



COUNCIL REGULAR SESSION

Wednesday, March 02, 2022

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
Kathy Payne, City Recorder
Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder
Tina Curry, Event Coordinator

OTHERS

Judy Thompson
Jane Garcia
Brady Preheim
Serena McCurdy

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

◆ Judy Thompson.

- She recognized E2C Inc. for their commitment to develop tourism in St. Helens. Volunteering last year allowed her to see how much fun visitors have. Tourism is part of their economic development, and she looks forward to the continued investment with E2C Inc. and community partners.
- She is working on the Kiwanis Parade permit and was concerned with the response she received from Chief Greenway. The staffing study done 10 years ago is still not being met. She listed the staffing needs and the adjustments made due to low staffing at the Police Department. Industry standards are two officers for every 500 people at events. She asked why there is no public safety service fee for new development? Why is public safety in the same fund as Library and Parks & Recreation? Life balance for officers is critical. Council needs to act now. Chief Greenway has it covered. He is dedicated and has dedicated officers.

Mayor Scholl asked if there were any concerns about the parade. Judy said they are working out the details.

Councilor Chilton recognized that Chief Greenway gave a report during today's work session. They are working on a plan for additional support. She appreciates Judy's advocacy.

- ◆ Tina Curry, Event Coordinator.
 - Showed banners that will be displayed at the entrance to the Waterfront property at Cowlitz Street. They were designed by Communications Officer Crystal King.
 - They are going to move the pumpkin totem. Does the Council want to put it away or move it to the corner location where the flag used to be? It would give visitors something to take their photo with.

After discussion, there was no objection from Council to put it where the flag was located. They'll move it if there are complaints.

- ◆ Brady Preheim.
 - Comment about the request from the Chamber of Commerce. They had an opportunity to have a paid staff person funded through tourism. They turned it down. He is a former Chair and advocate for the Chamber. They can't just show up and ask for money, but not want to do anything. They chose not to participate in Halloweentown activities, where they could have received tourism dollars. They should receive money from everyone for tourism and not just St. Helens. Is there value having a physical presence year-round? A lot of people obtain information online. He has mixed feelings about the value of a Visitor Center. The building remodel does look great.
 - Glad to see Chief Greenway and he agree. When asked about getting officers in and out of the building quickly, Greenway responded that officers will not be in the building. They'll be in the field. What is the need for a fancy new station if they're not going to be there? Brady agreed with the need for additional officers.
 - Concerned about comments that were made about spending tourism money. They've already spent money for fireworks. It's not a piggybank. The tourism director generated it for tourism. It is not appropriate for other uses. Tina has plans to spend it to make tourism better. Leave the money alone and let her do what she wants to do to make tourism better. Why does she not have a contract? It shouldn't have taken this long.
 - Council is worried about funding for additional officers. They could fund that with all the legal fees they have paid because of Councilor Topaz. Now he has the audacity to ask them to pay his legal fees. They also waste a lot of money when they don't reduce a person's salary after their responsibilities are reduced. It has happened in both Finance and Parks & Recreation.

ORDINANCES – *First Reading*

- 1. Ordinance No. 3281:** An Ordinance to Annex and Designate the Zone of Certain Property Located Southeast of the Intersection of Pittsburg Road and Meadowview Drive

Mayor Scholl read Ordinance No. 3281 by title. The final reading will be at the next meeting.

RESOLUTIONS

- 2. Resolution No. 1947:** A Resolution Determining that Unsafe Structures Exist Upon Properties as Described in Exhibit A and Directing that Notice to Abate the Nuisance be Posted on Said Premises

Mayor Scholl read Resolution No. 1947 by title. **Motion:** Motion made by Council President Morten and seconded by Councilor Topaz to adopt Resolution No. 1947.

Discussion.

Councilor Chilton asked for clarification on the nuisance. City Recorder Payne explained that the Building Official is requesting they be declared nuisances because their utilities have been shut off. They must have running water for sanitary purposes.

Vote: Yea: Mayor Scholl, Council President Morten, Councilor Birkle, Councilor Topaz, Councilor Chilton

- 3. Resolution No. 1948:** A Resolution of the City of St. Helens, Oregon Authorizing a Loan from the Special Public Works Fund by Entering into a Financing Contract with the Oregon Infrastructure Finance Authority

Mayor Scholl read Resolution No. 1948 by title. **Motion:** Motion made by Councilor Chilton and seconded by Council President Morten to adopt Resolution No. 1948. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Scholl, Council President Morten, Councilor Birkle, Councilor Topaz, Councilor Chilton

CONSENT AGENDA FOR APPROVAL

4. Council Minutes:
 - Executive Session Minutes dated February 11 and 16, 2022
 - Work Session, Executive Session, Public Hearing, and Regular Session Minutes dated February 16, 2022
 - Executive Session Minutes dated February 22, 2022
5. OLCC Licenses
6. Accounts Payable Bill Lists

Moton: Motion made by Council President Morten and seconded by Councilor Chilton to approve '4' through '6' above. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Scholl, Council President Morten, Councilor Birkle, Councilor Topaz, Councilor Chilton

WORK SESSION ACTION ITEMS

None

COUNCIL MEMBER REPORTS

Council President Morten reported...

