



*Where Life is Sweet*

Mayor and Members of the City Council

## **STAFF REPORT**

For the Meeting of August 11, 2025

### **Title/Subject**

Report on and Discussion of City Chats FY24-25

### **Summary and Background**

One of the ideas generated by the Hermiston Leadership Academy Class of 2024 was to hold something like “coffee with a councilor” around the community. We named our effort “City Chats” and held four at different locations, different times of day and throughout the year.

Below is a summary of each chat:

- Monday, November 18, 2024 – Maple Moose Coffee  
The turnout was very light. We had one person other than city councilors and city staff and he was the new chair of the City’s Hispanic Advisory Committee. We had a few hiccups on getting the word out.
- Thursday, January 16, 2025 – Java Junkies-Hermiston  
There were six residents along with city councilors and staff. The topics that came up were finances, animal control, homelessness and communication/engagement.
- Wednesday, April 9, 2025 – Next Chapter Bookstore  
There were eleven residents in attendance with a full complement of elected officials and two city staff members. Discussion topics were quite wide ranging as follows: Main Street tree maintenance, Geer and Harper intersection, Budget, Grant writing, truck traffic, Tariffs and city projects, Code enforcement, burning, pedestrian crossings, speed bumps in neighborhoods, street lighting, neighborhood watch and crime, citizen communication/engagement.
- Thursday, June 26, 2025 – Cuppa Yo-Hermiston  
There were four city residents in addition to the councilors and myself. The topics that came up were a variety: vehicle noise from vehicles (car stereos and exhaust systems as well as semi-trucks and their engine brakes), truck routes (signage) and truck noise, handouts at committee meetings, specific code enforcement concerns.

I think we got much better over the year making sure we advertised the city chat times and locations. For the most part, participation and interest in the program grew over the year. We even received some media notice of the program in November from Apple Valley News.

## **Tie-In to Council Goals**

One complete subarea of our goals and actions is titled “Community Engagement: Improve Engagement and Connection with the Community”

## **Fiscal Information**

There are very few direct costs. Most of the cost is staff time.

## **Alternatives and Recommendation**

### **Alternatives**

The city council may choose to:

1. Discontinue City Chats
2. Continue Quarterly City Chats in FY25-26
  - a. If this is your preferred path, please be ready with suggestions for locations.

### **Recommended Action/Motion**

Recommend continuation of City Chat program with the following four general dates:

- Mid-September 2025
- Mid-January 2026
- Late March 2026
- Late May 2026

### **Submitted By:**

Byron D. Smith, City Manager