



# COUNCIL WORK SESSION

Wednesday, January 18, 2023

## APPROVED MINUTES

### MEMBERS PRESENT

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

### STAFF PRESENT

John Walsh, City Administrator  
Kathy Payne, City Recorder  
Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder  
Crystal King, Communications Officer  
Jacob Graichen, City Planner  
Bill Monahan, City Attorney  
Tina Curry, Event Coordinator

### OTHERS

Steve Topaz  
Deb Parsons  
Lynne Pettit  
Linda Zahl  
Anne Scholz  
Bill Eagle  
Angela Cruze  
Victoria Kelly

### CALL WORK SESSION TO ORDER – 2:00 p.m.

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

- ◆ William Eagle. Mr. Eagle, a former district conservationist and former chair of the Columbia County Surface Mining Advisory Committee spoke about his opposition to the Knife River mining expansion application for Liberty Hill. He believed sites that were further from homes and did not contain wetlands or historic features would be better suited for mining, citing negative impacts to humans, drainage, and the local economy. He provided copies of his comment to the City Administrator and each Councilor.
- ◆ Linda Zahl. Ms. Zahl, who lives adjacent to the proposed Knife River mining facility, spoke about the effect that mining would have on air quality, nearby residences, water drainage, human health, tax revenue, property values. She encouraged the Council to talk to the County and to submit a comment to DEQ and the Army Corps of Engineers that Knife River is not an appropriate site.
- ◆ Steve Topaz. Mr. Topaz said dumping continued in the lagoon. He also wanted to know if the boat had passed the Coast Guard hull inspection and how much money the Halloween parking generated.
- ◆ Tina Curry, Event Coordinator. Confirmed the boat was completed and waiting for its final buoyancy test, not a test of the hull. After that it would be ready to come to the city. She also clarified that the Halloween parking had been managed by CERT. However, Staff was considering

several ways to mitigate the downtown parking situation going forward. She encouraged Council to discuss available parking and noted that the parking aspect of the Columbia View Park renovation would require six to eight months of planning.

Councilors and staff discussed downtown parking. Ms. Curry stated she did not believe parking would be available for the 4th of July. She also confirmed that Holly and Evie would be turning in the cash payments for Halloween parking at the end of the month. She did not have a final tally of all cash and online payments. However, as contractor, she did not want to broadcast the income as doing so could lead to copycats of the sharing of their expenses. Council President Chilton suggested Council add a discussion to problem-solve parking to a future meeting agenda. Ms. Curry added she had ideas to present that would make it relatively painless but would require cooperation from community members.

#### **DISCUSSION TOPICS** - *The Council will take a break around 4:00PM*

##### **1. Request from Eisenschmidt Pool - Anne Scholz, Manager**

Anne Scholz thanked Council for their flexibility with water bills during COVID which was very helpful to the pool. She reported on recent and upcoming pool repairs and asked for leniency with the pool's excess water to get through the swim season. The pool would then close on February 20<sup>th</sup> and repair work would begin.

After a short discussion about supporting the pool through the swim season, the consensus of Council was to adjust the water rate as requested.

#### **OTHER BUSINESS**

City Planner Graichen addressed the concerns about Knife River, noting the potential for encroachment in the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB), which would not be significant. Impacts to the wetlands would be mitigated. However, the boundary of the mining would be close.

Councilor Birkle said a lot of the mitigation abuts the UGB, and a lot of the drainage system looks like it would drain down, potentially impacting the Milton Creek, Dalton Lake, and north basins.

Mr. Graichen stated the perimeter was larger than what was permitted in 1992 and if Knife River wanted to pursue an expansion, a County permit would be required with the City as a referral agency.

##### **2. Right-of-Way Actions for the North 11<sup>th</sup>/12<sup>th</sup> Street Bluff Property - City Planner Jacob Graichen**

City Planner Graichen presented the Staff report on proposed changes to the right-of-way at the North 11<sup>th</sup>/12<sup>th</sup> Street bluff property. If the motion carried, the proposal will go to the Planning Commission for a recommendation and back to City Council for a decision.

Mayor Scholl and Mr. Graichen explained the history of the property and how the proposal helps clean it up and make it whole.

Council and staff discussed the property. Mr. Graichen explained the UGB in context of the mining proposal versus the city limits. Based on the County staff's comment on the Corps of Engineers permit, the original application was not within the UGB. However, the mining could potentially impact residents and the City's stormwater system. Even though the site was under St. Helens' UGB, it was still County property and there was the potential to challenge a County decision.

##### **3. Parks & Recreation Commission Motion to Change Name Back to Parks & Trails Commission**

Council and staff discussed the request to change the name of the Parks & Recreation Commission back to Parks & Trails Commission. It was noted that the Parks Commission did not have a say over anything that went on with recreation and signage still used the name "Parks & Trails." Councilors shared about

the connection between recreation and parks. A recommendation was made to have a Recreation Commission. Councilor Birkle suggested the Council review all commissions, committees, and boards at a future retreat.

Councilor Sundeen said Parks & Recreation Manager Shanna Duggan usually attends Parks Commissions meetings as a representative of Recreation along with a representative from Parks, but if Recreation becomes separate, only a Parks rep would be needed. He thinks the program overall would remain the same with close communication with Recreation to work together.

