



COUNCIL WORK SESSION

Wednesday, February 15, 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	Crystal King, Communications Officer
Kathy Payne, City Recorder	Jenny Dimsho, Associate Planner
Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder	Tina Curry, Contracted Event Coordinator
Jacob Graichen, City Planner	

OTHERS

Steve Topaz	Lynne Pettit	Lacey Tolles
Steve Toschi	Jak Massey	Brian Trenchard-Smith
Art Leskovich	Kevin Lay	Margaret Trenchard-Smith
Paul Vogel	Amy Bynum	Marilyn Allen
Rob Marinai	Andy Gregg	Chris Edmonds
Michael Alberta		

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

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

- ◆ Margaret Trenchard-Smith, Brian Trenchard-Smith, Composer Kevin Lay. Ms. Trenchard-Smith read her written statement about the Columbia Chorale of Oregon's fostering of the work *The Wisdom of Columbia County* with music by Mr. Lay, premiering on June 16 at Scappoose High School. Senator Ron Wyden had expressed intention of attending the performance. The Kiwanis Club of St. Helens was making the work the theme of its parade on June 17. On May 27, 2024, the work will be performed at Carnegie Hall. They were raising funds to produce both concerts and sponsorship to send students to the concerts. They raised \$10,000. She requested funds from Council, adding obviously they would be cited as a sponsor. She wrote the libretto of the work and provided it to Council.

Mr. Lay presented a music score to the mayor and welcomed Council to join them for both productions.

Mr. Trenchard-Smith hoped singing about the joys and histories of a great rural area would be adopted by other choirs throughout Oregon and rural America in order to help unify a community.

Ms. Trenchard-Smith clarified that the core of the budget was about \$75,000. If they were able to do everything they would hope, the budget would be \$161,000. For the inaugural performance, they requested funds before May 1; for Carnegie Hall, they need most of the funds by the end of this year.

- ◆ Marilyn Allen. Ms. Allen added *The Wisdom of Columbia County* would have two performances, hoping the one in June would include a good number of local high school students. They would appreciate any amount Council would donate as a show of support for local art.
- ◆ Steve Toschi. After seeing today's newspaper article about the fireworks show, Mr. Toschi stated communication with the City about how to handle the Fourth of July needs to be more accurately stated to the public. Last year's fireworks show was seamless and done very well by the contractor E2C which makes it a miscommunication to say that the City was looking for another vendor to take over the fireworks show and fundraising for the event. He spoke about the past when the City had to take over the fireworks after citizen groups had failed to get the fireworks show going and untrue accusations of tourism losing money. Fundraising had been a failure for the event, and there was no need for fundraising since Spirit of Halloweentown pays completely for the event, which the public should know. The City's press release spoke of the sentiment that the funds used to host the fireworks displays would be better utilized elsewhere, and he had no idea where such a statement came from. He wanted to bring to Council's attention the messages sent by the article make no sense.
- ◆ Steve Topaz. Mr. Topaz reminded the Council of his statement from the last meeting session regarding his rough estimate on the income from Spirit of Halloweentown. The corrected estimate, including parking, was over \$4 million. He then commented that hopefully Council would get information today from the February 6th Appeals Court hearing of *St. Helens vs. Cascade*. He stated the deep cores in the middle of the lagoon would not be drilled, which is technically criminal oversight. He questioned the river level only going up or down by two feet. The data from the deep cores showed the lagoon's temperature and pH changes with the tide. He suggested Council get its own hydrologist and geologist to double-check the data. He asked about the consulting firm informing Council in Fall 2022 that they found large percentages of the sanitary system on the west side were at capacity. It was decided the developer would be held financially responsible for any mishaps of the overloaded system until the system was brought up to capacity. He had heard a rumor that the repair of the sanitary sewer on the west side was on hold. He asked if the property owners along the sewer line had been notified, was the developer still responsible for covering the damages, and had the developer been notified the improvements have been put on hold.
- ◆ Lynne Pettit. Ms. Pettit complimented staff on their accomplishments in the last couple of months, which were especially noticeable to the Parks Commission. She spoke specifically of Buck Tupper, who did an outstanding job with communication and working with Councilor Sundeen. They had already completed a project and had a lot of help with things, such as walking the area under Council discussion.

DISCUSSION TOPICS

1. Semi-Annual Report from South Columbia County Chamber of Commerce - *Jak Massey, Member Relations Manager*

Jak Massey reviewed her report. A copy is included in the archive meeting packet.

- The Chamber was growing, and numbers are up.
- Coffee & Commerce was booked out for months.

