



# COUNCIL WORK SESSION

Wednesday, August 19, 2020

## APPROVED MINUTES

*This meeting was held electronically via Zoom.*

### CALL WORK SESSION TO ORDER - 1:03 PM

#### MEMBERS PRESENT

Mayor Rick Scholl  
Council President Doug Morten  
Councilor Keith Locke  
Councilor Ginny Carlson (arrived at 1:05 p.m.)  
Councilor Stephen R. Topaz

#### STAFF PRESENT

|   |                                      |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| John Walsh, City Administrator                      | Crystal King, Communications Officer |
| Matt Brown, Assistant City Administrator            | Mike DeRoia, Building Official       |
| Kathy Payne, City Recorder                          | Jenny Dimsho, Associate Planner      |
| Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder                   | Jacob Graichen, City Planner         |
| Sue Nelson, Interim Public Works Director           | Margaret Jeffries, Library Director  |
| Sharon Darroux, Engineering Project Manager I       | Shanna Duggan, Recreation Manager    |
| Rachael Barry, Government Affairs & Project Support | Matthew Kahl, City Attorney          |

#### OTHERS

|                 |                |            |
|-----------------|----------------|------------|
| Sue Mueller     | Hailey Iverson | Paul Vogel |
| Stuart Peterson | Dana Lathrope  | Sheri Cash |
| Dan Rocha       | Susana Hensley |            |

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

- ◆ Sue Mueller. She expressed her concerns about the safety of our city and citizens during the Spirit of Halloweentown events. She suggests cancelling the events. She questions the process by which the decision was made to continue these events. The city is currently in a state of emergency due to COVID-19. Fun times are needed, but this event should be cancelled this year. As a Lions Club member, she has enjoyed participating but this is a bad year to do it.

### DISCUSSION TOPICS - *The Council will take a 10-minute break around 3:00 PM.*

#### 1. Employee Length of Service Award

One employee has reached a milestone in his employment with the City of St. Helens. The following individual will receive a five-year certificate and pin.

Dan Dieter began working for the City in August of 2015 as a part-time Library Assistant where he continues to serve today. Congratulations, Dan, and thank you for your service!

City Recorder Payne read a statement from Dieter. He thanked the City for all that is being done during the pandemic. He appreciates the support for the Library's programs and services.

Council members expressed their appreciation of Dieter.

## 2. Chamber of Commerce Semi-Annual Report

Susana Hensley, Dana Lathrope, Dan Rocha, and Hailey Iverson were in attendance to give the Chamber report.

Dan reviewed the report:

- Reviewed the current Board members. The President position is currently vacant.
- Due to the lack of funding with COVID, they had to lay off Executive Director Chrissy Marquardt. She does continue to volunteer for the Chamber.
- Funds from a PPE loan has provided the ability to hire a part-time office assistant. Dana Lathrope is currently filling that position during the recruitment process.
- The InRoads Community Center is available to rent for members and non-members.
- Implemented a Code of Conduct. All Chamber volunteers are required to sign it. The goal is for clear expectations to be set for Chamber volunteers.
- Temporary building tenant – Birch Media. They are filming the TV show, The Crypt in St. Helens right now. They moved in in mid-July and will be here through September.
- There are six active committees:
  - Membership Committee
  - Coffee & Commerce Committee
  - Marketing Committee
  - Education Committee
  - Events Committee
  - Building Use Committee

## 3. Columbia County Economic Team (CCET) Semi-Annual Report - *Paul Vogel, Interim Executive Director*

Interim CCET Executive Director Paul Vogel was in attendance to give the CCET report. It is great to follow the momentum of the Chamber report.

