

City of St. Helens

Consent Agenda for Approval

CITY COUNCIL MINUTES

Presented for approval on this 20th day of April, 2022 are the following Council minutes:

2022

- Work Session, Executive Session, and Regular Session Minutes dated March 16, 2022
- Joint City Council/Planning Commission Meeting Minutes dated March 16, 2022

After Approval of Council Minutes:

- Scan as PDF Searchable
- Make one double-sided, hole-punched copy and send to Library Reference
- Minutes related to hearings and deliberations get copied to working file
- Save PDF in Minutes folder
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COUNCIL WORK SESSION

Wednesday, March 16, 2022

DRAFT MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT

Mayor Rick Scholl
Council President Doug Morten
Councilor Patrick Birkle (1:10 p.m.)
Councilor Stephen R. Topaz
Councilor Jessica Chilton

STAFF PRESENT

John Walsh, City Administrator
Kathy Payne, City Recorder
Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder
Matt Brown, Finance Director
Mouhamad Zaher, Public Works Director

Jacob Graichen, City Planner
Crystal King, Communications Officer
Bill Monahan, City Attorney
Tina Curry, Event Coordinator

OTHERS

Brady Preheim
John Brewington
Keith Locke
Kathy Innocenti
Conor Delaney
Paul Vogel and Guests

CALL WORK SESSION TO ORDER – 1 p.m.

VISITOR COMMENTS

- ◆ Tina Curry, Event Coordinator.
 - Met with Brad Hendrickson at Sand Island Campgrounds. He requested additional parking. There is a road that goes up the hill that would allow for 30-40 additional parking spaces. Is that an option?
 - Her portion of the tourism audit is complete. She cc'd City Administrator John Walsh with all her submittals to the auditor.
 - Working on a tourism budget for this year. It's been very busy.
 - Public Works and Columbia River PUD are going to move the totem pole tomorrow.
 - Received the dragon chair, which will be in the Kiwanis Parade. She suggested Council members ride in it. It will be on a permanent trailer.

Council President Morten pointed out that Brad vacated 15 feet of the street behind his storage area. They talked a lot about diagonal parking. Is he asking to park on his own property or across the street? Mayor Scholl added that both sides of the road was vacated. Brad may be referring to Wyeth Street where it intersects with First Street, the area that was dug out and they're refilling. Tina said Brad is referring to an area with available parking that no one is using.

Mayor Scholl advised Brad to speak with City Planner Jacob Graichen.

- ◆ Paul Vogel, Columbia Economic Team. He introduced Dansons, a company that is touring the Armstrong property today. Dan Thiessen and his son, Jeff, were in attendance. Dan explained that they operate a wood pellet company. They have about 550 employees world-wide and close

to 20,000 stores sell their products. They are a family operation and extend family to community. They care about the communities they work in. Their family has several charitable foundations they invest in, as well as many community organizations. This is the first time they've had an opportunity to visit a Council meeting prior to relocating. Paul added that they are interested in an Opportunity Zone.

Mayor Scholl said he worked at the pellet facility in Columbia City.

Council President Morten asked how many family-wage jobs it would bring into the community. Dan said they like this property because there is room for expansion. Initially, it would be 40 jobs. This site has the potential to be a distribution center, which would bring an additional 40-50 jobs. Initially, it would be wood pellets, but they also do chips, chunks, and charcoal. Jeff added that this area represents a very significant marketing area. It's a great location for box stores.

Paul said it's early in the process and they'll be speaking with Planning staff.

Council welcomed them.

PRESENTATION

1. Presentation of Plaque to John Brewington for Service on the Parks & Trails Commission

Mayor Scholl presented a plaque and key to the City to John Brewington. John served on the Parks & Trails Commission between 1983-1984 and 2002-2022. He has also been very involved in the community, reporter for the newspaper, and an Elks member.

John said he attended Council meetings for seven years as a newspaper reporter, otherwise he would have served on the Parks & Trails Commission sooner. He was pleased to see the Council make improvements to the Riverfront District. They have a good Parks Division.