- Happy Hour was now available to any member who would like to host and was changed to 4:30 - 6:30 p.m.
- They had gone to just one newsletter at the beginning of the month, followed by weekly bulletins.
- She created a brochure of the Chamber's event packages and for prospective members.
- She was interested in the Chamber participating in Citizens Day in the Park.
- She planned for the Chamber to be involved in the Kiwanis Community Parade.
- She enjoyed the 2nd Annual Boardwalk Trick-or-Treat event.
- Their Black Friday sale was successful.
- Their community room would be more utilized this year with classes almost every month which are open to all, not just members.
- Two of her personal goals for this year included:
 - Creating a Chamber advertisement jingle at the library's Makerspace.
 - Getting the Chamber back on the radio.
- She reviewed member support and the Ambassador Program.
- Their building needed some improvements, perhaps through grants. She would be helping the Promise Church's work on landscaping by cleaning up the parking area. They would renew their two-year lease with SAFE of Columbia County
- She reviewed the Chamber's community involvement and hosting a Candidate Forum.
- The Annual Awards Banquet will return on May 5. Nominations were currently open. They would have a live auction representing Oregon's fun, food, and festivities and do a wine and whiskey wall.

Mayor Scholl confirmed Council would have a sponsorship table at the Banquet.

2. Discussion regarding Parking for Events - *Tina Curry, Event Coordinator*

Tina Curry reviewed her report. A copy is included in the archive packet for this meeting.

"Park It" t-shirts, which list all of St. Helens' parks with activities can be purchased online at the SpiritofHalloweentown.com shop.

Mayor Scholl will consider the request for permission to use tourism funds to purchase tables at the Chamber's Annual Awards Banquet for people in the community who cannot afford to go but are really good volunteers and possibly as well as for Council. There is not enough parking for events on the Cascade property. The only parking that could possibly cover the parking needed is the parking behind the Recreation Center, and also that available on the Cascade's property, behind the softball field and possibly the Cascade's parking lot itself.

Mayor Scholl explained that the Waterfront parking is not available because of construction and clarified that her numbers for Halloweentown do not align with Mr. Topaz's. The parking will be needed for 4th of July and Spirit of Halloweentown and perhaps permanently once buildings go in downtown. The only parking that could possibly cover the parking needed was the parking behind the Recreation Center, that available on the Cascade's property, behind the softball field and possibly the Cascade's parking lot itself, which was privately owned, but had an agreement with the City.

Mayor Scholl agreed it was necessary to communicate with nearby property owners that street parking will be used, and the City would need to mark off what was needed. The grid of the city would be reviewed to determine methods for this year, such as enticing prices for the lots, so that they do not interrupt homeowners parking on their own streets. For some streets, like Nightmare on 4th Street, the City may want to do signage "For Residents Only." A shuttle should also be used, which was how it used to be done, and could use school buses.

Ms. Curry reviewed the ParkMobile app option which would suit St. Helens' needs. The company would do 100 percent of the customer service. They provide the signs, but the City provides the posts and puts them up. The program costs the City nothing to operate. Customers pay 45 cents when they use the app. Community messaging could make it clear that street parking was no longer free, and they can price both to make parking in the lots more favorable. With ParkMobile, residents' license plate numbers could be input into the program so that they would never get a ticket.

Council President Chilton had concerns about the app and permanent signage. She did not want to waste money by putting in signage that later had to be ripped out. She wondered who would enforce the parking tickets, would it increase work for Court and Police staff, and would there even be enough parking spaces. Severe parking issues have only been seasonal.

Ms. Curry responded to Councilor Chilton's concern about the app being user-friendly by stating 90 percent of the people who come to St. Helens are from out of town and are more than likely engaging with such a parking solution. CERT would still be involved and able to assist people with the app.

City Planner Jacob Graichen clarified permitting would be required depending on where the installation happens. Street parking would be under Public Works. The Planning Commission might be concerned about the visuals of an installation in the Historic District. On private property, questions of whether it was temporary parking or permanent parking would open some issues.

Mr. Walsh clarified he was looking at possible procurement questions, if the City must put out an RFP before it can contract with ParkMobile.

Council agreed with Mayor Scholl to have a representative from ParkMobile come present to Council.

Mayor Scholl directed staff to get clarification about the boat as there had been a lot of inquiries about it. It had taken much longer than anticipated. It was supposed to be inspected tomorrow by the Coast Guard. The boat was purchased with tourism funds, not City money, and should be here soon.

Ms. Curry reviewed correspondence with updates about the status of the boat.

