



COUNCIL WORK SESSION

Wednesday, September 16, 2020

APPROVED MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT

Mayor Rick Scholl
Council President Doug Morten
Councilor Keith Locke
Councilor Ginny Carlson
Councilor Stephen R. Topaz

STAFF PRESENT

John Walsh, City Administrator	Margaret Jeffries, Library Director
Matt Brown, Assistant City Administrator	Mike DeRoia, Building Official
Kathy Payne, City Recorder	Shanna Duggan, Recreation Manager
Sue Nelson, Interim Public Works Director	Sharon Darroux, Engineering Project Manager
Jenny Dimsho, Associate Planner	Bill Monohan, City Attorney
Brian Greenway, Police Chief	Tina Curry, Event Coordinator
Rachael Barry, Government Affairs & Project Support Specialist	

OTHERS

Al Petersen	Judy Thompson	Wela Nagelspach
Liam Frobisher	Sheri Stuart	Frank
Dana Lathrope	Abbi Russell	Paul Vogel
Kathy Lombardi	Sarah Frobisher	Mike Russell
Brady Preheim		

CALL WORK SESSION TO ORDER VIA ZOOM – 1:02 p.m.

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

Assistant City Administrator Matt Brown read a letter into the record from Ryan Drake from Drake's Towing. He is financially struggling and having to charge his customers more since he no longer has the St. Helens contract. He wants the City to put out an RFP for exclusive towing services again. He also commented on Councilor Topaz wasting taxpayers' dollars and having a negative effect on local businesses. A copy of his letter is included in the archive packet for this meeting.

- ◆ Jenny Dimsho. Thanked the Scappoose Bay Watershed Council and Dana Pricher for writing a grant for the City to remove invasive species. We were awarded \$12,000 from the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board. Dana has volunteered to handle all the grant management. This will improve the quality of 5th Street Nature Trail and Nob Hill Nature Park. Work will be happening over the next two years.
- ◆ Al Petersen, SHEDCO Board Chair. He is here for Sheri Stuart's Main Street Program report and to give a SHEDCO update.
 - Most of their meetings have been held on Zoom. They recently resumed meeting in person at the Wild Currant.

- Most non-profits have been kicked in the pants since COVID. Their ability to do things has been limited.
 - The Promotions Committee has been promoting local businesses on Main Street through social media and live streams.
 - Update on the Main Street grants through SHEDCO:
 - The Columbia Theater replaced their marquee. He thanked Associate Planner Jenny Dimsho and Communications Officer Crystal King for helping document the installation. The total value of the marquee was approximately \$61,000. The reimbursement from the Oregon Main Street grant was \$51,842.
 - The El Tapatio grant expired due to a lack of construction being done. They lost out on that \$100,000.
 - SHEDCO held a second business plan competition last year. Hallow's Pizza won the competition. The approval process took longer than expected and then they were hit by COVID-19. He is proud to announce that the first day of being open is Friday. They are in the food pod next to Wauna Credit Union.
 - About two months ago, he talked to Robert Blumberg from Wauna Credit Union. They were pleased with the way the business plan competition has been unfolding.
 - SHEDCO has been involved in raising money and materials for those people displaced by the wildfires that are out at the Columbia County Fairgrounds.
- ◆ Brady Preheim. He is following up on the SHEDCO report. The failure of the El Tapatio grant was not the failure of El Tapatio. It was the responsibility of SHEDCO as the grant manager. It seems a little suspicious that for two years in a row Al Petersen was the architect on both projects that won.

DISCUSSION TOPICS

1. Employee Length of Service Award

One employee has reached a milestone in his employment with the City of St. Helens. The following individual will receive a 20-year certificate and pin.

Aaron Kunders began working for the City in September of 2000 as a WWTP Operator II. As he earned his certifications, he continued to move up the ranks to Operator III and IV. In January of 2009, he became the Operations & Pretreatment Supervisor, followed six months later becoming the City's WWTP Superintendent after Greg Zielinski retired. Aaron keeps the WWTP running smoothly year after year.

Congratulations, Aaron, and thank you for your service!

2. Discussion regarding Status of Main Street Program - *Sheri Stuart, Main Street Oregon*

Main Street Oregon State Coordinator Sheri Stuart was in attendance to review her presentation. A copy of the presentation is included in the archive meeting packet. The purpose of the assessment visit was to educate leaders and community members, and to assess the capacity for the City and SHEDCO to continue participating in the Main Street Program. A survey was done as well. She reviewed those responses.

Sheri does think Main Street is a good fit for St. Helens. She focused on Board level observations.

- There were times that SHEDCO only had three Board members, which is too few. The term of office should be a maximum of six years. At least two board members have been serving on the Board for at least that long and in a leadership capacity that long.
- More than half of the survey responses rated SHEDCO as somewhat to not effective. That is not to diminish the volunteers who have big hearts for the community.
- Transparency - with two few people serving there is a lack of things being shared.

