



COUNCIL WORK SESSION

Wednesday, December 15, 2021

APPROVED MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT

Mayor Rick Scholl
Council President Doug Morten
Councilor Patrick Birkle – arrived at 1:06 p.m.
Councilor Stephen R. Topaz
Councilor Jessica Chilton

STAFF PRESENT

John Walsh, City Administrator
Matt Brown, Finance Director
Kathy Payne, City Recorder
Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder
Jacob Graichen, City Planner

Mike De Roia, Building Official
Rachael Barry, Government Affairs Specialist
Crystal King, Communications Officer
Bill Monahan, City Attorney
Tina Curry, Event Coordinator

OTHERS

Stephanie Patterson
Erin Salisbury
Robert Salisbury
Brady Preheim

CALL WORK SESSION TO ORDER – 1 p.m.

Mayor Scholl read the Council Mantra.

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

- ◆ Tina Curry, Event Coordinator. Christmas Ships Parade/Activities update:
 - Fantastic event
 - Served 300+ cups of cocoa
 - Did not rain
 - Santa and elves
 - Live music box in City Hall window
 - Candy was very appreciated
 - The alpacas and sasquatches were fun and added a lot to the atmosphere
 - Local Krampus came
 - Lots of positive feedback
 - Christmas Ships dinner was paid for by Tourism. Captains picked up a box of food to take back to their boats.
 - Provided podium and backdrop to the Police Department for their award ceremony
 - Thanked Public Works for everything they have done to decorate the Plaza. It's a challenge to keep the lights on with the wind and rain.

- ◆ Brady Preheim. Why do people in most cities work there for years, retire, and get a party, but people in St. Helens work for years, there are litigations, a settlement agreement, and a gag order? How much did Sue's settlement cost the City and why did it happen? They don't understand how unhappy people are at the City. Councilor Topaz and Finance Director Brown have both been part of it. There is a legacy of error that must be fixed; one of which is the Recreation Center. 1) They claimed the new building did not need any work and spent thousands of dollars renovating it; 2) there is a department head not qualified to do the job, was demoted, and then remoted; 3) two more people were hired; and 4) basically hasn't done anything in two years.

The Council is voting on the Police Station today. He was part of the discussion in Scappoose when they wanted to build their roads and sidewalks. They seriously considered putting it on the water bill. They talked to attorneys about the statute that allows the City to use the water bill to replace streets and sidewalks. It was designed to allow you to replace the sewer plant or water line. It was not designed for a police station, roads, or sidewalks. Scappoose rejected it and sent it out for a vote, which is what St. Helens needs to do. If they get sued and lose, how much will that cost? And then how will they pay for the Police Station?

He is glad to see the new Main Street program and leadership but is concerned that the new name is only putting lipstick on a pig. He reviewed the presentation in the packet that referred to the \$200,000 for the theater. Has any of that money been spent? It must be spent by April. What happens if it's not? It will be another failure. The grant is to Main Street, and they are responsible to spend that money, not the theater. He loves the theater but is concerned it won't happen.

The Christmas Ships were great. The pirate ships all disappeared. The Police don't seem to be able to do anything about them, but when you ask the tourism director to get rid of them for the Christmas Ships, they suddenly moved. Maybe they should contract with E2C to patrol the docks.

DISCUSSION TOPICS - *The Council will take a break around 3:00 p.m.*

1. Update from Main Street Alliance Board - *Erin Salisbury, Interim President*

Erin Salisbury reviewed the Main Street Alliance report. A copy is included in the archive packet or this meeting. They were formerly known as SHEDCO. The Main Street Approach is a common-sense, strategy-driven framework that guides downtown revitalization efforts. Building off four decades of success, this model harnesses the social, economic, physical, and cultural assets that set a place apart. It's a nonprofit mix of community stakeholders; including merchants, retail businesses, property owners, citizens, volunteers, etc., all with the idea of "I love St. Helens."

- Reviewed how Main Street works
- The goal of St. Helens Main Street Alliance is to build a high quality, livable, and sustainable community that will grow St. Helens' economy while maintaining a sense of place.
- Recommendation from Oregon Main Street Coordinator in 2020
 - Restructure the Board
 - Forge an agreement with the City
 - Hire an executive director
 - Community-based goal and workplan development

In response to Brady, work is being done on the theater. They have been using the money. The grant money is reimbursable. They don't get the money until they have received their financing and completed the next stage of the process. They have received funds for the marquee replacement, digital screen inside, and other improvements. That money has not been lost. The Oregon Main Street did receive more funding for next year. They will begin announcing it and soliciting applications from property owners in January. One application from St. Helens will be sent to the State. They want to be sure whoever receives

it will be successful. Unfortunately, the business who received the grant a few years ago did not understand that it was a reimbursable grant.

