



COUNCIL WORK SESSION

Wednesday, March 03, 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
Brian Greenway, Policy Chief
Jacob Graichen, City Planner
Rachael Barry, Government Affairs &
Project Support Specialist

Mouhamad Zaher, Public Works Director
Bill Monahan, City Attorney
Mike De Roia, Building Official
Sue Nelson, City Engineer
Jenny Dimsho, Associate Planner
Crystal King, Communications Officer
April Messenger, Municipal Court Clerk
Tina Curry, Event Coordinator

OTHERS

Jeff Auxier	Greg Pettit	Paul Vogel
Lorelei Juntunen	Lynne Pettit	Keith Buisman
Betsy Penziol	Amber	Nancy
Robert Salisbury	Mike Peebles	Matt Q.

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

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

- ◆ Jeff Auxier, Columbia County District Attorney. He is in support of the proposed Public Safety Facility. He also supports the Ad-hoc Committee's recommendation to enact an administrative fee to fund it. They are at a crossroads with the criminal justice system and law enforcement. St. Helens has an excellent police chief and a lot of young, homegrown talent. Portland metro-area officers are looking for new places to work. Chief Greenway is turning St. Helens into a destination police force. Officers want the satisfaction of playing a meaningful role in making a police agency better and be able to work on major cases right away. The only thing he sees standing in the way of St. Helens Police becoming that kind of agency on a State level is the current headquarters. The experienced and highly trained officers from other agencies like the command staff, like the work St. Helens is doing, and are interested until they see the building. It creates barriers. There are currently no female officers, which really limits the justice system. Men and women share a locker room at the current facility. There are only two offices for the command staff to share. That is not appealing when trying to recruit from larger jurisdictions. The lack of interview rooms is very unprofessional. Making good cases and having solid, thorough investigations with quick plea deals that do not go to trial saves a lot of money for taxpayers. It would save the community

money to have a modern public safety facility. The momentum will hit a wall if they do not modernize the facility.

DISCUSSION TOPICS

1. Employee Length of Service Recognition

1:09 p.m.

Two employees have reached milestones in their employment with the City of St. Helens. The following individuals will receive a certificate and pin.

5 Years

Ethan Stirling started working for the City's Public Works Department in February of 2016 as a Utility Worker I. In May of 2019, he was promoted to Water Systems Operator where he currently serves today.

Initially, April Messenger began working for the City way back in 2007 as a part-time Deputy Court Clerk. However, due to budget cuts, her position was eliminated in 2009 and she was laid off. She was hired back on March 1, 2016, as an Office Assistant, eventually becoming a Utility, Banking, and Court Specialist in 2017 and a Court Clerk in 2020 where she currently is serving.

Congratulations, Ethan and April, and thank you for your service!

2. Columbia County Economic Team (CCET) Semi-Annual Report - *Executive Director Paul Vogel*

1:10 p.m.

Paul Vogel reviewed his presentation. A copy is included in the archive packet for this meeting. Some of the highlights were:

- Managed three rounds of grants
 - \$1,644,506 to businesses and non-profits
 - 700 hours spent
 - \$384,653 was issued to St. Helens
- CRF Grant \$15,000
- PPE Grant \$50,000
- More familiar with local businesses and their challenges
- Improved collaboration
- Directly assisted businesses
- Cascades is expanding and adding 21 jobs
- Control Solutions will be coming to St. Helens with a proposal
- Five projects looking to invest and site in the County. Two are interested in the Armstrong site.
- Reviewed prospects looking to relocate or expand in the area
- Collaborating with the Port of Columbia County
- Business Oregon and Greater Portland Inc. both have a new director and CEO
- Reviewed communication and outreach
- Encouraged people to be safe to avoid moving back to the Extreme level
- Thanked the Council for their support and partnership
- Explained Enterprise Zone
- Have some Opportunity Zones in place now

Mayor Scholl thanked Paul for his report.

4. Millard Road Property Developer Solicitation - *Jacob/ECONorthwest*

1:51 p.m.

City Planner Graichen reviewed the Millard Road property. Copies of maps and information is included in the archive packet for this meeting.

- The property is zoned Mixed Use (MU) and is surrounded by mostly residential uses
- Water and sewer service are available
- There are wetlands on the property

Lorelei Juntunen, EcoNorthwest, reviewed the RFP process and timeline.