- Increased communication is very important.
- The lack of partnerships is concerning. It has actually deteriorated since the beginning. It is very challenging if there is not good communication and partnerships. She sees other communities where there are strong relationships that have completely transformed their downtown.

Recommendations:

- Re-constitute SHEDCO to enable organization to fully engage the Main Street structure
 - New board/application process overseen by joint City/SHEDCO member/partner recruitment committee
 - Funding support by City through MOU with clear deliverables and benchmarks
 - Hire an executive director (ideally full-time but minimum part-time) – provision for City on hiring committee
 - Community-based development of goals and objectives

Council President Morten thanked Sheri for her presentation. St. Helens is the County seat. Sheri encouraged the City to become a very strong active partner. What about the County? Sheri responded that counties are financial partners as well, but usually at a much smaller dollar amount.

Mayor Scholl mentioned the local business organizations in our community: SHEDCO, the Chamber of Commerce, Keep it Local, and Columbia County Economic Team (CCET). Does that seem like a lot for a city our size? Sheri said most of those are typical. It is possible to combine one of those with another.

3. Partnership Update and Release of Phase I Site Characterization Report - *Kathy Lombardi and Abbi Russell of Maul Foster Alongi*

2:05 p.m.

Kathy Lombardi and Abbi Russell from Maul Foster Alongi (MFA) were in attendance to give their update. A copy of the presentation is included in the archive packet for this meeting. They reviewed the projects and next steps of their partnership with St. Helens.

Councilor Topaz said DEQ was very upset that there are no core drillings down the middle of the lagoon. Some of the core drillings determined that the DOGAMI landslide area was there which makes the southwest area of the lagoon a dangerous spot. He talked about some of the data being questionable. We are going to be removing stuff from the Portland Harbor that is extremely toxic. There is contamination underneath the existing membrane. MFA has stated they do not believe the fill should be above the present levy. Can you justify putting super toxic waste inside a town next to a Waterfront? He is trying to get justification for continuing forward.

Kathy responded that MFA prepared the Phase I Site Investigation Report to be compliant with DEQ's guidance and regulatory framework for permitting landfills. The draft has been submitted to DEQ for review. They received confirmation that it was an appropriate level at this time. There are additional studies and analysis to be done. They are in the early phases. There are more checks and balances and opportunities to ensure comfort with the Council, the City, and constituents. In response to the question about the super toxic waste and whether such material would be placed into this facility, from the beginning of this project, they have worked closely with the City in terms of identifying what waste would or would not be placed in that facility should it ever receive waste. The directive is to ensure safety to the community. This will not be a hazardous waste landfill. This facility will not accept that high level waste. That material will go elsewhere. Part of the permitting process includes the criteria for acceptance. The City has a lot of control to direct those requirements for accepting or not accepting particular types of waste. There is no expectation by the City or MFA that the facility would receive toxic waste.

Councilor Topaz talked about the main supplier of the lagoon being Portland Harbor. If it is not really toxic, they are going to encapsulate in place or move it. There is a margin along the Portland Harbor, all the way down the Multnomah Channel, which includes this property. Certain setbacks will be cleaned up.

He saw no indication in the MFA report that the EPA's cleanup of the local waterways was involved. Part of it is because this overall superfund project extends all the way down as the second phase. He had expected that when they conducted tests and observations that some of that information would be used. An in-water cleanup will be required for the Portland Harbor. That extends all the way to St. Helens because of the Multnomah Channel contamination.

Kathy responded that those questions and the analysis required to answer them is part of future phases of work. Just as a reminder, they are in the very early steps of analysis. There are many steps to come.

Councilor Topaz asked if there are any steps that would indicate that it is unsuitable, and they should not proceed? Or do you have to take it all the way to the end? Mayor Scholl responded yes to the first question. This is a report on the site and whether it is doable. Everything Councilor Topaz spoke about is yet to be determined. MFA is looking at the facility as whether or not it is feasible. People should not assume they are further along. There is much more community engagement to happen. There are a ton of materials around the area, including Armstrong and in-water. He appreciates all the work done by MFA. Now they know what the site consists of. The City Council has done their part to inform the citizens of what is there. They can pull the plug on it at any time.

Mayor Scholl has heard that it will cost the Portland Harbor more to cover it up than to dredge it. Councilor Topaz agreed that it is cheaper to dredge it. Their plans now are to cover it. Council President Morten pointed out that all the plans are conceptual. The lagoon is a detriment to citizens and needs to be addressed. Mayor Scholl clarified that the lagoon is an oversized facility and is on a valuable piece of land that can be repurposed for the citizens.

Discussion ensued. Additional public engagement will be held. No decisions about fill have been made at this time. It is still be reviewed.

4. Update from the South County Collaborative Group - *Rachael*

2:51 p.m.

The City's Government Affairs and Project Support Specialist Rachael Barry said that this item is postponed. There were several presenters but due to the length of previous agenda item presentations, some of them could not stay longer.

5. Police Department Semi-Annual Report - *Chief Greenway*

2:52 p.m.

