



COUNCIL WORK SESSION

Wednesday, April 05, 2023

APPROVED MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT

Mayor Rick Scholl
Council President Jessica Chilton
Councilor Patrick Birkle
Councilor Mark Gundersen
Councilor Brandon Sundeen – via Zoom

STAFF PRESENT

John Walsh, City Administrator
Kathy Payne, City Recorder
Crystal King, Communications Officer
Brian Greenway, Police Chief
Joe Hogue, Police Lieutenant
Suzanne Bishop, Library Director

Gloria Butsch, Finance Director
Cameron Burkhart, Library Assistant/Communications Support Specialist
Jenny Dimsho, Associate Planner/Community Develop. Project Manager
Tina Curry, Contracted Event Coordinator
Bill Monahan, Contracted Attorney

OTHERS

Steve Topaz Robert Salisbury
Erin Salisbury Lynne Pettit
Steve Toschi Scott Jacobson

CALL WORK SESSION TO ORDER – 2:00 pm

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

- ◆ Erin Salisbury. Ms. Salisbury spoke strictly as a 1st Street property owner about the community's concerns regarding parking affected by construction projects. She asked how to keep the 46 two-hour spaces in front of operating businesses between the end of 1st Street down to the corner available to customers but also have spaces for residents and employees to park for a full workday. She added it was frustrating the City event space did not seem to have construction currently happening but was gated off and not accessible. The immediate problem needed a solution.
- ◆ Steve Topaz. Mr. Topaz spoke about the sale of the City-owned portion of the Boise property to ACSP being null and void, submitting his comments as a Councilor at the time to City Recorder Kathy Payne into the record and noting the courts also said the sale was null and void. He posed several questions about how to find out how much money was made or lost with the sale of the City property; the difference in the publicly announced \$3.5 million offer for the property and the sold price for \$1.55 million; the total costs for title fees, lawyers, etc., to sell the property; the transfer of funds; if any physical changes were needed to complete the sale of the property and any associated costs; and the legal costs beyond the sales agreement. He stated the Oregon Government Ethics Commission ruled that Mayor Scholl and Councilor Chilton violated ORS 192.6602 and the Commission entered final default orders on Rick Scholl and Jessica Chilton regarding the sales pitch of the WWTP property. He addressed the 163-page

DEQ report describing the contaminated area of the Boise Inc paper mill where four possible measures for protecting the environment were outlined. The City has not had anything to do with it, knowing Boise and DEQ are involved. It was a mess. He advised paying attention to Laura Shirah's public comments.

- ◆ Tina Curry. Ms. Curry reported talking to Casey at the County about possibly using the County Courthouse parking lot for additional traffic from 5:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m. during the busiest time for restaurants.

DISCUSSION TOPICS

1. Employee Length of Service Recognition - Cameron Burkhart (5 Years)

The Council recognized Cameron Burkhart for their five years of service with the library, with the Mayor and Councilors Birkle and Chilton expressing their appreciation for their service, professionalism, and passion for St. Helens.

2. Semi-Annual Report from the Police Department - *Chief Brian Greenway and Lt. Joe Hogue*

Chief Brian Greenway and Lieutenant Joe Hogue presented their six-month report. Key highlights included a staffing update; drawing candidates to St. Helens in competition with other metropolitan agencies; proactive policing and Officer McClure's training leading to increased DUII arrests which saves lives; the work of their detectives especially to ensure child safety when handling child abuse referrals; removing the school resource officer (SRO) due to cuts but still maintaining a partnership with the School District, especially to conduct threat assessments, with the hope of one day reinstating an SRO; an increase in search warrants; plans for a crisis stabilization center through a committee with CCMH; training other law enforcement agencies; the Cocoa and Crafts and Cops event with the Rec Center; new K-9 Max was still in training; K-9 Ryder will be retired after Max is ready; and active shooter training to stay prepared.