- Draft RFP March 2021
- Release RFP April 2021
- Pre-Bid Meetings and Q&A May 2021
- Review Proposals/Conduct Interviews June 2021
- Multi-family housing is performing well in St. Helens. That is an incentive for developers.
- Goals
 - Redevelop the property with a mix of residential and commercial uses that meet market needs
 - Generate revenue for the City
 - Balance development objectives with neighborhood goals, including connectivity and open space

Lorelei asked for feedback on goals, amenities, and uses to consider and not consider.

Councilor Topaz dislikes that it is following the rest of the road. He would like to see a specialty area with high-end homes and corporate businesses. This is a time to make this an upscale community.

Graichen explained that the Housing Needs Analysis was addressed when they re-zoned the property. The developer is entitled to develop the property according to the zoning. Councilor Topaz worries about the high-density cost to the City. Lorelei said the RFP allows the market to define the size and the Council can select among the submittals.

Council President Morten talked about the issue of balance. He was pleased to see open space and connectivity as goals. He hopes that is kept in mind with development.

Councilor Chilton visited the property on Sunday. It is in a great area. She would love to see multi-family use and a small nature park. Where does the Council come in for the RFP process? Lorelei explained that there will be a panel of people reviewing the submittals. Graichen added that Council's feedback will be included before selection is made. Councilor Chilton expressed interested in serving on the review panel.

Councilor Birkle agreed that it is important to participate in the process. He was on the School Board when the School District owned that property. They were anticipating a lot of growth at that end of town when the property was purchased. He agreed with Councilor Chilton and Council President Morten's desire to have public access. He asked what the difference is between significant and not-significant wetlands. Graichen explained that significant is a designation by the City and requires a City permit. If it is not significant than the City may not have as much involvement, but you still have Oregon Division of State Lands (DSL) and Army Corp of Engineers. Significant wetlands do include upland protection zones. Councilor Birkle expressed that wetlands are significant and should be preserved. He does not want to see a lot of commercial development. He does like the idea of the County's recommendation for cottage community concept. He is in support of mixed use, multi-family, medium density, preservation of wetlands, and connectivity to Maple Street.

Mayor Scholl talked about housing needs. Demands are not being met and rent is very high. He supports connectivity and a pathway, cottage clusters around the wetlands, and larger lots near the back. He

wants to keep the wetlands condensed to have less of an impact on properties in the City and within the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB).

City Administrator Walsh pointed out that this will come to the Council again before it is released.

Graichen added that the City currently does not have cottage cluster rules. It is a matter of balancing projects and time to work on adding it to the Code.

Councilor Topaz talked about the need for industrial development to increase tax revenue. The tax system is terrible.

Mayor Scholl pointed out that there needs to be CC&R's for the property owner to maintain park space. The City does not have money to maintain more parks.

3. Police Department Semi-Annual Report - *Police Chief Brian Greenway*

2:28 p.m.

Chief Greenway reviewed his report. A copy is included in the archive packet for this meeting.

- Hired two full-time Police Records Specialists. One is Spanish speaking.
- Created a second detective position to address increasing complex criminal case investigations.
- Conducted reality-based Use of Force De-Escalation training.
- Created training curriculum for Spanish.
- Working on retaining training for an Emergency Vehicle Operation Course (EVOC).
- Conducted training and policy changes addressing the new Oregon Measure 110 Law for possession of drugs.
- Communication and public outreach continues for the proposed Public Safety Facility.
- Held tours of the current police station. The public is seeing the need for a new facility.
- Proactively policing in the community.
- Created quarterly meetings between St. Helens Police Department, Columbia Community Mental Health (CCMH), and Communication Action Team (CAT) to discuss long-term solutions for homelessness within the City.
- Body Worn Camera Tagging Program allows them to retain camera footage for five years.
- Wants this to be the safest place to work, play, and live in Oregon.

Councilor Birkle thanked Greenway and Brown for addressing homelessness. Council President Morten asked if the County is involved with homeless solutions. Greenway responded that they do plan to include the County in long-term visions. There are many agencies addressing it, but they are not communicating with each other. Council President Morten suggested using the fairgrounds.

Councilor Chilton understands this issue. She is glad to hear that CAT is on board. Transitional Housing is extremely helpful.

Councilor Topaz likes to see organizations working together. Are there programs to help homeless individuals obtain a job? Greenway will ask that at the next meeting.

