



COUNCIL REGULAR SESSION

Wednesday, December 06, 2023

APPROVED MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT

Mayor Rick Scholl
Councilor Mark Gundersen
Councilor Russell Hubbard
Councilor Brandon Sundeen

MEMBERS ABSENT

Council President Jessica Chilton

STAFF PRESENT

John Walsh, City Administrator
Kathy Payne, City Recorder
Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder
Suzanne Bishop, Library Director

OTHERS

Howard Blumenthal	Nick Hellmich	Molly Matchak
Jim Coleman	Steve Toschi	Jennifer Massey
Robin Toschi	TC	Brady Preheim
Erin Salisbury		

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

- ◆ Molly Matchak. Distributed a copy of the Main Street brochure to the Council and expressed her concerns about the St. Helens Main Street Alliance. The front of the brochure has a picture of Molly's Market, which has been closed for over eight months. She requested the photo be replaced with a business that is still open but she noticed it's still in print circulation and online. Who approves of the brochure?

Mayor Scholl said he will contact Main Street.

Councilor Hubbard asked why her store closed. Molly responded that she was required to put in a firewall. Business in the summer is great but winter is tough. This town seems to have a hard time with change and does not want growth.

- ◆ Nick Hellmich. He used to work at Molly's Market. Investment was made into Molly's Market, but following a disagreement, the Fire Code was pushed to get done. He understands the need for it but they were not made aware of that in the beginning. Main Street seems to want to benefit from Molly's Market even after she closed.
- ◆ Brady Preheim. The City pays for the Main Street Executive Director position. Part of that sponsorship is that they would be open and provide financials, but their meetings are closed to

the public. He recommends the City discontinue the funding since they currently do not have an Executive Director. He is unhappy about Resolution No. 1995. It appears to be lack of planning and not an emergency. They started a project without a contract to put the lines underground. There is a budget crisis. Tourism is the one operation that gets no money from taxpayers, returns 10:1 on investments, and now they are discussing doing an RFP and updating the contract. That should have been done in June. They need to renew the contract and leave tourism alone.

- ◆ Steve Toschi. The lot next to Grace's Antiques is probably worth about \$1 million. It allows the developer to develop up to the street and have a view. There's a lot behind them they can use for parking or put parking underneath. This seems like another back door deal, like the previous deal to trade land for dirt. He also doesn't like that the Planning Commission is being circumvented. Silencing of free speech by the Council is unlawful. It's raising red flags. He encouraged Council to move forward with the formation of the Budget Committee. He is in favor of law enforcement and abiding by laws. They don't support law enforcement by breaking laws and building police stations where it's illegal. There is a \$10/month utility charge to build the new station and now they are talking about using the money for something else. They need to form the Budget Committee and clean shop. He supports law enforcement and wants to make sure they have the legal means to pay them.
- ◆ Erin Salisbury. The presentation at the Work Session gave her a lot to think about. She hopes the City will someday sell the lot at the corner of Wapama Way and Strand Street. She likes the idea of adding design and timeline contingencies. The property has an unobstructed view of the river and the City should get a great price for it.
- ◆ Jim Coleman. He spoke about the decorum in the last meeting. He mis-spoke, thinking he was referring to a Council meeting but it was a public hearing. He went on to listen to the meeting on the way home. The mayor went on for ten minutes about who Jim should and shouldn't talk to. Jim was offended. There were more disparaging comments made about the gentlemen talking about the lagoon and reservoir. The mayor went on to attack former mayors Randy Peterson and Don Kahlberg, blaming them for the problems resulting from their administration. He had never heard disparaging remarks about them before. The comments were completely out of line. In June 2023, the Council adopted a Code of Conduct, which he read a portion of, "...Practice civility, professionalism, and decorum in discussions and debate. Difficult questions, tough challenges to particular points of view, and criticism of ideas and information are legitimate elements of democratic governance. However, this does not allow board members to make belligerent, personal, slanderous, threatening, abusive, or disparaging comments..."
- ◆ Jennifer Massey. She has not watched today's Work Session. She thanked Councilor Sundeen and Councilor Hubbard for reviewing the financial documents she sent to the entire Council. These documents were received in response to a Public Records Request. She is disappointed in the rest of the Council for not opening what was sent. They should want to review what concerned citizens are sending. Only Councilor Sundeen responded. Mayor Scholl only forwarded the email to City Administrator Walsh, who then responded. If she wanted Walsh included, she would have sent it to him. She applied to serve on the Budget Committee due to the financial crisis. She feels should be considered, is intelligent, competent, understands finances, and can be nonbiased. They need strong and opinionated people who are willing to work.

Councilor Gundersen reported that he is unable to find the documents Jennifer sent. She will re-send them to him.

RESOLUTIONS

1. **Resolution No. 1995:** A Resolution Declaring an Emergency and Authorizing an Exemption from Competitive Bidding Requirements for Procurement of Services to Underground Utilities at the S. 1st Street - St. Helens Street Intersection

Mayor Scholl read Resolution No. 1995 by title. **Motion:** Motion made by Councilor Gundersen and seconded by Councilor Hubbard to adopt Resolution No. 1995.

Discussion.

Councilor Sundeen is unsure about the emergency. Mistakes were made but they need to move forward and get it taken care of. Councilor Hubbard agreed.