Questions from Council were addressed as follows:

- Their current software cannot extrapolate data about specific locations and types of calls for service such as car crashes, but they are working to get a new report management system on board which would give them the ability to look at data about the top five intersections, crime hotspots, etc. Not all traffic crashes are reportable to the police, and many people involved in crashes do not report them.
- The department's approach to interacting with the homeless population starts with hiring the right people who have a mindset of helping, including by offering services. Whatever would be decided with HB 3115, the police just need clear direction of what they need to do. It was noted that St. Helens unhoused population is self-sufficient.
- Potentially seven officer retirements would be coming up and all seven would be eligible to retire by summer 2024. Two officers would definitely be retiring. The department is competitive now with hiring pools.
- The department had a reserve program for a long time, with their own reserve academy. The last time it was opened, only one person applied because people did not want to do the work for free.
- In a community partnership, the department gets bulletins from the other jurisdictions about car prowlers. Chief Greenway advised citizens to Lock, Take, Hide: lock their car, take their keys, and hide their valuables. Car prowls are a crime of opportunity. Officers will be out patrolling the communities. The department will put out a reminder come summertime, working with Communications Officer Crystal King.

Councilor Birkle recalled doing a ride-along with Officer Coy where he was impressed with another officer's assessment of an individual by making use of a translation service for non-English speakers. As a teacher, he supports the police and is confident in their response should anything like the school shooting in Uvalde happen in St. Helens.

Councilor Sundeen thanked Chief Greenway and Lieutenant Hogue and their whole department for their work, adding it has been great working with Chief Greenway and getting to know the needs of the department and their officers.

3. Recommendations from Parks and Trails Commission

Mayor Scholl referenced the Parks and Trails Commission recommendation to the Council (memo included in the meeting packet) to amend the St. Helens Municipal Code to establish a six-foot leash law in all City parks and that Heinie Heumann Park and Grey Cliffs Waterfront Park be off-leash dog parks in addition to McCormick Park.

Councilor Sundeen explained the Parks and Trails Commission discovered discrepancies in the Code regarding dogs and leash rules and would like to make the Code consistent.

The Council was in agreement with the proposed updates.

4. Discussion regarding Proposing Rules for Boards and Commissions Members Regarding Communications and Use of City Logo

Mayor Scholl said due to recent events, all members of City Boards and Commissions need to take care when they speak whether it appears their message is from the City or their personal opinion. If stating their own opinion, they need to make sure no City logos are used. A policy needs to be put in place. No individual speaks for the City itself without going through Communications.

City Administrator John Walsh confirmed rules are already in place for Council communications but none that apply directly to boards.

Ms. Payne clarified that the Council can implement the rules and direct the boards to follow the policy.

Mayor Scholl stated the citizens are better served by the City having a unified message.

Ms. Payne clarified she would work with Mr. Walsh to draft a policy and bring it back to Council for approval.

The Council was in agreement that a policy was needed.

5. Update on Columbia View Park Improvements

Mr. Walsh and Associate Planner Jenny Dimsho presented via PowerPoint an update on the progress of the Columbia View Park and Riverwalk Project, starting with the schedule and its goal of awarding the project for construction to begin in September after 13 Nights on the River. With the time it will take to get building permits and bid the project and an estimated year of construction, it is urgent to complete the final design in order to parallel the duration of the streets project to minimize impacts to Downtown and to businesses. They reviewed the design process so far, addressed the main elements in the Columbia View Park Improvements Project, provided details on changes staff requested the consultants make moving into final documents of removing the skylights and having no design on the stage panels that face the audience, and gave an overview of the Riverwalk side of the site plan, noting coming out of the 30 percent design, the top of the gangway will also go right and connect to the County's trail. The last main portion of the project is the playground and adjacent picnic shelter/pavilion. The playground will have three main mounds, one colored like land and the other two like water. The mounds will use the surfacing material poured in place (PIP) which is bouncy material. They described how the design for the shelter has evolved over time and staff requested the Council's notice to proceed to move into final design. The next time the Council will see the item is when the City is

bidding it and selecting the contractor who will build it. Staff also clarified that if the color of the playground mounds fade, the PIP is replaced. However, PIP lasts a long time. It was further clarified the playground would not be any structural playground like McCormick but more of a natural playground which is a trend right now for parks such as Kenton Park in Portland.