- Produce a daily newsletter.
- Update the website every two weeks.
- There is a great concern for childcare services. Businesses are impacted by shifting schedules and staffing to accommodate childcare. Immediate and sustainable actions are needed.
- Have had good engagement with the chambers. They have been sharing resources, ideas, and suggestions.
- Helped Birch Media coordinate with the Chamber for a facility. It has brought spending to small businesses and restaurants in St. Helens.
- Keep It Local has been coordinating regularly with the chambers. The focus this fall will be around training. The business environment has changed, and businesses need tools.
- The PPE Store has increased traffic by about 50% over the last couple weeks. They are at the Fairgrounds every Friday afternoon providing high quality masks, gloves, and sanitizer.
- The most important thing that they have been able to do is the Small Business Emergency Grant Program. They have about \$250,000. There were 52 total awards for \$210,000 representing businesses all around the County.
- Col-Pac received a couple grants that will be available for small business services.
- There are five large industrial businesses pending in Columbia County. More than half of those proposals are for St. Helens sites. They have been collaborating with the Port and the cities. They are anxious to organize their marketing so they can be more proactive in attracting clients.
- Collaboration with the City has been terrific. The City has made good use of CRF funding by supporting community organizations. Assistance from Government Affairs and Project Support Specialist Rachael Barry has been very valuable.

- Met with the prospective new owner of the Armstrong building last week.
- Active in tourism. Participated in a tourism call that involved much of the coast. The coast is having a difficult time with a lot of disrespect and trash. Columbia County tourism has increased positively with camping, parks, trails, and kayaking.
- An Executive Director search is underway. He is the interim, as well as a candidate.
- They are completing their membership renewal for CCET. The renewal rate has been very good.

Discussion about childcare. CCET has partnered with NW Childcare Resource and Referral. Their priority is to help provide energy and support but not lead it.

Discussion about expanding outdoor tourism. The Port is looking at expanding their facilities to increase camping, kayaking, and canoeing. The CCET Board allocated \$25,000 towards interpretive signage on the CZ Trail. Money was received from Travel Oregon to complete the historical kiosk program. They are trying to gather data from the hotels to get a sense of occupancy.

Councilor Carlson talked about County-owned facilities being dated and aged. There is a lot of real estate here, but restrooms are old and not accessible to all folks. Paul will share that feedback with the County. Some of those facilities have not received funding due to lack of capacity in the past. They are seeing many more new users now.

#### **4. Report on Community Survey - Rachael**

Government Affairs and Project Support Specialist Rachael Barry was in attendance to give a report on the community survey. She thanked everyone for their support on this endeavor. A copy of the report is included in the archive packet for this meeting.

Walsh talked about this being a benchmark and conducting a survey every five years to see growth. Discussion of the next survey including questions about education in partnership with the school district.

#### **5. Review Proposed Bench Donation for McCormick Park Off-Leash Dog Area**

A copy of the request is included in the archive packet for this meeting.

Councilor Topaz questioned why the Council reviews bench requests. Council President Morten explained that the Parks & Trails Commission and Arts & Cultural Commission make a recommendation to Council. There was an incident several years ago that created this process. City Council has the final say where something will go but they need recommendations from the two commissions first. Interim Public Works Director Nelson added that the City adopted a formal policy several years ago for accepting donated items.

Stuart Peterson reported that his mother-in-law, Nancy Stutzman, passed away on July 25. She enjoyed watching the dogs run and play. The bench will be in her memory.

Council will make a decision at tonight's regular session.

#### **6. Employee Wellness Committee's Proposed Bicycle Giveaway Volunteer Program - Jenny/Shanna**

Associate Planner Jenny Dimsho and Recreation Manager Shanna Duggan were in attendance to make the request to the Council. A copy of the proposal is included in the archive packet for this meeting.

Duggan reported that the bike volunteer program began based on a surplus of bicycles at the Police Department. The former Bicycle & Pedestrian Commission used to service the bikes and then distribute them to the public. That has not happened in a few years since the Commission was combined with the Parks & Trails Commission. The bicycles are now at the Recreation Center. The goal is to make the repairs and distribute to the public for free. It would be a good partnership with staff and community.

The Parks & Trails Commission has donated \$500 to the program, as well as volunteer time. The proposal is for City staff to donate up to two hours of volunteer time working on the bicycles.

Councilor Topaz suggested a program that allows the kids to help fix the bicycles and a bicycle rental program. Duggan responded that this is a pilot program. Her overall goal is to get the community involved but it is not as feasible right now during the pandemic.

Council will make a decision at tonight's regular session.