Council President Morten thanked John for his hard work and dedication. In all his years serving on Council, John has been here helping. The Parks & Trails Commission rallied around John to assign parks and work collaboratively with all groups. It's amazing to see how far they've come, thanks to his leadership. It's a very functional and effective organization. He is already missed. It's been a pleasure.

John said the Council purchased property on Ross Road a few years ago. The gentleman who sold it took \$60,000 off the price so the park would be named after him. Mayor Scholl confirmed that it's already been done.

Council thanked John.

Mayor Scholl announced that the Kiwanis Parade is coming soon. Jaycees started it around the 1950s. He asked Communications Officer Crystal King to find out if the Chronicle has information about the year the parade began.

DISCUSSION TOPICS

2. Annual Report from City Auditor - *Conor Delaney with Pauly, Rogers & Co., PC*

Conor Delaney reviewed his report. A copy is included in the archive packet for this meeting.

- Financial statement audit is substantially complete
- A few amendments to be made to the draft
 - Federal grant expenditures
 - A single audit is required when over \$750,000 is received in grants
 - The final report will include an additional 8-10 pages
- Reviewed Community Development Fund
- Slight change in payroll

- Slight change in capital assets
- Significant finding
 - Took a while to work out the kinks from the financial software conversion. Bank reconciliation should always be done within 30 days of the previous month.
- Will include a couple best practice recommendations
 - City's process for mid-month payroll draws is not recommended
 - You're supposed to withhold taxes for every payroll payment
 - Most payroll systems are not set up to do draws. It creates additional steps and errors.
 - The City should be constantly reviewing staffing levels in accounting
 - They are seeing the need to meet more requirements, which creates more work
 - Evaluate staffing levels to be sure they have adequate personnel
- The audit should be complete within the next week or so

3. Semi-Annual Report from Senior Center - *Kathy Innocenti, Manager*

Kathy Innocenti presented her report. A copy is included in the archive packet for this meeting.

- Slowly reopening the Senior Center
 - Open for lunch
 - Band on some days
 - They still wear masks in the building because they're considered health care. They are not required at Top Notch.
 - Reservation system. Only four people are allowed per table.
- They have hired a cook and assistant cook
- Top Notch thrift store
 - Had to close for snow and ice, and a couple times for illnesses
 - Sales have been good
- The building is being used regularly
 - AARP doing taxes for community members
 - Evergreen Dance Center from Longview uses it on Thursday nights
 - Red Cross blood drives
 - VFW ladies
 - Medicare representatives
 - CERT was planning training there, but they withdrew
 - Approached by a church to use it on Sunday
 - Jewelry sale a week from Saturday

Mayor Scholl appreciates receiving the newsletter. It's very informative. Council President Morten agreed.

Councilor Chilton asked about the garden space. Kathy explained that it's managed by a community group. They do have a partnership with them for composting and occasionally receiving vegetables.

4. Request from Keith Locke for Right of Way Vacation off N. 2nd Street - *Jacob*

City Planner Graichen reviewed the request. A copy is included in the archive packet for this meeting. The applicant must provide two-thirds consent from owners within the affected area to be eligible for the public hearing. The City owns a small portion of property within that area. The request tonight is for the mayor's signature to provide consent to apply for street vacation.

Councilor Topaz referred to the parking they discussed earlier. If you extend First Street through the hatched area, you end at the clear area. Is that private property? Graichen pointed out and talked about the area on the map. It's no longer an 85-foot right-of-way. It's now a 50-foot right-of-way.

Mayor Scholl said the yellow highlighted area is the area Brad referred to for parking. On-street parking is more feasible now. They have discussed emergency access and parking use only.

Councilor Topaz talked about the storm drain under Godfrey Park. Graichen said it was in disrepair and needed to be replaced. It has been repaired.

Councilor Birkle said this is stuff that will come up in Planning Commission. They are being asked to provide consent. He is concerned that they are approving development if it's a decision that eventually comes to Council. Mayor Scholl disagreed. The only person who can obtain the property is the abutting property owner. Graichen clarified the areas being requested to give consent. Public right-of-way is not included in the consent area.