- Reviewed upcoming events
 - Awards Ceremony Fundraiser - January 9, 2022, 12-1:30 p.m., Columbia Theater
 - OMS Revitalization Grant 2022
 - Spring Uptown Cleanup 2022

Part of rebuilding a city's economic vitality is making connections with people. Her number one criterion to be on the Board is, "Do you love St. Helens, and do you want to help improve St. Helens?"

Council President Morten has followed the program since its inception in Oregon city. It has made a huge difference in their commercial sector. Good luck.

Mayor Scholl asked about the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). Erin talked about the employee not being a City employee, which changes the MOU. They also need to talk about office space and does not think it should be located in City Hall. They are working through a list of what needs to be done for the City. City Administrator Walsh will return with a modified MOU for review.

Councilor Topaz talked about AmeriCorp not being a good fit in City Hall in the past. Erin confirmed that those volunteers were only here for a few months. It takes a while to learn and makes a lot of sense to have a permanent hire who can build the program. Main Street is specific to St. Helens. There is room for everyone to join.

Councilor Chilton has spoken with Judy Thompson about the program and is looking forward to seeing what they do.

Councilor Birkle has been impressed with the energy and vitality at the meetings. He is excited about the opportunity.

Mayor Scholl said the Main Street Board members are true professionals. They are very capable of hiring a new employee. He recommends Council direct Walsh to work with Main Street on an MOU. Council concurred.

2. Discussion regarding Residential Fire Sprinklers for New Child Care and Adult Foster Care Facilities Located in Dwellings - *Mike*

Building Official Mike De Roia reviewed the State required changes. The changes will require fire sprinklers in new childcare and adult foster care facilities. It helps actively suppress the fire, giving more time to evacuate. People can present alternatives for review:

1. Defining the care facility and dwelling unit, and putting fire separation between them with walls, barriers, etc.
2. Fire alarm system that is capable of automatically calling out
3. Exits directly to the exterior

It's around \$16,000 for a new sprinkler system for a 1,600 sq. ft. home.

Mayor Scholl gave kudos to De Roia and Walsh for how well the building process is going now.

3. Review of New Public Works Job Descriptions and Plan for Internship Program - *Mouhamad*

Public Works Director Mouhamad Zaher reviewed the job descriptions. Copies of the job descriptions and organizational charts are included in the archive packet for this meeting. The positions are new roles, but not new FTE's. There is no financial impact. It will help with career advancement and retainment. The internship program creates an opportunity for students in school. It gives them a real-life experience to work.

He is requesting consent to hire one FTE and an intern. They currently have a large workload and need assistance.

Councilor Topaz asked if there is a budget for people getting their professional license and certifications. Zaher said yes. He supports continuing education.

Councilor Chilton asked about managing an intern. Zaher explained that they are usually in their third year of school and would have a limited role. They would be familiar with GIS and CAD. It's a very specific model for six months. Councilor Chilton is in favor an intern but doesn't want to give anyone more work. Zaher agreed. They will have very specific tasks to be done.

Councilor Birkle thanked Zaher. The existing and proposed organizational chart handouts are helpful. What current positions are funded for Engineering? Zaher responded that there are two currently filled and one vacant. They are requesting the vacant position be filled.

Mayor Scholl talked about Zaher being very professional. He has been in communications with him and Walsh about this proposal.

4. Review Notice of Intent to Award for 2021 Aerial Imaging and GIS Data Update Project - *Jacob*

City Planner Graichen reviewed the contract. A copy is included in the archive packet for this meeting. It is on tonight's agenda for approval. Aerial photos are used daily.

- Mapping was originally done in 1995
- First aerial shots were taken in 2000
- Last aerial shots were taken in 2009

Timing is right because it's in the budget with \$75,000 from Public Works and \$25,000 from Planning. It will also be a good opportunity to get photos of the Waterfront and Industrial property before development. He is proposing to include our entire Urban Growth Boundary, and not just the city. Six proposals were received. GeoTerra was unanimously selected. He is requesting approval of the recommendation.

Councilor Topaz said the County has some of this in their system. Is someone flying over or is it a satellite image? Graichen confirmed that it will be captured by plane and will provide information that the County does not have. A satellite image would not give them the resolution they need.

Mayor Scholl suggested putting "Why not St. Helens on the Waterfront property" before taking an aerial.

Councilor Birkle thanked Graichen for the explanation. He requested a new aerial photo be hung on the wall. Graichen confirmed that this will give them that opportunity.