Since she is assigned to Administration, Councilor Chilton plans to meet with Duggan to talk about Recreation at least quarterly. Maybe Duggan will have some ideas about how to get more of the public involved.

City Recorder Payne will bring back an updated ordinance and bylaws for approval to change Parks & Recreation back to Parks & Trails Commission.

Council discussed how it is a challenge to support a high number of boards and commissions in terms of staff and volunteers. They touched on rekindling the Arts & Cultural Commission.

#### **4. Report from City Administrator John Walsh**

City Administrator Walsh presented his report, updating Council on key items as follows:

- Applications for the Finance Director position were being screened. He reported on the recruitment process and City Council's role in selecting a director. He recommended the Council participate in a panel style interview. Staff would be conducting their own panel interview as well. After a short discussion with the Council, he confirmed the Council's interview would be conducted in an executive session at a meeting scheduled for February 1 at 12:30 pm.
- Jamie Edwards accepted the position as Accountant II to replace Carol Green who is retiring. Edwards continues to help in Utility Billing until her former position is filled. Recruitment is open right now for the position.
- Staff is still working with AFSCME on the City's collective bargaining agreement, updating job descriptions and salaries of the positions of concern in the Memorandum of understanding (MOU) that the City has relating to the contract. Council will see some activity coming soon on job descriptions and pay equity issues.
- The City has a tentative agreement with the St. Helens Police Association. Staff is trying to get the paperwork so they will have an MOU on the 1st.
- The City is eligible for an expansion program in the current grant cycle for the Veterans Memorial. Staff would work with Gene Hester to apply for a grant to fund his proposed flag pavilion. The City should consider matching funds.
- He provided a Public Safety Facility update, including a scope of work is back from the City's engineering firm. He has not had a chance to review it in detail yet, but he will present it at the February 1 meeting with the potential changes and what the programmatic elements of redesign look like. It will be about a nine-week effort with probably 12 to 18 months for the build.
- The police were overflowing their buildings, which led to dire working conditions. Staff was considering unused portions of the Recreation Center as a short-term solution. Mayor Scholl suggested using the house at McCormick Park, which Council discussed and agreed.
- Columbia View Park is at 90% design.
- After a previous discussion about planning a trail from St. Helens to Scappoose to connect to the Crown Zellerbach trail and the trail system going up the hill, the application is open. Staff has reached out to Scappoose and the County after the communities expressed interest in creating connection through the Oregon Pathways Program.
- The Streets and Utilities projects are starting to see more activity. A 20,000-yard pile of the spoils would be tarped and reused on-site. He confirmed the spoils meet all requirements.

- The Growing Rural Oregon Project awarded the City a \$100,000 grant that is renewable for the first three years to support greater St. Helens entrepreneurs. Columbia Economic Team (CET) is looking for the best and most effective way to use those resources. The Small Business Resource Center, Keep It Local, and the Small Business Alliance are a nice mission fit with CET who is being looked to in order to host a services agreement putting the entrepreneur to work in that cluster. The concept was very well received by CET's board which includes the new mayor of Scappoose and former senator Betsy Johnson.
- Mainstreet continues to do good work and received a grant from the Coalition for the scarecrows which they are happy about.
- For the request for proposals (RFP) to hire a contractor for the City's tourism, sooner would be better than later, if the Council wants to do it. This coming year will be challenging with construction. If Council is satisfied, they do not have to do anything right now. He confirmed the current contract is good through the end of the year.
- Mayor Scholl cautioned that people can promise things, but their history of delivering is unproven, having gone through the process a number of times. Council President Chilton said they are in a good position right now with a history of growth with Tina and can just tweak parts of her contract. Mayor Scholl agreed. Council has been trying to implement a quarterly meeting with the tourism director to discuss things which Tina is open to. Because Tina is a contractor, the City can only manage up to a certain point. She is not a City employee, which is a threshold that gets crossed in Council meetings quite often. Walsh thought it would be valuable to distribute the contract for Council's review and discussion about deliverables they would like to see, to be incorporated over time.
- He, Councilor Gunderson, and Planning Commissioners Toschi and Castner met to review House Bill 3115, solutions for the houseless the City needs to accommodate. Legal counsel from the City's insurance company is offering some advice; one attorney was familiar with the issues as he was on the Grants Pass case that resulted in HB3115. More updates will come.
- An environmental restoration group has expressed interest in acquiring the mill site and would like to come talk to Council during open session sometime soon. He will send Council more detailed information about the group.
- He confirmed for Council President Chilton that the boat that had to be towed from the docks was taken up the channel by another boater and a couple more boats were almost towed.
- Columbia River Yacht Club sent a letter and has been a responsible boating group. Some of their members were talking about not having to pay at the docks, but the club stated that is not how their organization behaves. They appreciate what St. Helens is doing and recognize the City's enforcement activities. They know who was there, and they are going to make it right which they did by paying the differences. Mayor Scholl stated the relationship between both yachting communities and the docks has been good. Council President Chilton noted after back-to-back meetings with complaints to Council about boats stuck at the docks and no enforcement, it is nice now that the City has fixed the problem.

**ADJOURN – 3:43 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted by Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder.

ATTEST:

/s/ Kathy Payne  
Kathy Payne, City Recorder

/s/ Rick Scholl  
Rick Scholl, Mayor