Councilor Chilton is having trouble understanding the motive of the request to vacate the property. Graichen said there's a variety of reasons for street vacations. They don't want to get into the merits for this one. It's usually because they want to own the property, control the property, and sometimes there's motive for how it works with the Code. He reviewed the potential development incentives.

Councilor Topaz said they've gotten rid of sidewalks in the past with street vacations. Now they need the sidewalk back. Graichen said an easement was retained for some of those.

5. Review Right of Way Dedication Deed for 115 Little Street - *Jacob*

City Planner Graichen reviewed the report. A copy is included in the archive packet for this meeting. He reviewed the map. The property is located at the back of Skinny's Texaco. The house was destroyed in a fire and has since been acquired by Wayne Weigandt. Wayne does want to do something with it in relation to the Texaco property. The property owner is in favor of dedicating that portion to the City for a right-of-way.

Councilor Topaz asked if it was ever the City's. Graichen does not think so.

6. Review New Job Description for Building Maintenance - Utility Worker I

Public Works Director Zaher reviewed the proposed job description. A copy is included in the archive packet for this meeting. They currently have one Building Maintenance staff member, who is Roger Stauffer. The workload is tremendous for him alone. A new system for maintenance requests is being created. He is requesting approval of the job description. This role is already in his budget, and he hopes to fill the position next fiscal year.

Councilor Topaz asked how much it would cost to hire someone outside to do this work. Zaher will be able to review that during the next Public Works report. He built a program to gain matrix and build data. There is a high demand for building maintenance. Councilor Topaz said it's probably cheaper to hire someone than have it done from outside. Zaher responded that there is a need to have someone here, rather than wait for a contractor's availability.

Council President Morten appreciates what Zaher has done. Reading over the essential duties, there's almost 40. This will be a great position. It's obvious that this person will be multi-talented. It's the first time since he's been on the Council that this has been outlined in the scope of duties and responsibilities. He thanked Zaher. They are hiring a team person who can fill in and help as needed. It's an asset to team comradery.

Councilor Chilton asked why he is asking if it's in the budget. Zaher said he likes to run new opportunities by the Council. Walsh added that Council approves job descriptions.

Councilor Birke clarified they are approving the job description, not necessarily filling the position. There is still a budget process to go through for hiring. He wants to make sure they are discussing it and are aware of it. They still don't have a budget for next year. Mayor Scholl explained that it's part of the general budget. Roger is very knowledgeable but will not be here forever. They need to educate someone who will be taking over some day.

Zaher explained that when he says this is in the budget, it's a position that has been vacated. Mayor Scholl asked for Brown's input. Councilor Birkle is not questioning that it's in the current budget year. However, they do not have a 2022-23 budget. He doesn't understand why he can't question this.

Walsh reminded them that this is for the approval of a job description and not to fill the position. Not all positions will be filled that they approve the job description. Brown agreed with Walsh. This is approving the job description and not the posting and hiring. Right now, it is included in the next fiscal year's budget. If it's approved, the position will be posted for hiring. Councilor Birkle was only asking questions for clarification. Council President Morten said the budget has nothing to do with this.

Mayor Scholl apologized to Councilor Chilton and Councilor Birkle for his behavior. He reacted to them based on what he thought was being insinuated.

Break - 2:33 p.m.

Brown clarified that the request is only for the job description. If the budget is approved, the job will be posted. It will not be posted or filled within the current fiscal year.