The boat would be in the water tomorrow, and the whole thing would be videotaped. Copies of the documentation will be given to Council.

3. Discussion of HB3115 Related Code Amendments - *Jacob Graichen, City Planner*

City Planner Graichen reviewed his memo, a copy of which is included in the archive packet for the meeting. No code amendments were proposed at this time. HB3115 made requirements for how cities manage their homeless population on public lands, camping, sheltering, etc., with a deadline of July 1. Planning Commission and staff have been looking at it for several months. After legal feedback, staff understood the Code needed to be amended, and they hoped to utilize the next Planning Commission/City Council joint meeting on March 8th to discuss some of the issues and achieve some consensus on the direction regarding potential amendments.

At the Mayor's request, Mr. Walsh would try to have the City's consulting attorney at the joint meeting.

Mr. Graichen spoke about the timeline for writing the ordinance and making it an emergency clause probably to be effective sooner than 30 days.

He addressed at length the camping regulations to be considered.

4. St. Helens and 1st Street Gateway Feature - *John Walsh, City Administrator*

City Administrator Walsh reviewed the St. Helens and First Street intersection's addition of a gateway feature which could be done by the contractor installing utilities nearby with upcoming construction. A copy is included in the archive packet for this meeting.

Associate Planner Jenny Dimsho reviewed what she had received after reaching out to two local companies. Staff hoped Pacific Stainless, another local firm, might be involved in the fabrication. AKAAN Architecture and Lower Columbia Engineering (LCE) both prepared proposals, which were placed in Council's boxes. AKAAN had experience doing some gateway features. LCE had done a lot of work in the community.

Mayor Scholl asked if it would be wise to align the design of all three gateways. Ms. Dimsho said the 2017 Branding and Wayfinding Master Plan contemplated a gateway arch near the Chamber building. The Corridor Plan recommended gateway features. Many background documents are available that the firms would have to look at to ensure consistency with the branding efforts that have already been done.

Mr. Walsh said turnarounds by the gateways were a nice place for public art which could be developed through the public process or a private partnership. Ms. Dimsho said the feature under discussion feels very much like an entry to the downtown, whereas the other feature feels like it could be incorporated into an art walk, along the river walk. She felt they were separate, but they could be inspired by each other. She confirmed they would absolutely want to involve the Main Street program team. Staff were looking for guidance between the two proposals. Council President Chilton was disappointed that LCE did not include visuals in their submission.

Council President Chilton wondered about the possibility of a four-way arch since there was more than one way to come through the intersection.

Ms. Curry shared a thought that had just occurred to her, that the buses would get stuck in traffic after the July Fourth fireworks event.

5. Review Community Grant Applications

City Recorder Kathy Payne confirmed 13 grant requests have been received. Mr. Walsh added that the community grant funds are also used for Citizens Day and other events. Coming into this year's budget season, community grants would be brought back in some capacity but at the expense of other things planned.

Mayor Scholl suggested putting \$5,000 for community grants in the budget for the year.

Council President Chilton noted Council had decided grants would only be awarded once a year. She wanted to look at previous recipients to help the decision process and let new people receive the grants.

Mr. Walsh clarified if Council would like to pull out funding for Arts & Cultural other than what they currently have, he would have to look at the budget and see if it were still there.

Councilor Sundeen agreed about not awarding to those who received last year, due to scarcity of funds.

The meeting packet included a list of the grant requests.

Mayor Scholl asked how much money was available. Mr. Walsh replied that the last time he looked, it was less than \$3000.

Council discussed the applicants and their requests.

Councilor Birkle asked if the Big Halloween parade could be funded through tourism. Council concurred. Councilor Birkle also talked about Letty's application for Dia de los Muertos and supporting a population that was underserved.

Mayor Scholl talked about the Alano Club and the need for security improvements.

Mayor Scholl said they would decide who would receive the grants during tonight's regular session. Each Councilor should be ready to bring their one choice to award.

