MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT

Mayor Rick Scholl
Council President Jessica Chilton
Councilor Mark Gundersen
Councilor Russell Hubbard
Councilor Brandon Sundeen

STAFF PRESENT

John Walsh, City Administrator
Crystal King, Communications Officer
Jenny Dimsho, Associate Planner
Suzanne Bishop, Library Director
Tina Curry, Contracted Event Coordinator

OTHERS

Jennifer Massey	Christina Sullivan
Jim Coleman	Sidney Sullivan
Kai Huschke	Brady Preheim
Nick Hellmich	CDC
Steve Toschi	Arthur Leskowich
Eddie Dunton	

CALL REGULAR SESSION TO ORDER – 7:00 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

VISITOR COMMENTS – *Limited to three (3) minutes per speaker*

- ◆ Nick Hellmich. He heard public comment earlier and does not want a nativity scene in the Plaza. That exposes the City to litigation. The presenter was not speaking for all Christians. He also pointed out that the City's YouTube channel allows comments, which could be misconstrued.
- ◆ Brady Preheim. He suggested a levy be done for police funding. The police station could be remodeled using the garage space, and then add additional storage space. He is not in agreement with putting Councilor Hubbard in charge of tourism when he doesn't know what tourism is. Tina Curry makes it look easy. She doesn't have a contract and decisions need to be made now. This is probably the most successful tourism program in the state.
- ◆ Christina Sullivan, speaking as a private citizen. There are 15,000 people living in St. Helens. Just because people aren't coming here to complain doesn't mean they agree. She hopes they make decisions that are best for the whole city and not just the few coming here with an agenda. There has always been drama associated with tourism no matter who has run it. Based on the income and attendance, tourism is very successful now. They should be thanking E2C and Tina Curry for

her commitment. The City is in a financial crisis and spending time revamping the contract is a misuse of time and money.

- ◆ Steve Toschi. He addressed serious budget problems that need to be worked on now. The Budget Committee needs to meet sooner than planned to begin working on those problems. Tourism is very successful. The contract with the current contractor should be extended for six months.
- ◆ Jim Coleman. Every time someone has a problem with Tina Curry, those people are attacked, including himself. There is constant controversy. The Council made a controversial decision to add a \$10 Public Safety Fee to utility bills. He does not agree with the discussion at the work session to not build a police station and instead just spend all the money. The money should only be used for the police station.
- ◆ Jennifer Massey. She would like the Council to make a collaborative goal to be transparent this year.

ORDINANCES – First Reading

1. **Ordinance No. 3298:** An Ordinance to Amend the City of St. Helens Comprehensive Plan Map for Certain Property from Light Industrial, LI Designation to the General Residential, GR Designation and the Zoning District Map from Light Industrial, LI Zone to the General Residential, R5 Zone (475 N. 12th Street)

Mayor Scholl read Ordinance No. 3298 by title. The final reading will be held at the next meeting.

CONSENT AGENDA FOR APPROVAL

2. OLCC Licenses
3. Accounts Payable Bill Lists

Motion: Motion made by Council President Chilton and seconded by Councilor Sundeen to approve '2' and '3' above. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Scholl, Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

WORK SESSION ACTION ITEMS

Special Session scheduled for Wednesday, January 10, 2024, at 6:00 p.m. to discuss the current fiscal year Police Department budget and the police station project.

COUNCIL MEMBER REPORTS

Council President Chilton reported...

- Happy New Year!
- Working on a resolution for the police staffing issues.
- Advocate of moving forward with the police station plans. Ethical to continue to do what they said they were going to do with that money.
- Encouraged public to educate themselves about the waterfront project and Project Sprint.
- A comment was made about the negative comments made at Council meetings. She reminds herself that there are over 14,000 here and most of them are not attending these meetings. She never came to any meetings before getting elected. That doesn't mean that she didn't care, she just expected the people who were elected to represent her. They must listen and think of everyone.

Councilor Sundeen reported...

- Happy New Year!
- There is still an opening on the Parks and Trails Commission.
- There is interest in revamping the Japanese Gardens at McCormick Park.

- He appreciates being here and working with the Council. His goal is to improve communication with the public. Sometimes just sitting down and talking with someone is all they need to help bring understanding.
- Requested to talk about the Budget Committee timeline.

Councilor Gundersen reported...

- He looks forward to the police staffing and funding meeting coming up.
- He agreed with Councilor Sundeen's goal to improve communication with the public.

Councilor Hubbard reported...

- Unfortunately, the Library did not receive the Makerspace Grant.

MAYOR SCHOLL REPORTS

- They have had to budget like everyone else. They need to be proactive with some of these current budget decisions before the new fiscal year budget goes into effect.
- He looks forward to 2024 and the upcoming projects.

OTHER BUSINESS

City Administrator Walsh looked at prior Budget Committee meetings. They all fell within the same time frames in previous years. The budget is being actively worked on now.

Mayor Scholl pointed out that Tina Curry is doing a great job. The problem is with the contract and not her.

ADJOURN – 7:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder.

ATTEST:

/s/ Crystal King
Crystal King, Communications Officer

/s/ Rick Scholl
Rick Scholl, Mayor