## **7. City Hall Requests - Office Updates - John/Matt**

City Administrator John Walsh reviewed the request. A copy is included in the archive packet for this meeting. The request stems from the hiring of a Public Works Director and needing to rearrange staff locations to create space.

Assistant City Administrator Matt Brown showed the proposed floor plan of the upstairs.

Councilor Topaz suggested bringing in a structural engineer and re-wiring the entire area. Brown confirmed that they will be re-wiring the upstairs. The Building Official will ensure all building codes are met.

Council will make a decision at tonight's regular session.

## **8. Strategic Action Plan Update**

Brown reported that there are three updates for tonight's agenda:

- Language was added to three job descriptions for board/commission support.
- Additional work is needed with Mackenzie for the Police Needs Assessment.
- Council received a list of City-owned properties. Does Council want to discuss those properties at a future meeting? Council concurred.

## **9. City Administrator Report**

- The Planning Commission meeting was Zoom-bombed last week. Brown reviewed the proposed Zoom meeting policies and guidelines. One change is that it requires all boards and commissions to hold Zoom meetings, rather than in-person meetings, unless approved by Council. There will be a lot more management of the meetings to reduce the risk of Zoom bombs.
- There is an item on tonight's agenda to award the timber sale contract. They are working on a long-term sustainable revenue stream.
- There is an agreement on tonight's agenda with Maul Foster Alongi for Sykes Road Reservoir Feasibility Study.
- CCET talked about Cares Act Funding. The City has distributed funds to community partners. Funds have been made available for losses from cancelled cultural and community events. The City should be able to recoup some of the costs from 13 Nights on the River and Spirit of Halloweentown.
- There has been criticism about the safety of 13 Nights on the River and Spirit of Halloweentown. They are following all safety and cleaning guidelines.
- Tina has been working on a Kite Club. Someone wants to donate a small Conex box, which can be placed on the Waterfront property to hold kites for checkout.

Mayor Scholl assured the public that the City will cancel the Spirit of Halloweentown activities if it looks like there is a threat to the community. He requested a full report of the proposal and safety measures in place.

Council President Morten reported that he has received complaints from seven people about Spirit of Halloweentown activities. It is important to share information about what safety measures are in place. That is the most inquiries that he is had about any issue in such a short time.

Walsh will request Tina give a full report tonight.

- Continuing to secure Waterfront funding with the State.
- There has been some confusion with the Public Works Director recruitment. William Daniel withdrew from the position. He asked for clarification on how to proceed with the recruitment.

Council President Morten is not in favor of opening it back up to interview the candidate who did not show up to the in-person interview. The top two candidates scored very closely.

Councilor Topaz believes it sets a precedent if they continue to go to the next candidate. The candidate that did not show up had valid reasons.

Councilor Locke recommends going with the second recruit, based on past practice. If that does not pan out, they can recruit new applicants.

Councilor Carlson is okay with going with the second candidate or re-advertising for new applicants. She wants to do what is best for the community. The candidates scored very closely.

Mayor Scholl recommends starting the recruitment process over. There was a long gap of time between the application submittal deadline and the interviews. He would like to deliberate the same day after the interview with legal counsel in attendance.

Discussion ensued.

Brown suggested not involving City staff in the interview process if Council is not going to consider their opinion. Mayor Scholl agreed. It is a Council decision.

Council will make a decision of how to proceed at tonight's meeting.

Mayor Scholl excused himself and turned the meeting over to Council President Morten at 3:31 p.m.

- Sand Island is booked every weekend. It has been very successful. There was a small picnic shelter over there that will be rebuilt larger.
- Received an email today from Art Leskovich about the Wilsonville Concrete Products lease. He has environmental concerns about the sediment underneath the leased area.

Councilor Topaz reported that there was discussion in January about an RFP for a tourism director. He requested it be added to an agenda to discuss and give staff direction.

**OTHER BUSINESS** - None

**ADJOURNMENT** – 3:36 p.m.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION** - No Executive Session was held.

Respectfully submitted by Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder.

ATTEST:

/s/ Kathy Payne  
Kathy Payne, City Recorder

/s/ Rick Scholl  
Rick Scholl, Mayor