6. Report from City Administrator John Walsh

- The position of Finance Director was offered, and the applicant was ecstatic about it. After the reference check concluded, they would begin negotiating on terms. She will be available to begin on March 15.
- The auditor had begun work.
- He was looking at the budget calendar.
- The Administrative Billing Specialist position received almost 150 applications.
- The Engineer Tech 1 position had been authorized, and there have been second interviews. An offer has been made but not yet confirmed.
- Construction of the Waterfront property was busy, and they hit rock. It was going nicely and building energy. Most of the whole lot was taken offline at this time. Hopefully, some parking could be opened back up.
- He had been working with Parks & Recreation Manager Shanna Duggan on Recreation. It was going very well, and they were growing partnerships with the School District. The Education Service District (ESD) had been very supportive of the programs and was offering some funding.
- Regarding fireworks, E2C's contract specifically stated they collaborate with a community organization; what was mentioned in the newspaper was factually correct. They have not done the contract for this year's fireworks display. Brad Hendrickson at St. Helens Marina had purchased a small barge and had offered it, which would more than likely be the solution for getting a show on the water. Mayor Scholl advised making sure the Fire Marshal approved it first.
- Wyden Town Hall was held on Saturday, and it had a good turnout. The senator was thanked for the senate's appropriations which was a fair amount to the St. Helen's community.
- Today was supposed to be the congressional-directed spending package announcement. Staff would see what programs and projects to potentially go after, for an appropriation from the federal legislation.

7. Semi-Annual Report from Columbia Economic Team - *Paul Vogel, Executive Director*

Paul Vogel reviewed his report. A copy is included in the archive packet for this meeting.

- He thanked the Council for their membership, initiative partnerships, and engagement.
- He reviewed the CET Board of Directors and members. City of Scappoose is a member, and Mayor Joe Backus was voted on the Board. Dr. Karen Sanders and former senator Betsy Johnson were significant additions.
- They have increased their membership by two and were looking for 15 more businesses for membership.
- He touched on stakeholder and initiative engagement.
- He talked about connection with tourism and how people were excited to hear about redevelopment going on in St. Helens. They received a capacity grant for branding. They would focus on destination development, and this year's focus is downtowns and main streets. They would inform folks of Travel Oregon's competitive grants and support writing them. They were an event sponsor of the Governor's Tourism Conference for nocturnal kayaking out of Scappoose Bay.
- He updated on the Small Business Development Center which was nearly one year old. The volume of clients was such that they would seek additional funding out of the state network for help with growth.

- He gave updates on the Keep it Local initiative.
- Growing Rural Oregon is an action item on Council's agenda. The City of St. Helens was selected for it by the Ford Family Foundation. It would create support and beneficial services for small businesses in the community. He encouraged Council to approve the Memorandum of Understanding.
- He touched on business recruitment, retention, and expansion.
- He advised they did not win the grant for Project Alfred, but learned many lessons and will be better prepared to compete next time.
- He reviewed CET's projects and those they helped on, noting some lessons learned and including an update on funding for the skate park through a direct career skills program.
- He addressed working toward changes about land use regulation and elevating awareness and perception around allied businesses that support the semiconductor and tech industry. He updated on some new developments on properties in Scappoose.
- He spoke about the St. Helens Industrial Site:
 - The amount of time needed to prepare the site for buildable development was the biggest concern.
 - It was fortunate the City owns the property, and he explained why.
 - He met with RestorCap, a company which looks for distressed properties and makes them buildable. They have a deep understanding of how to redevelop such sites to be leasable and purchasable, and their successful business model allows them to monetize credits and certain aspects of the remediation. He believed they were unique and self-financed with a good track record and a strong interest in working with the City. They were in attendance to address the Council.

Rob Marinai, President, RestorCap, and his partner Andy Gregg presented via PowerPoint an overview of their company and a review of projects they have done, clarifying they are not self-financed but could finance large-scale projects without going to banks. Their core business is restoration, remediation, and reuse to benefit the public. Virtually everybody in the company spent their entire careers doing environmental restoration, environmental clean-up, or environmental finance. They have worked with DEQ who recommended they pursue the St. Helens Industrial Site.

Mayor Scholl noted the site is envisioned as more for use than anything else such as credits. Mr. Marinai and Mr. Gregg agreed and described some of their past projects involving credits.

They clarified they had not yet looked at the entire St. Helens Industrial Business Park site in a systematic way, just on visits. Council and the representatives of RestorCap discussed the characteristics of the site as well as possibilities. Mayor Scholl noted the City is looking at mixed use for the site which RestorCap acknowledged was how they would look at the site in addition to natural preservation, public access, and whatever the industrial use could be. Mayor Scholl added the City is spending \$10 million on civil engineering and putting pipe in the ground on the property.

Councilor Sundeen thought RestorCap's presentation was timely because the site was something Council needed to revisit.

Council President Chilton loved the proposal and thanked Mr. Marinai and Mr. Gregg for coming and Mr. Vogel for bringing them in.

Chris Edmonds who handles public affairs and strategy consulting was also in attendance as was Michael Alberta, technical advisor on the real estate. Mr. Edmonds provided some of his professional background.

Mayor Scholl was interested to see their proposal.

ADJOURN – 4:45 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