



COUNCIL REGULAR SESSION

Wednesday, January 15, 2025

APPROVED MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT

Mayor Jennifer Massey
Council President Jessica Chilton
Councilor Mark Gundersen
Councilor Russell Hubbard
Councilor Brandon Sundeen

STAFF PRESENT

John Walsh, City Administrator	Joe Hogue, Acting Police Chief
Kathy Payne, City Recorder	Suzanne Bishop, Library Director
Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder	Gloria Butsch, Finance Director
Jacob Graichen, City Planner	

OTHERS

Brady Preheim	Robyn Toschi	Dan Hatfield
Steve Toschi	Mitzi	Brittany
Arthur Leskowich	Treadway Events	Kelly Wheeldon
Erin Wheeldon	Pat Fery	Jane Fery
Grant Toschi	Mercedes Massey	Brianna Gaston
Adam St. Pierre	Nicholas Hellmich	Guy Cummings

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Massey recognized Hometown Hero Martin Luis Scheer Jr. Martin and asked him to lead the Pledge.

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

- ◆ Nicholas Hellmich. Worked at Columbia Community Mental Health (CCMH) where EMS had responded unprofessionally to an incident, and he asked if EMS workers could receive trauma-informed training.
- ◆ Steven Toschi. Showed maps of the Millard Road property plan which originally had 64 lots and was changed to 90 lots. He showed a map of Rick Scholl's property on Sixth Street and the proposal Mr. Scholl presented to the Planning Commission after failing to declare conflict of interest regarding Ordinance No. 3306. He noted manufactured homes would decrease neighboring property values, and he urged Council to send Ordinance No. 3306 back for revision and suggested limiting commercial interests running apartments to apartment residential zones.
- ◆ Brady Preheim. Stated no more than two Council members could be assigned to the Administration Department due to quorum rules. He asked for public confirmation about the status of the Police Chief and wanted Acting Police Chief Hogue to be hired as the permanent

Police Chief. He was waiting for an apology to City Administrator Walsh as his actions were carried out under the direction of Council.

DELIBERATIONS

1. AP.2.24 through AP.6.24 - Appeal of Planning Commission Decisions to Build a Triplex with Multiple Variances on Wyeth Street (Dan Hatfield)

Council and staff discussed the request, emphasizing the importance of supporting and not undermining the Planning Commission's decision. It was noted that everyone was required to follow Code, and it was not the same as being penalized. Councilors agreed a duplex would be more appropriate and would need fewer Variances than a triplex, and they recommended submitting a proposal for a duplex with a narrower footprint to the Planning Commission.

Dan Hatfield asked Council to approve his project with a duplex rather than a triplex to avoid the cost of having to go back through the Planning Commission.

City Planner Graichen clarified that if Council upheld the Planning Commission's decision an appeal could be made to a higher authority, or the project would go back to the drawing board. Council could approve some of the project's Variances such as the reduced setback or off-street parking which could be utilized in a proposal for the Planning Commission.

Council members stated the matter should go back to the Planning Commission for review and agreed approving a duplex rather than a triplex would be simple if it were not for the many variances in the request, which were beyond Council's scope.

City Administrator Walsh proposed remanding the decision to the Planning Commission to avoid the applicant needing to reapply and pay the fees again.

City Planner Graichen confirmed the decision could be remanded to the Planning Commission where the decision could be affirmed, reversed, or modified with the new concept that the project could be a duplex, with the condition that Mr. Hatfield grant written approval to extend the 120-day window for response.

Motion: Motion made by Councilor Gundersen and seconded by Council President Chilton to remand the decision back to the Planning Commission with the added condition of a written extension to the 120-day limit as stated by staff and based on discussion. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Massey, Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

REQUEST FOR APPROVAL TO ATTEND EXECUTIVE SESSIONS

2. Consideration of Application from Tamara Maygra of Odd Friday Talk Radio & St. Helens Update to Qualify as a Representative of the News Media to Attend Council Executive Sessions

Motion: Motion made by Councilor Gundersen and seconded by Councilor Sundeen to table the request for approval to attend Executive Sessions to discuss the matter with legal counsel. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Massey, Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

ORDINANCES – Final Reading

3. Ordinance No. 3306: An Ordinance Amending the St. Helens Municipal Code Chapters 17.16, 17.32, 17.60, 17.80, and 17.96 Pertaining to Multifamily Development, Oregon House Bill 4064 (2022) Regarding Manufactured and Prefabricated Dwellings, Oregon House Bill 3395 (2023) Regarding Single Room Occupancies, and Other Housekeeping Amendments

Mayor Massey read Ordinance No. 3306 by title.