5. Review Resolution to Adopt Community Public Safety Fee - *Matt*

Finance Director Brown reviewed the resolution. A copy is included in the archive packet for this meeting. The proposed fee is much lower than what was presented to community members at the 20+ community engagement events held. However, Council will need to review the fee every year to ensure that revenue is coming in as predicted.

Mayor Scholl suggested the Budget Committee review it. Brown said it's also an opportunity to engage with the Ad-hoc Committee on a regular basis. Councilor Chilton agreed that it would be beneficial to have the Ad-hoc Committee continue meeting to review the fee and progress. Council concurred.

Councilor Topaz added that it will help as we recruit businesses into town.

Brown reported that they will continually look for additional funding sources.

6. Discussion regarding Bids Received for Parks & Recreation Master Plan - Matt

Finance Director Brown requested permission to re-advertise the Parks & Recreation Master Plan RFP. They only received two responses. He personally knows of a couple other firms that would be capable of doing it. A couple characteristic changes would be made, such as removing the SDC methodology study and have Steve Donovan do that part. That would reduce the cost of the RFP as well.

They also recognized that the Council wants to be part of the rating process. With the second RFP, they want to invite Council President Morten, and possibly the entire Council since the Recreation Program is very community focused. Council President Morten appreciates that. They are accountable and a watch dog for the citizens. He would also like to involve Parks & Trails Commission members. Mayor Scholl suggested a joint meeting to review them. Councilor Chilton wants those groups to be part of the Master Plan drafting process as well. Brown confirmed that the RFP will be clearer about community engagement events for more input.

7. Recommendation for Appointment or Reappointment of Budget Committee Member - John

Mayor Scholl discussed the recent interviews conducted by himself, Councilor Birkle, and Council President Morten. Bill Eagle had the most strength because of his knowledge. However, they felt that it was time, based on the resolution for term expirations, to appoint a new member. They recommend Lew Mason to be appointed and Jeff Grundy as an alternate if another space needs to be filled.

Council President Morten confirmed that all the interviews went very well.

8. Discussion regarding Tourism Contract and Masonic Building Lease - John

City Administrator Walsh reported that the Tourism Executive Committee's recommendation was sent to the City's attorney for review. He does not have any additional information about that at this time.

The Masonic Building lease expires December 31, 2021. It has proven to be the epicenter for revenue opportunity. He is seeking direction from Council.

Councilor Topaz asked if the second floor can be made ADA compliant. Walsh responded that there are exemptions for existing buildings. There is a lift chair to access upstairs. Councilor Topaz responded that he has fixed both chairs in that building in the past. Walsh said there is a level of building compliance that must be followed.

Council President Morten is in favor of renewing the lease.

Councilor Chilton is opposed to renewing the lease. They have received a lot of financial concerns. There needs to be a hold on spending until the concerns are addressed. She hasn't seen anything that listed the work they have already done to the ability and what the plans are for using it. Mayor Scholl responded that it's utilized for a store, haunted house, and museum upstairs. It generates more than enough revenue to cover the cost.

Councilor Birkle is conditionally in favor of renewing the lease. There were initial discussions about the use of that building, and how it is being used today is different. The store should not be in competition with other local stores. Is the museum upstairs better used for Main Street offices? Council is accountable to citizens. They need to be more aware of what is happening there.

Council President Morten asked if the ORS allows tourism money for other uses, such as Main Street, to be funded by tourism.

Mayor Scholl explained that they needed a site for tourism and leased that building. They had hopes to use that building for other purposes, and it didn't come to fruition. They may conflict with some other businesses but the City owns the branding for Spirit of Halloweentown. The building is paying for itself, and funds other events. Maybe tourism should just take over and pay for 4th of July.

Councilor Chilton asked if they have conducted an audit of the store. Mayor Scholl responded that it is operated by a third-party. They will be reviewing the contract.

Council President Morten agreed that Main Street could be housed in there. Tourism would benefit from a Main Street program. They can work collaboratively. Walsh said they have discussed putting Main Street in that building. They want to maintain an active storefront. Hotel revenues have decreased due to COVID and Motel 6 transitioning to a long-term stay. Tourism revenue must go directly back to marketing. Sales from the store goes directly into a City account.

Council President Morten asked where Councilor Chilton would like to see a tourism office. Councilor Chilton did not realize they had an office there because she always sees them at City Hall. Council President Morten believes there needs to be some visibility with a space for storage and an office. Councilor Chilton agreed and wants to discuss that. Walsh added Oregon City has a small space, but it was very nicely done.

Discussion of the cost to operate fireworks.

Mayor Scholl asked how much money was received from hotel taxes last year. Brown responded that they have received \$78,000 from tourism funds this fiscal year to date. Mayor Scholl pointed out that adjustments have not been made this year. Brown confirmed that revenues currently exceed expenses. That update was distributed to the Council. He has concerns and is not comfortable discussing them in a public meeting. Councilor Chilton pointed out the concerns in a document they received. Brown does not think the figures are accurate and is not comfortable sharing them.