Mayor Scholl talked about Salem being the problem with homelessness.

5. Discussion on Fireworks

2:53 p.m.

Walsh distributed an email to the Council with the survey results.

Councilor Chilton noticed that fireworks is listed in the Tourism contract. Mayor Scholl confirmed that it was originally on there. He talked about the history of the fireworks. Years ago, 13 Nights on the River and fireworks was coordinated by St. Helens Community Foundation. They were funded with street dances, beer sales, and business donations. When the Foundation dissolved, the City took over it to help

save it. It was dumped on Tourism because the City knew Tina could do it and bring the events back in in the black. Walsh agreed that it is in the contract for Tourism to work with a community partner on fireworks. It has been difficult to find a community partner willing to take it on.

Councilor Topaz mentioned that the mill contributed to fireworks. Mayor Scholl clarified that they were not a major contributor.

Mayor Scholl talked about how his Uncle Ed Lokken ran the fireworks from 1980 to 2012 or 2013. When he passed away, his body was donated for medical use and was worked on for three years. They just go his ashes back this year. Diane Dillard, who has been a big supporter of fireworks, and his Aunt Judy Lokken both really want to see a show this year. The main revenue for fireworks came from business donations. He does not want to do that to businesses this year. They have to have the money by April 1.

Discussion of the survey. Councilor Chilton pointed out that the survey shows people do not want to pay for it. The City is going to have to pay for it or let the citizens down. Mayor Scholl talked about former fireworks organizers and the work they put into it. It was not fair to move it to Tourism and he wants to see that changed. Council President Morten agreed that it needs to go back to another agency to organize. It does not belong in a governing capacity. The City received very bad reviews in the survey. Fireworks needs a long-range plan. He would like to see this as the City's last year putting it on.

Mayor Scholl pointed out the overwhelming response of 81% to have the fireworks if it could be done safely. He would like to hear creative fundraising ideas. His Aunt Judy and Diane are willing to donate money to move it to Sand Island. The City has always helped with the transportation of fireworks over to Sand Island by barge.

Councilor Birkle suggested working through the Chamber and St. Helens Main Street for the future. He agreed with the City needing to do it this year, and then passing it off in the future. If it can be done safely and with a good plan, it should be done.

Tina Curry spoke with Western Fireworks yesterday. The Blues Festival, Vancouver Waterfront, and Longview fireworks shows are cancelled. The cities in our community who are doing fireworks this year is Clatskanie and Rainier. Tina asked about permits being obtaining for gathering and was told that people are encouraged to watch from their cars, and some are shooting higher to encourage people to watch from home. Most of the money raised for fireworks comes from knocking on doors and asking for donations. It is difficult for volunteers to raise that amount of money. Western Fireworks is encouraging people to not come and watch and not gather.

Mayor Scholl said if they do it on Sand Island, they can use bigger shells and go higher.

Tina encouraged asking the adjacent jurisdictions to help financially. Mayor Scholl agreed. Councilor Topaz suggested asking Washington too. Tina confirmed that she has asked them in the past.

Mayor Scholl said his Aunt Judy is willing to donate \$500 if they can write a story about the years of service his Uncle Ed contributed to fireworks and donating his body to medical use. He suggested more people may be willing to donate after reading the story.

Discussion of donations going to a designated fireworks account. Funds can be held there for a future show if the Governor does not allow fireworks again this year. All donations are a tax write-off.

Council President Morten talked about it needing to be turned over to another entity in the future. This could be the last time the City does it.

Mayor Scholl requested permission to talk to Communications Officer Crystal King about a press release, based on what was discussed. He would like to dedicate what is left in the Council funds. It will be on tonight's agenda for a vote.

6. St. Helens Riverwalk Agreement - *John/Jenny*

Continued to tonight's meeting.

7. S. 1st and Strand Streets Road and Utility Extensions Agreement - *Mouhamad/Sue*

Continued to tonight's meeting.

8. Review Communications Support Specialist Job Description - *John*

Continued to tonight's meeting.

9. Set Date for Tourism Workshop

Continued to tonight's meeting.

10. Strategic Action Plan Updates

Continued to tonight's meeting.

11. City Administrator Report

Continued to tonight's meeting.

OTHER BUSINESS

Continued to tonight's meeting.

ADJOURN – 3:22 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