Vote: Yea: Mayor Scholl, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

AWARD BID AND/OR CONTRACT

2. Award Bid to Consor for Professional Engineering Services for Wastewater Collection System Capacity Improvements Project

Motion: Motion made by Councilor Sundeen and seconded by Councilor Gundersen to approve '2' above.

Discussion.

Mayor Scholl apologized if he called out former mayors about the infrastructure problems. They are his friends as well. The 1989 Sewer Master Plan showed areas in red that had not been addressed. It's a good project with about \$4 million in grant funds.

Vote: Yea: Mayor Scholl, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

APPOINTMENTS TO CITY BOARDS OR COMMISSIONS

3. Reappoint Russ Low to the Planning Commission

Motion: Motion made by Councilor Gundersen and seconded by Councilor Hubbard to reappoint Russ Low to the Planning Commission. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Scholl, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

4. Reappoint Howard Blumenthal to Parks and Trails Commission

Motion: Motion made by Councilor Gundersen and seconded by Councilor Sundeen to reappoint Howard Blumenthal to the Parks and Trails Commission. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Scholl, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

Councilor Sundeen asked when the Budget Committee members would be appointed. Mayor Scholl responded that there is one more vacant position. He anticipates that it will be on the next agenda. Budget Committee Orientation will be held January 11. They can move forward with what they have now but it would be nice to get them all done at once.

APPROVE AND/OR AUTHORIZE FOR SIGNATURE

5. Personal Services Agreement with Moore Site Services LLC for On-Call Services at 1300 Kaster Road
6. Seventh Amendment to Otak, Inc. Agreement for S. 1st and Strand Streets, Road & Utility Extensions Project

Motion: Motion made by Councilor Gundersen and seconded by Councilor Sundeen to approve '5' and '6' above. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Scholl, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

CONSENT AGENDA FOR ACCEPTANCE

7. Grant Agreement with Travel Oregon for Riverwalk Project Phase I
8. Library Board Minutes dated October 9, 2023
9. Parks and Trails Commission Minutes dated October 9, 2023
10. Planning Commission Minutes dated September 12, 2023

Motion: Motion made by Councilor Gundersen and seconded by Councilor Sundeen to approve '7' through '10' above. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Scholl, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

CONSENT AGENDA FOR APPROVAL

11. Council Work Session, Executive Session, and Regular Session Minutes dated November 1, 2023
12. Animal Facility Licenses
13. New Building Permit Technician Job Description
14. Accounts Payable Bill Lists

Motion: Motion made by Councilor Sundeen and seconded by Councilor Gundersen to approve '11' through '14' above. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Scholl, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

WORK SESSION ACTION ITEMS**Property at Wapama Way**

Councilor Sundeen said if they do sell it, he agreed with adding conditions of what can be done with it. He's not sure he's comfortable selling it to the first person who asks for it but appreciates the Associate Planner's explanation. Downtown parking during events will continue to be an issue.

Councilor Gundersen agreed.

Discussion of additional information needed, such as a development plan, appraisal, etc.

Motion: Motion made by Councilor Sundeen and seconded by Councilor Gundersen to direct staff to look into the sale of the property at the corner of Wapama Way and Strand Street. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Scholl, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

City Administrator Walsh clarified they are seeking additional information.

COUNCIL MEMBER REPORTS

Councilor Sundeen reported...

- Thanked Howard Blumenthal for his work on the Parks & Trails Commission.
- There is a vacancy on the Parks & Trails Commission. It's a great group and they'll be meeting next week.
- He appreciates the police officers and discussions with them.

Councilor Gundersen reported...

- Chief Smythe asked the Council for representation on the Columbia River Fire & Rescue Board. He applied and was selected.
- Planning Commission will meet next week.

Councilor Hubbard reported...

- He is focused on Project Sprint and is excited to see what they bring in. The biggest hurdle is the power, in which they are collaborating with Columbia River PUD and PGE. Today's meeting was excellent and they have clear direction.

MAYOR SCHOLL REPORTS

- Thanked Public Works Director Mouhamad Zaher for being the project lead for Project Sprint. Yesterday, they met with the Governor's Regional Solutions Team, Business Oregon, and PGE. Later, they met with Governor Tina Kotek. She was very excited to learn about the project. It's a billion-dollar investment into the St. Helens site and a \$400,000 million-dollar investment into the Scappoose site. Positives for St. Helens are the sewer and water capacity. The only downfall is the power. It would bring about 3,000 jobs into the community. St. Helens used to have multiple industrial operations, but they gradually all closed with Cascades being the most recent one. This was the 11th mill Cascades shut down this year. He was introduced to Project Sprint three months ago. He is very optimistic in the future of St. Helens. They will work their way out of the financial crisis with a lot of collaboration.
- Christmas Ships and Christmas Tree Lighting is on Saturday.
- Merry Christmas!
- He apologized again for offending Jim Coleman, Randy Peterson, and Don Kahlberg. He respects them and considers them friends.

OTHER BUSINESS**ADJOURN – 7:48 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted by Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder.

ATTEST:

/s/ Kathy Payne

Kathy Payne, City Recorder

/s/ Rick Scholl

Rick Scholl, Mayor