Councilors discussed the natural playground concept with staff, noting pros and cons and suggesting color schemes. They also discussed the stage's infrastructure and design, noting the need for shaded areas and consulting with sound and music professionals on where to place speakers. Ms. Dimsho replied the relocation of the stage did not seem to warrant additional sound study, adding the same equipment will be used. When the orientation of the stage was selected, the speaker angle was discussed. The sound is projected either way. It was noted that different groups that play have different needs and staff responded that some bands bring their own equipment. It was also noted that the site had never had a berm before and no study has been made on how it could affect the sound. However, Councilors Birkle and Gundersen believed the site is designed well enough to ensure enough electrical capacity to combat any noise issues caused by wind and waves.

Ms. Salisbury asked if a place has been incorporated to put the sound people because performers' crews have complained about it. Ms. Curry replied most sound technicians are walking around the shows with their computers as it is all automated. Hardly anybody has a soundboard they are setting up. Sound equipment will be right next to the stage which the plan accommodates. The floor of the stage has a lot of power outlets which most stages do not have, adding she believed the stage is well-powered.

Mayor Scholl stated everything else in the update looked great.

6. Report from City Administrator John Walsh

Mr. Walsh presented his report. Key highlights were as follows:

- Finance Director Gloria Butsch was introduced.
- Ms. Butsch will send out the agenda tomorrow for the first Budget Committee meeting of the fiscal year.
- Carol Green will retire next week.
- Mr. Walsh has been meeting with all department heads on their goals for the budget. The budget will be a challenge.
- Ms. Butsch spoke about the audit which is still ongoing but has been put on the backburner as the budget cycle starts with the goal of wrapping it up before the next fiscal year end.
- No expenditures are being proposed for the biennial Urban Renewal budget. Expenditures would require the budget being done every two years. The budget may be revisited as deeper discussions happen about levels of services.
- On May 4, the League of Oregon Cities is putting on an Urban Renewal virtual training which will also be recorded. Staff hoped the Council would participate.
- He described the continued work with the consultants and Councilor Sundeen on the redesign effort for the Public Safety Facility/police station. At the next meeting, the Council will probably get a contract to go out to bid.
- At the next meeting, the City Forester will come back with the prospectus on the last timber sale that Council requested. New recommendations will come in next year with increased cost that would reduce City revenues, requiring the Council to make choices.
- Upcoming events include another Central Waterfront Open House tomorrow, the Boards and Commissions Appreciation Dinner on April 20, and Take Your Child to Work Day on April 27.
- Work continues with attorney Aaron Hisel on House Bill 3115. The Planning Commission will meet next week to discuss the matter further. Staff will have more of a draft proposal after that for the Council's next meeting.

- Calls to action from Senate Weber's office included a request for funding for the water reservoir. He has also talked to Business Oregon about funding and grant options for the reservoir. The project looked good.
- Meetings have been held to work on the fireworks show. No contract was in place yet with Western Display, but their people have been out there cleaning the barge, been to the launch site, etc. Mayor Scholl noted an increase in costs was to be expected. Mr. Walsh pointed out some size limitations on the barge which could mean smaller shows but more of them. The funding for the fireworks show will be around \$20,000. The Council will be seeing the contract soon.
- A stakeholder group will be put together for the Gateway Feature Project. Ms. Dimsho briefly reviewed the process for the project which will kick off internally on Friday.

Councilors Chilton and Sundeen volunteered to serve on the Gateway stakeholder group as Council representatives.

Communications Officer King clarified Engineering Manager Sharon Darroux has scheduled a meeting tomorrow to discuss parking and they will report back to Ms. Salisbury afterward.

Mayor Scholl said the City should be sure to make parking available in Columbia Park itself before construction begins after 13 Nights.

ADJOURN - 4:20 pm

EXECUTIVE SESSION

- Real Property Transactions, under ORS 192.660(2)(e); and
- Consult with Counsel/Potential Litigation, under ORS 192.660(2)(h).

Respectfully submitted by Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder.

ATTEST:

/s/ Kathy Payne
Kathy Payne, City Recorder

/s/ Rick Scholl
Rick Scholl, Mayor