- Judy Thompson had a good suggestion about having System Development Charges (SDCs) in place for police. City Administrator Walsh explained that SDCs are set by the Oregon Revised Statutes (ORS). Many jurisdictions add fees on their utility bills for streets, parks, and public safety. They are not able to control the property tax rate, so that is a way to increase revenue for enhanced services. Council President Morten added that SDCs are to allow new residents to pay for growth. He would like to discuss it further.
- Parks & Recreation Commission meeting on March 14.
- Received a call from Kenneth Gates prior to the last meeting. He and Casey Wheeler wanted to meet him at the Food Bank. They were the visionaries in creating the new Food Bank. He toured the facility and was amazed at what it will offer the community. It's in the middle of town. Councilor Topaz added that donating is a good way to be part of the Food Bank.

Council Topaz reported...

- The Hunger Run for the Food Bank is on Saturday. They needed a permit, which they had to pay \$500 for. He was surprised that it couldn't be waived.
- The Elks donated \$8,000 to the Food Bank. The Food Bank thanked them. He would like the Council and newspapers to inform the community about the donation. He suggested the City's Communications staff do something for it.
- Plans have changed in strange ways. When they first started the Riverwalk design, it was 21 feet wide and then it widened to 30 feet for ambulances. When the Veneer property was purchased, there was a Code change that said there was public property about 50 feet wide. Reducing to 30 feet, they lost about 40% of the public ground in the design. The public is not going to be happy when they go from 50 feet to 30 feet.
- He went to the County Tax Office on Monday to find out how much money the marijuana grow operations pays. He found out that the only ground owned by the marijuana group is a 100 foot by 100-foot area, which they pay \$518 per year. The City sold them 8.6 acres. They should be

paying \$19,000 a year. If they pay the rate he pays for his place, they should be paying \$75,000. Most of the ground is City-owned. Is the City preventing the County from getting \$75,000? It needs to be investigated. Multiple buildings were put there so they could get permits. The City has to okay those permits so OLCC can issue those permits. Is that handled by Council or staff? He found out from the County that the office is a year behind in permits.

Councilor Chilton reported...

- She suggested they investigate using timber sale revenue to help fund police. Mayor Scholl said they are already exhausting those funds for the Public Safety Facility. They are spending \$3.6 million from the General Fund. They have given raises and added positions since he started. Councilor Topaz said he has seen fundraisers for new equipment and asked if they could use that mechanism. Walsh added that there are a lot of fiscal policies with one-time funding sources. Right now, those investments are in community and economic development. Mayor Scholl said there is a balance of funding. Police and Public Works are two of them. Councilor Chilton agrees with the need, but feels public safety needs to be priority number one. She looks forward to the police funding discussion and what the timber fund revenues are used for. Council President Morten said he brought up the urban trail during the special session, which is very inexpensive to implement. He agreed that the Police Department needs to catch up with staffing. They are fortunate to have a lot of park volunteers. He supports Councilor Chilton's ideas. Councilor Chilton thinks there will be a lot of support from staff.
- Her family is expanding. She is due with a baby in August and plans on staying very involved.

Councilor Birkle reported...

- It's important to recognize that March is Women's History Month. They are not diminishing men by promoting women. It's important to look at all the important contributions by women.
- He and his wife will be walking in the Hunger Run.
- He and his wife will be training with CERT.
- Planning Commission meeting next week. City Planner Graichen's report in the packet includes a great picture that shows the flight path of the plane conducting the aerial photography.

MAYOR SCHOLL REPORTS

- It was good to review the goals during the special session tonight.
 - Public Works has been understaffed. They need balance.
 - The timber revenue was spent for the Community Center.
 - There are a lot of listed Capital Improvement projects that likely can't be funded.
 - He supports the Police but there needs to be balance.
- They are working on the tourism contract. The City's contract attorneys are very busy right now.
- He's encouraged about tomorrow's joint meeting.

OTHER BUSINESS

None

ADJOURN – 7:49 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder.

ATTEST:

/s/ Kathy Payne
Kathy Payne, City Recorder

/s/ Rick Scholl
Rick Scholl, Mayor