



COUNCIL WORK SESSION

Wednesday, January 06, 2021

APPROVED MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT

Mayor Rick Scholl
Council President Doug Morten
Councilor Patrick Birkle
Councilor Stephen R. Topaz
Councilor Jessica Chilton

STAFF PRESENT

John Walsh, City Administrator
Matt Brown, Assistant City Administrator
Kathy Payne, City Recorder
Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder
Mouhamad Zaher, Public Works Director
Sue Nelson, City Engineer
Sharon Darroux, Engineering Project Manager
Rachael Barry, Government Affairs &
Project Support Specialist

Crystal King, Communications Officer
Jacob Graichen, City Planner
Jenny Dimsho, Associate Planner
Bill Monahan, City Attorney
Mike De Roia, Building Official
Brian Greenway, Police Chief
Joe Hogue, Police Lieutenant
Tina Curry, Event Coordinator

OTHERS

George Dunkel	Judy Thompson	Jerry Cummings
Chris Iverson	Durell Kearsley	Gulgun Mersereau
Jonas Biery	Duncan Brown	Steve Pegram
Bob Brawand		

CALL WORK SESSION TO ORDER – 1:00 p.m.

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

None.

Welcome to new councilors Patrick Birkle and Jessica Chilton.

DISCUSSION TOPICS

1. Police Station Ad-Hoc Committee Presentation

Assistant City Administrator Brown reviewed a PowerPoint presentation. A copy is included in the archive packet for this meeting.

Chris Iverson and George Dunkel were in attendance to review the Committee's recommendation. The facility recommended is 10 times the size of the existing facility. They emphasized the need for a new facility. The City already owns the recommended site.

Recommendation:

- Community engagement
- Additional polling after community engagement, if needed
- Increase funding for utility assistance programs

- Creation of Public Safety Fund
 - Additional fee on utility bill
 - Start at approximately at \$7 and then increase yearly, if needed
 - Creation of Public Safety Fund as "Administrative Action" by Council after community engagement period
- Sale of current police station to pay down debt
- Continue researching potential grants and other funding opportunities

Councilor Topaz pointed out that it appears to be half Police Station and half City Hall. Should it be enlarged to include all of City Hall? Or should they remove the City Hall portion and build a new City Hall? Are there any agencies that apply for public safety grants? Brown explained that there is potential for expansion across the street from the proposed site. They have been investigating grants. Unfortunately, the City does not meet low-income USDA grant requirements. They will continue seeking grants.

Chief Greenway explained that they have a deadline of January 31, 2021 to apply for federal grant funding under the Presidential Order on Safe Policing and Safe Community Act. Unfortunately, part of the process is that police departments have to be accredited or be in the accreditation process. They cannot pass accreditation standards because of the current facility. A new station will open those federal funds.

Council President Morten thanked the Committee for their work. He would like Council to keep the Budget Committee in mind while reviewing this. He agreed with Councilor Topaz's suggestion to put City Hall and the Police Station together. It should be considered as Phase II for the future.

Councilor Chilton agreed with the need for a new police station. She requested clarification of the utility bill charge. Brown explained that the amount would be dependent on a 20-year or 30-year loan. Financial advisors are in attendance to further explain.

Duncan Brown, PFM. They are the City's financial advisor for capital projects and bond issues. The utility fee/surcharge is flexible. It can be imposed at the Council's discretion. It could start off small and grow or stay consistent. It is more flexible than general obligation bonds.

Councilor Birkle recognized the great work of the Committee. He appreciates their insight. He shared some of his thoughts:

- Need to look at a permanent funding source for the Recreation Program, which is funded through the utility bill now.
- Need to make sure we are flexible for residents who are financially constrained.
- Agreed with involving the Budget Committee.
- Agreed with the multi-uses of the building. Designing a building for possible expansion is important to keep in mind.
- This is a good opportunity to recruit and retain officers.
- Public outreach is key for the entire process.

Brown reported that the recommendation from the Committee is to increase funding for utility assistance programs. The City currently gives funding to Community Action Team (CAT) to help with utility assistance.

Brown reviewed the next steps:

- Discuss/accept Committee recommendation
 - Adopt a resolution on January 20
- January 20 City Council Meeting
 - Revisit Committee recommendation
 - Discussion and decision on community engagement period

Council concurred with recommendations to proceed.

Mayor Scholl agreed with the Committee's recommendations. The need for a new facility is great.

Committee member Judy Thompson acknowledged the honor of being able to participate. The need for a new facility is significant. They need to be prepared for growth and attract officers. She is happy to see it happen.

Committee member Jerry Cummings appreciated the opportunity to participate. It was disheartening to see the existing facility. Our City is only going to increase in size. The more people who move here, the more inadequate the facility will become. It is important to do this. He is willing to help in anyway with the public engagement.

2. Building Division Semi-Annual Report - *Mike*

1:55 p.m.

Building Official Mike De Roia reviewed the Building Department duties and report. A copy of the report is included in the archive packet for this meeting.

- Between July 1 – December 28, 2020:
 - Received 324 building permit applications; 232 required plan review
 - Performed 83 inspections a week, which the County does partially help with
- A new Building Inspector begins on Monday, January 11. John Hicks brings a lot of construction and inspection experience. He is looking forward to having him on board.
- Implemented ePermitting software

Councilor Topaz asked what kind of space De Roia would need if they moved into the Police Station. De Roia is not sure exactly how much space they would need but they do need more space for plan review. Planning and Engineering also participate in the plan review process. Mayor Scholl pointed out that the Police Station facility is proposed to include Municipal Court, which would free up space for them move to the annex building next door. He thanked De Roia for his hard work. He has been working tirelessly and attending classes to earn certifications.