City Planner Graichen suggested removing the parts of Ordinance No. 3306 Council was uncomfortable with, and allowing staff to draft a new ordinance with those parts omitted. The major components of

Ordinance No. 3306 were the rules regarding multifamily detached units, manufactured prefabricated structures, single-room occupancy, and other housekeeping amendments. He confirmed he could remove any component from all applicable sections of the new draft of the Ordinance.

Council President Chilton and Councilor Sundeen voiced concern about the component regarding manufactured prefabricated structures.

Councilor Gundersen noted though the issue was affected by State mandate, he preferred to review manufactured prefabricated structures on a case-by-case basis to ensure the best was being done for the City.

City Planner Graichen explained the housekeeping items in Ordinance No. 3306 were very general things that did not fit in the other categories mentioned. He recommended rejecting the second reading of Ordinance No. 3306 and directing staff to return with an Ordinance omitting manufactured prefabricated structures.

Mayor Massey voiced concerns about multifamily developments potentially being able to have four detached homes on one lot within a neighborhood, though she had nothing against manufactured homes. She supported the component regarding single-room occupancy (SRO) and the housekeeping items but would rather exclude the parts about multifamily detached units until an option could be presented that would not allow four homes on one lot.

City Planner Graichen clarified that the State mandate only pertained to the manufactured homes and single-room occupancy components, and the multifamily detached units had stemmed from Council Goals in response to the 2019 Housing Needs Analysis, though he confirmed the needs identified in the Housing Needs Analysis had generally been met.

Councilor Hubbard noted allowing many little structures did not work for infrastructure or neighborhoods.

Mayor Massey was concerned about developers buying investment property to put in clusters of many little homes similar to accessory dwelling units (ADUs) and proposed not allowing multifamily detached units in neighborhoods.

Motion: Motion made by Councilor Gundersen and seconded by Councilor Sundeen to reject or deny the second reading of Ordinance No. 3306 and direct staff to return with an Ordinance regarding single-room occupancy and housekeeping items. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Massey, Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

RESOLUTIONS

4. **Resolution No. 2035:** A Resolution of the St. Helens City Council to Set Planning Department Fees

Mayor Massey read Resolution No. 2035 by title. **Motion:** Motion made by Council President Chilton and seconded by Councilor Gundersen to adopt Resolution No. 2035. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Massey, Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

5. **Resolution No. 2036:** A Resolution Appointing the Budget Officer for Fiscal Year 2025-26

Mayor Massey read Resolution No. 2036 by title. **Motion:** Motion made by Councilor Sundeen and seconded by Mayor Massey to adopt Resolution No. 2036. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Massey, Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

APPROVE AND/OR AUTHORIZE FOR SIGNATURE

6. Lease Renewal for Masonic Building at 231 & 235 S. 1st Street

Motion: Motion made by Councilor Sundeen and seconded by Councilor Gundersen to approve '6' above.

City Administrator Walsh confirmed the rate of the lease was \$0.60 per sq. ft. which was well below market rate, and the City would enter a property tax exemption agreement with the building with no limits on the period of time the tax exemption could be applied except for the haunted house portion which had a limitation of 90 days per year as an event and required the Fire Marshall's approval.

Council members noted 90 days was enough time for a haunted house and the space could be used for storage and other uses that did not require a permit during the off-season. Treadway had ideas for using the space apart from Spirit of Halloweentown including laser tag and other activities. The building was beautiful and had been underutilized after the City put a fair amount of money into remodeling the building.

City Administrator Walsh stated discussions were being held and grants were being looked for to bring the Masonic building up to Code as the needed fire sprinkler was an expensive item.

Vote: Yea: Mayor Massey, Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

7. Final Partition Plat for the OYO Hotel/Village Inn

Motion: Motion made by Councilor Gundersen and seconded by Council President Chilton to approve '7' above. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Massey, Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

REVIEW APPLICATIONS FOR AND APPOINT NEW MEMBER TO BUDGET COMMITTEE

8. Budget Committee Applications

Councilors discussed the applications received for appointment to the Budget Committee and noting they preferred someone who had not served on the Budget Committee or other boards before. Council members agreed Marissa Swartz had valuable financial experience to offer to the Budget Committee.