7. City Administrator John Walsh Report

- The Zoom accessibility feature has been turned on.
- The Armstrong property has seen a lot of interest lately. It's exciting. The site is incredibly well served with utilities and infrastructure. Councilor Topaz asked if the property is contaminated. Walsh responded that one of the reasons the property is marketable is remediation of the wetlands and a boundary line adjustment to separate the uplands from the lowlands. Council President Morten asked if changing ownership triggers a reassessment with DSL. Walsh said DSL has been in consultation with the boundary line adjustment throughout the process. As far as assessment of values and property tax, he is not aware. Councilor Topaz said it would be a great place to build wind turbines.
- Met with Marine Board representatives yesterday to talk about the design proposals for the Grey Cliffs Park ADA accessible fishing pier and kayak launch. It was a great conversation. It will be funded with a grant from Fish & Wildlife, a grant from the Marine Board, and a 25% match from the City. The State does all the design and permitting work. They just have to commit to the project. It's an exciting project that will serve the community well.
- Library Director interviews on March 28. They received 15 applications and plan to interview nine people.
- There has been interest in the RFQ for the Veneer property. He will ask for an extension if there's not much response.
- Joint City Council and Planning Commission meeting tonight. It will be a presentation for the First Street extensions and utilities.
- Good news on Central Waterfront project. They received \$984,000 from the State Legislature to advance the Riverwalk and \$287,000 from FEMA to evaluate the integrity of the wastewater berm. It will include a technical aspect and a community engagement aspect with a committee. State funds will go through Business Oregon.
- Tina mentioned that the Tourism audit is being worked on.
- They are still waiting for the Events Contract to be reviewed by the attorney.
- The Boards and Commissions Reception will be held on April 28 with a catered dinner at the Community Center.
- Docks and Waterways Committee doing good work
 - Code amendments being reviewed by the attorney
 - Kiosk is ready to install
 - Harbor Master discussion
 - Marine Patrol unit discussion

- Closer to getting the reservoir repaired
- Focusing on budget. It will be a challenging budget year. Everything is more expensive.

ADJOURN – 2:57 p.m.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Respectfully submitted by Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder.

ATTEST:

Kathy Payne, City Recorder

Rick Scholl, Mayor

City of St. Helens
CITY COUNCIL

Executive Session Summary

March 16, 2022

Members Present: Rick Scholl, Mayor
Doug Morten, Council President
Patrick Birkle, Councilor
Stephen R. Topaz, Councilor
Jessica Chilton, Councilor

Staff Present: John Walsh, City Administrator
Kathy Payne, City Recorder
William Monahan, City Attorney with Jordan Ramis PC
David Bowser, City Attorney with Jordan Ramis PC *(for reservoir discussion – left at 3:17pm)*
Mouhamad Zaher, Public Works Director *(for reservoir discussion – left at 3:17pm)*



At 2:58 p.m., Mayor Scholl opened the Executive Session pursuant to the ORS numbers listed below and then gave Council roll call. Representatives of the news media and designated staff shall be allowed to attend the executive session. All other members of the audience are asked to leave the room. Representatives of the news media were specifically directed not to report on or otherwise disclose any of the deliberations or anything said about these subjects during the executive session, except to state the general subject of the session as previously announced. No decision may be made in executive session. Any person in attendance, including the news media, who has a recording device is directed to turn it off.

- **Consult with Counsel**, under **ORS 192.660(2)(h)**
 - Update on litigation with regards to 2MG water reservoir.
 - Update on litigation with Cascades Tissue.

- **Real Property Transactions**, under **ORS 192.660(2)(e)**
 - No discussion was held under this ORS.

The Executive Session was adjourned at 3:22 p.m.



ATTEST:

Kathy Payne, City Recorder

Rick Scholl, Mayor



COUNCIL REGULAR SESSION

Wednesday, March 16, 2022

DRAFT 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
Jacob Graichen, City Planner
Jenny Dimsho, Associate Planner/Community Development Project Manager
Tina Curry, Event Coordinator

OTHERS

Ali Hasenkamp Art Leskowich
Brady Preheim Brenda Herren-Kenaga
Jane Garcia Jennifer Pugsley
Steve Toschi

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

- ◆ Brenda Herren-Kenaga. She is here as a citizen. She has a house on 4th Street and is here regarding number three on the agenda. The City is missing an opportunity by giving up interest in the property. They talk about being family friendly, they obtained a grant for an all-abilities playground, they have worked hard on the Riverfront development project, they have Grey Cliffs Park, and they have Godfrey Park. This would be a great opportunity to have an overlook park. There is very little opportunity left to have a viewpoint of the river. She has kayaked and watched eagles and osprey feed their young. She'd like that same opportunity to see them eye level. Brenda quoted the American Psychologist Association referring to the benefits of exposure to nature, "...improved attention, lower stress, better mood, reduced risk of psychiatric disorders, and upticks in empathy and cooperation..." Take the opportunity to make it useful for everyone. She referenced sections of the Comprehensive Plan about using public space to benefit citizens.