Councilor Topaz talked about staff helping with setup. Does the City get reimbursed from tourism for staff time? Mayor Scholl said that Zaher has been tracking that. Councilor Topaz wants to see those numbers.

Councilor Birkle, Councilor Topaz, Mayor Scholl, and Council President Morten were in favor of renewing the lease. Councilor Chilton was opposed.

Break

9. City Administrator Report - John

- Executive Session after this meeting
- Riverwalk Open House at the Recreation Center tonight
- Councilor Topaz is requesting more time to review Ordinance No. 3276. It's not urgent and can be tabled until the next meeting. That gives everyone three weeks to review it. There were no objections from the Council to postpone the second reading. Councilor Birkle asked for clarification about the Council position election. Everyone will select two and the top two candidates will be elected. Councilor Topaz disagrees with it. The survey was not valid with the limited responses. Mayor Scholl asked about a dozen people, and they liked the proposed change. It's the popular vote. Council President Morten likes the popular vote and received the same response from people he spoke with. An announcement will be made tonight that it will be tabled until a date certain. In the meantime, direct questions to Walsh and staff.
- A conflict between Council rules and the public meetings calendar was found. Councilor Birkle reported that the Operating Rules and Procedures says that the calendar is approved at the first meeting of the year. He suggests that the rules be amended to follow practice.
- There is a resolution on tonight's agenda to participate in the National Prescription Opiate Litigation Settlement. Cities that participate will receive funding for public safety and education. There is no cost to participate.
- There is an acceptance on tonight's agenda for an in-water lease renewal.
- The Dock Use Committee meeting was fantastic. It includes a diverse group of stakeholders. There was good discussion about irresponsible boaters and what it takes to get them to follow

the rules. They are engaging with more of the boating community. The next meeting will be January 25 to allow more communication. Councilor Topaz talked about the different views all working for a solution. Everyone understood it was needed. Mayor Scholl added that it was good to hear everyone's input.

- Library Director interviews begin January 11. So far 28 applications have been received. Mayor Scholl gives credit for that high number to Library Director Jeffries. Final interviews will be conducted on January 18.
- Urban Renewal Budget Committee and Urban Renewal Agency meeting on January 5.
- Coordinating with the Marine board for an accessible dock for fishing and non-motorized vessels at Grey Cliffs Park. They are working on a rendering and plan for dredge material placement.
- Moving forward on the Industrial Business Park planning.

Councilor Chilton asked when they will discuss the Tourism Executive Committee report. Walsh said it could be any time. Councilor Chilton wants the report to be made public. Councilor Topaz agreed. Walsh said the intent was to come up with a contract that works. Council President Morten said there are recommendations in the report. The recommendations are different than some of the findings. He doesn't want to go over everything the Committee did. He only wants to review their recommendations. Mayor Scholl said this is important, but they have a Riverwalk presentation soon. They have a recommendation from staff they can look at it and move forward. They will be addressing these issues at the special meeting on December 29. Tourism has come to this Council enough. They are moving forward in a good direction. Councilor Topaz pointed out that they don't have to accept the staff recommendation. Councilor Birkle wants to take the recommendations into account but also wants to be assured the conditions are put into place before agreeing to a new contract. It is important for the community to know the staff made recommendation but doesn't think it needs to be made public. They can still achieve accountability. Councilor Chilton said tourism is being discussed in the community and she wants to do her due diligence. There are shocking concerns that staff has raised. Mayor Scholl asked Councilor Chilton to identify the people in the community she is referring to. The mantra says they will not make promises to an individual or group. Councilor Chilton argued that it's the same as him saying he has discussed the election process survey results with people in the community. What he is asking is unethical. Mayor Scholl said they are close to the finish line. He is not trying to be disrespectful. Councilor Topaz disagreed with being close to the finish line.

Walsh acknowledged Councilor Birkle's point about closeout issues. A lot of those concerns are raised in the memo. It doesn't address the legal limitations of what a new contract looks like. It's with the attorney right now to help define roles, what can and cannot happen, and what they can and cannot ask for. There is more due from the contractor, including financials.

The tourism special meeting will be December 29. Representatives from Travel Oregon and Paul Vogel with Columbia Economic Team are willing to be there, although they're not excited about the date being so close to the holidays.

ADJOURN – 3:50 p.m.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Respectfully submitted by Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder.

ATTEST:

/s/ Kathy Payne
Kathy Payne, City Recorder

/s/ Rick Scholl
Rick Scholl, Mayor