Motion: Motion made by Councilor Sundeen and seconded by Councilor Hubbard to appoint Marissa Swartz to the Budget Committee. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Massey, Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

APPOINTMENTS TO CITY BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

9. Appointment to Parks & Trails Commission

Mayor Massey noted she was sad to see Nick Hellmich leave the Parks and Trails Commission.

Councilor Sundeen shared Lucas Green's background and passion for preserving the Milton Creek Woodland Reserve and noted he had been interviewed and recommended for appointment to the Parks and Trails Commission.

Motion: Motion made by Councilor Sundeen and seconded by Councilor Gundersen to appoint Lucas Green to the Parks & Trails Commission. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Massey, Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

CONSENT AGENDA FOR APPROVAL

10. Approve Budget Calendar for Fiscal Year 2025/26
11. City Council Minutes dated November 6, 2024, November 20, 2024, December 4, 2024, December 18, 2024, and January 2, 2025
12. Accounts Payable Bill Lists

Motion: Motion made by Councilor Gundersen and seconded by Councilor Sundeen to approve '10' through '12' above. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Massey, Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

WORK SESSION ACTION ITEMS**Council Work Session Times**

Change time to accommodate schedules to 3:00 p.m.

Motion: Motion made by Council President Chilton and seconded by Councilor Hubbard to change Council work sessions and Council operating rules to accommodate a new start of 3:00 p.m. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Massey, Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

Summer Schedule

Mayor Massey stated canceling the first Council meeting in July and August 2025 would allow planning vacations and give staff more flexibility. A special session could be called if needed.

Motion: Motion made by Councilor Sundeen and seconded by Council President Chilton to cancel the first meeting in July and August. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Massey, Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

COUNCIL MEMBER REPORTS

Councilor Sundeen reported the Parks and Trails Commission met last Monday to discuss the Urban Trail Project and the next steps for the Milton Creek Woodland Reserve Project including reaching out to Council to work on a better map for the project area. Reid Herman had resigned from the Parks and Trails Commission and was appointed to the Planning Commission, and Nick Hellmich had also resigned from the Parks and Trails Commission. Lucas Green would be a good fit and offer a new perspective. He thanked Acting Police Chief Hogue and the Police Department for their good work.

Council President Chilton welcomed Mayor Massey to Council and commended her openness and willingness to work as a team. She read a statement she had written regarding changing the mindset to focus on bringing high-paying jobs like Project Arcadia into St. Helens, getting high school graduates into good jobs and programs, and keeping the money in the county.

Councilor Gundersen reported on the Columbia River Fire and Rescue Board's team efforts to stabilize financially and gave a shout out to the Local 3215, Dustin King, and Chief Smythe, noting they had saved enough money to purchase a new ambulance which would be running in May 2025. He also thanked Hometown Hero Martin Scheer Jr.

Councilor Hubbard welcomed Mayor Massey to Council and reported the Library was preparing supplies and staff to operate the new Makerspace. He stated Dan Hatfield's property sat as a hazardous burnt structure for four to five years, and he asked whether there was an ordinance to address dangerous structures that were an eyesore and to prevent unwanted inhabitants. The structures did not need to be brought up to Code immediately but should not be left in such disrepair. He said there should be an Ordinance to grant a set amount of time to address hazardous structures.

Councilor Chilton proposed possibly incentivizing owners to tear down dangerous structures on their own property.

MAYOR MASSEY REPORTS

Mayor Massey was excited for the opportunity to be a part of Council and thanked several City staff members for their specific work on several projects along with the following additional comments:

- Council members' new phone numbers would be populated soon on the City website to provide an easy way to reach Council members.
- She was glad Citizen's Day in the Park was still being planned, and that Treadway might take on the event so staff could enjoy the event and co-mingle with citizens.
- Her personal goal was to break ground on the new Police Station within six months, noting the matter would be discussed at a joint Council and Planning Commission meeting on February 5, 2025.

- A form for public service/military background information collection was available on the City website, and she encouraged filling out the form or nominating someone.

OTHER BUSINESS

ADJOURN – 8:19 p.m.

Respectfully transcribed by ABC Transcription Services LLC and submitted by Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder.

ATTEST:

/s/ Kathy Payne
Kathy Payne, City Recorder

/s/ Jennifer Massey
Jennifer Massey, Mayor