Mayor Scholl explained that the request is only for a signature on the street vacation application. They are not deciding whether to vacate or not tonight. Brenda is concerned that if Council gives approval of a signature it would set a precedent that they are in favor of the application. Graichen explained the street vacation process. The applicant is currently in the process of acquiring property owner signatures.

- ◆ Brady Preheim.
 - He likes the overall Waterfront design plan. It looks nice, but he hates the bollards. People will run into them. He suggests closing the Plaza to vehicles, remove the grass, leave the trees, and put in bricks as a fundraiser. There are only three businesses that won't have parking in front of their business, but they will have parking within a block.
 - The work session was really bad, again. He doesn't understand the confusion about what they're voting on. It should have only been a two-minute conversation and it ended up lasting 30 minutes.
 - He is opposed to the City giving consent as a property owner of the street vacation. There are enough other signatures they can obtain to move forward. He agreed with Brenda that it would give them an advantage if the City signed. The applicant wants to build apartments and condos there. He's concerned that it could be an eyesore along the river.

- ◆ Tina Curry. She has met with Riley at the County several times to discuss the Rose Garden. It is moving along and may happen by the summer.

ORDINANCES – Final 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 for the final time. **Motion:** Motion made by Council President Morten and seconded by Councilor Topaz to adopt Ordinance No. 3281. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Scholl, Council President Morten, Councilor Birkle, Councilor Topaz, Councilor Chilton

APPROVE AND/OR AUTHORIZE FOR SIGNATURE

2. Contract with Hasa, Inc. for 12.5% Sodium Hypochlorite for the Wastewater Treatment Plant
3. Consent to Vacate Public Right of Way on N. 2nd Street
4. Dedication Deed for Right of Way at 115 Little Street
5. Extension of Agreement with Strategic Networks Group, Inc. for Broadband Assessment
6. Agreement with Kittelson & Associates for St. Helens Street & S. 1st Street Alternatives Analysis Project

Motion: Motion made by Council President Morten and seconded by Councilor Chilton to approve '2' through '6' above.

Discussion.

Councilor Topaz thinks item number three should be removed. He agreed with comments made that it may be a conflict of interest for the City to sign their consent.

Councilor Birkle also has concerns about the street vacation.

Mayor Scholl did not get consent from the City for his personal street vacation, but he was still able to get two-thirds consent from neighboring property owners.

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

Motion: Motion made by Council President Morten and seconded by Councilor Topaz to approve '2, 4, 5, and 6' above. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Scholl, Council President Morten, Councilor Birkle, Councilor Topaz, Councilor Chilton

CONSENT AGENDA FOR ACCEPTANCE

7. Planning Commission Minutes dated February 8, 2022

Motion: Motion made by Councilor Chilton and seconded by Councilor Birkle to approve '7' above. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Scholl, Council President Morten, Councilor Birkle, Councilor Topaz, Councilor Chilton

CONSENT AGENDA FOR APPROVAL

8. Council Work Session, Special Session, and Regular Session Minutes dated March 2, 2022
9. OLCC Licenses
10. New Job Description for Building Maintenance - Utility Worker I
11. Accounts Payable Bill Lists

Motion: Motion made by Council President Morten and seconded by Councilor Topaz to approve '8' through '11' 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...

- Parks & Recreation Commission update:
 - Thanked Councilor Birkle for attending the meeting to speak about invasive species.
 - Gave them bad news about not having funds for big capital park projects. However, he was firm about completing the urban trail. The urban trail travels through six parks and winds around beautiful vistas on Wyeth Street. It will not be very costly but will take energy and volunteers.
 - Recruiting to fill a vacant position. He wants to make sure they are not putting the City in a liable position. He asked them to adopt the same standards the City uses for interviewing employees by requesting they ask the same questions of all candidates. He asked them to present their questions to City Recorder Payne for approval.