Council President Morten thanked De Roia. He is by far the best Building Official he has seen in his 14 years here. He agreed with moving Building next door when Court moves.

Walsh extended his appreciation to Mike.

3. Review Proposed Bench Donation for McCormick Park

2:06 p.m.

The Parks & Trails Commission has recommended approval of the two benches. Kathy Syrstad of St. Helens Lions Club submitted the application. Council President Morten agreed with the proposal.

Councilor Birkle spoke with Kathy about the proposal. He explained the proposed sites for the two benches.

- Adjacent to the new bridge near the old camping sites.
- The corner of Old Portland Road and S. 18th Street. Council President Morten emphasized the need for the bench to face the park and not the streets.

Mayor Scholl suggested the bench location be considered for a future round-about, in accordance with the Master Plan.

Council had no objections to the proposal for two benches.

4. Consideration of Right-of-Way (ROW) Dedication by 970 Oregon Street - Jacob

2:14 p.m.

City Planner Graichen reviewed his memo. A copy is included in the archive packet for this meeting.

The applicants are opposed to the ROW dedication. They have filed an appeal to the Planning Commission. However, ROW's require Council acceptance. The Council can decide to reject the ROW dedication, making the appeal mute. Is the Council comfortable discussing this tonight? He reviewed a memo listing the basis for rejection if the Council decides to do that. A copy of the memo is included in the archive packet for the meeting.

Discussion ensued.

- ◆ Durell Kearsley. He is concerned that the ROW dedication affects them for future sale of the property. If they try to sell the property, they will have to move the existing gate before lending would be approved. That would cost between \$15,000 - 20,000. This is premature of the final goal. It will cost them now but may not happen for another 50 years.

Council President Morten talked about the former owner wanting to sell that property to the City. Council voted no at that time. The City would still entertain a proposal to purchase that property. It is a valuable piece of property to Public Works. Durell understands the history. They are not ready to sell at this point. If they do, they will make that offer.

Councilor Chilton appreciates Durell's input. She thanked Council President Morten for his insight as well.

Councilor Birkle appreciates the background information. He would prefer it follow the standard process and go to Planning Commission for a decision.

Discussion ensued.

Durell talked about the delay this is causing. The odds of development is at least 50 years down the road and should not be considered.

Walsh pointed out that the ROW dedication will happen if the City is the future buyer.

Discussion was continued to tonight's meeting.

Break 2:56 p.m.**5. Strategic Action Plan Updates**

3:06 p.m.

Brown updated the Council on the communications and streaming policies for public meetings. YouTube was used for streaming when they first began. They have since change to streaming on Facebook. Facebook does not allow them to use the agenda management software to track timing. However, YouTube does work with the software to allow for the use of timestamps. The City has been asked about streaming videos on the website since not everyone has Facebook. Zoom and Facebook cannot embed on our website, but YouTube can. He is proposing to switch back to YouTube for Council and Board/Commission meetings.

Mayor Scholl likes that YouTube can timestamp for easy access.

Council President Morten agreed with using YouTube.

Councilor Chilton thinks it is fine. She would like to continue streaming on Facebook for more access. Brown clarified that they could post a link on Facebook to the website when the meeting begins.

Consensus of Council to switch to YouTube for streaming on January 20, as discussed.

6. City Administrator Report

3:15 p.m.

- Will be reviewing good governance in a Council retreat.
- Happy New Year!
- Welcome new councilors!
- 2020 was awful. Hopefully, it is only up from here.
- Working towards a healthy and vibrant community.
- New McCormick Park playground equipment contract was just signed.
- Updates to Campbell Park with grant funding.
- Waterfront redevelopment project is proceeding.
- St. Helens Industrial Business Park framework plan and funding is moving forward. It will be presented to Council at the first meeting in February.
- Continuing to work on a draft for the RV park behind the Recreation Center.
 - Planning to preserve the area along the creek.
 - 20-foot trail along the creek.
- Grading component at the Mill site.
- Approved a franchise agreement at the last meeting from Waste Management for drop boxes at the last meeting.
- The Comcast franchise agreement is on hold.
- Columbia River PUD franchise agreement expired on December 31. Staff will work on it and bring to Council.
- NW Natural Gas franchise agreement will come to Council for renewal as well.
- Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the City and SHEDCO is being reviewed. It will come back to Council for approval.
- There was a dock usage issue during Christmas Ships. Staff is working to improve the process and enforcement, especially related to transient boaters.
- Working with community partners to keep up with COVID challenges and health updates.
- The need for communications at the City is continuously increasing.
- Council retreat on January 27. He emailed a draft agenda to Council.

OTHER BUSINESS

3:25 p.m.

Councilor Topaz reported...

- He is going to propose an RFP for the Tourism Director tonight.
- He still has not gotten a number from Walsh for the OreGrow plant. He is going to make a motion tonight to end the sale.
- The City needs a work plan for the next 20 years.

Council President Morten reported that Oregrow is paying the City. He told Councilor Topaz that he needs to have the facts correct before making those statements. Brown added that the sale of the property is complete.

Mayor Scholl reminded Councilor Topaz that this was an action item for the entire Council. He told Councilor Topaz that he continues to distract the Council from the work the City is doing to move forward.

ADJOURNMENT – 3:28 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