Chief Brian Greenway was in attendance to give his semi-annual report to the Council. A copy of the PowerPoint presentation is included in the archive meeting packet.

Break – 3:24 p.m.

6. Discussion Regarding Tourism Coordination RFP

3:31 p.m.

City Administrator Walsh reminded the Council that this topic was carried forward from the last meeting. There was a concern presented about audit controls. Legal counsel reviewed the RFP and confirmed that there is a high degree of accountability. Does the Council want to do another RFP? Based on the last one done, the people who submitted clearly did not understand what is involved. Mayor Scholl talked about one candidate who thought they could manage it from California with volunteers doing the work.

Councilor Locke expressed that he thinks this is a bad time to do an RFP. Councilor Topaz agreed. He requested a copy of the audit system. Walsh explained the audit system that the City conducts. Assistant City Administrator Brown elaborated on the process. The audit is available on the City website. He can provide a copy of the auditor's contract as well.

Councilor Carlson suggested more public communication about tourism and planned events.

Mayor Scholl suggested the addition of an option to furlough the tourism consultant if events have to be cancelled due to weather, pandemics, etc.

Council directed staff to visit this topic later.

7. Discussion Regarding Status of Youth Council - *Ginny/Shanna*

3:41 p.m.

Councilor Carlson reported that she and Councilor Locke used to lead Youth Council together. Now with COVID and Councilor Locke's retirement, they need staff support. This proposal supports leadership opportunities and makes it more inclusive for the community. It does not diminish them in any way. The students range from 6th – 12th grades, which is a broad base. The City is responsible for their safety. The partnership with the Recreation Program gives them more staff support.

Recreation Manager Shanna Duggan reported that she has been reviewing other programs in the State to use as examples. Her proposal would be to create a multi-layer teen program:

- Youth Advisory Council
 - Complete an annual application
 - Participate in volunteer opportunities
 - Part of Boards, Commissions, and Council meetings
 - Help with Recreation Programs
- Teen Theme, to offer a safe place for students to hang out after school
- Teen Service Corps
- Councilor-in-Training

Duggan is excited to be a part of the Youth Council. She is in the schools a lot and can talk to the students about becoming involved. Students need supervision and structure. She can support them but allow them to plan projects.

Council President Morten applauded Councilor Locke and Councilor Carlson for their work with Youth Council. He thinks the Youth Council is more suited for the element of kids that are 15, 16, or 17. It should be the pinnacle of leadership. It could be organized like a sports program where you have a Junior Varsity and a Varsity. That could ease the burden on who manages this program. The work that has been done with them is remarkable.

Councilor Carlson pointed out that the older students do take on the leadership roles. She sees great growth when they start young. She has written letters of recommendation for several students who have moved on. Making a difference in these student's lives is worth the investment.

Discussion ensued. Youth Council fits a big need for teens in the area. The partnership with the Recreation Program would offer more opportunities and oversight.

8. Strategic Action Plan Updates

Assistant City Administrator Brown reviewed items on tonight's agenda:

- Resolution No. 1899 for bond refinancing at a lower rate. It will save the City about \$650,000.
- Agreement with Arciform for design services for the Utility Billing and Municipal Court building façade.
- Community Action Team (CAT) loan payoff.
- Ad-hoc committee for the police facility.

9. City Administrator Report

4:11 p.m.

- Making progress on the Riverwalk and Veneer roadway utility design. The infrastructure financing, grant, and loans are in place.
- The St. Helens Industrial Park is moving along. The infrastructure funding plan is currently incomplete. The preliminary grading plan is being reviewed.
- The central waterfront project is in a slow-down phase to secure resources for the next phase.
- The Urban Renewal Plan Amendment steps are in process. Everything is on schedule.
- Need to review the Public Works interview schedule. Discussion ensued. Consensus of Council to hold the recruitment process open for one more week.
- The Oregon Film Trail has proposed signage to be placed downtown identifying movies that are filmed here. It is app based that directs users to film locations. No objections from Council.
- 13 Nights on the River was cancelled last week and this week due to hazardous air quality.
- Spirit of Halloweentown will be much different this year. Safety is very important.
- Columbia County Economic Team (CCET) selected Paul Vogel as the permanent Executive Director. He is doing great work.
- Port of Columbia County filled the position of Business Development Officer with Matt Miller. He is the former director at Great Portland Inc.
- In his position on the Board of the Oregon City County Manager's Association, he was nominated to sit on the League of Oregon Cities (LOC) Board of Directors. It is an honor and will not be confirmed until the LOC Conference on October 14 and 15. Council members needing to sign up should contact Payne or himself.
- He and Associate Planner Dimsho have been invited to lead a session at the Oregon Brownfields Conference on October 5 and 6. They will share the story of the Waterfront and what they have been working on.

OTHER BUSINESS

- Public hearing at 6 p.m. tonight.
- No executive session following this work session.

ADJOURNMENT – 4:34 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder.

ATTEST:

/s/ Kathy Payne

Kathy Payne, City Recorder

/s/ Rick Scholl

Rick Scholl, Mayor