Councilor Topaz reported...

- At the last meeting he brought up that there was only one taxable property on the mill property, which they were paying \$518/year. Councilor Birkle pointed out that was incorrect. Councilor Topaz agreed and had since found a total of four maps showing more properties. They are paying about \$18,000. He thanked Councilor Birkle for finding that information. They are building stuff on the property with permits, but there seems to be several problems which City Planner Graichen is looking into.
- The Library Director search is moving forward.
- He is bringing the Council in front of the Ethics Board about a recent Executive Session that had to do with the toxic waste dump at the lagoon. It is a mechanistic complaint. A lot of things were done correctly and some incorrectly. He has asked the Ethics Board, the Council has been notified, and the newspaper is aware of it. City Council is being investigated by the Ethics Board. Council President Morten said he does not think they are being investigated yet. Councilor Topaz agreed, but it has been filed. Councilor Chilton pointed out that Councilor Topaz was part of the meeting as well and participated. Councilor Topaz confirmed that information was included in his statement. There seems to be a problem with procedure.
- He will be gone part of June.

Councilor Chilton reported...

- Attended the South Columbia County Leadership meeting. They discussed county priorities, which are shared amongst most of them. It was really helpful.

- Kudos to the Makerspace at the Library. She has gone twice with their five-year-old, who was very excited about the things she made. Staff has been amazing and very welcoming.
- Attended the St. Helens Sports Boosters Auction last weekend. She got to see a more in-depth look at the schools, sports, priorities, and honoring accomplishments. It was good to see so many people involved.
- They continue to work on the budget. The meetings can get heated, especially when discussions are related to the budget. She feels confident that they will get to a good place of agreement. Everyone wants to have more money and take care of problems. They're working on it and listening to each other.

Councilor Birkle reported...

- He does not wear green on St. Patrick's Day. However, tomorrow is Sports Day for Spirit Week at school, and he will be wearing green to represent his team.
- He attended the Parks & Recreation Commission to speak about a Solv Cleanup at Dalton Lake on April 23.
- He spoke with Eliza Gallagher last Friday. She works with policies for the four northwest counties, including working with landlords about housing issues. He'd like to invite her to a future meeting to introduce herself.
- A new taproom business has opened in the Houlton District.
- He was not able to attend the South Columbia County Leadership meeting due to a CERT training conflict. Sgt. Castilleja was in attendance talking about emergency issues.
- He continues to hear good comments about the Recreation Program from his students.
- He enjoyed participating in the meeting yesterday about developments at Grey Cliffs Park.
- Planning Commission update:
 - They reviewed a new subdivision on the north side of town. He was very impressed by the developers' initial plans to work around wetlands and the natural environment. It's neat to hear from developers who are not just here to build and make money, but to contribute to the social capital of the community.
 - Two resolutions were made:
 - Be proactive with a desire to support the work of the Council and City by creating a subcommittee to promote and support the work of staff.
 - Advocate with Council during the budget review to hire another Planner. It is in no way a reflection of the great work being done by current staff.

MAYOR SCHOLL REPORTS

- It was good to be part of the South County SWAT. They have done a lot of work to meet the goals discussed. They also discussed bringing back the Quarterly City County dinners. The County will work on planning it.
- It was a good meeting yesterday with Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife discussing Grey Cliffs Park. They are in the beginning stages of putting in an accessible kayak and fishing dock.
- They are really close to adopting ordinances to police their docks and waterways. There will be changes that some people won't like but it gives them the ability to police the waterways.
- Enjoy the weather. Live and be nice to each other. He hopes people don't feel a lot of pressure about what's going on in the world. Mental health is important and he's here if anyone needs someone to talk to.
- Thanked staff for all they do. The amount of work continues to go on.

OTHER BUSINESS

ADJOURN – 7:46 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder.

ATTEST:

Kathy Payne, City Recorder

Rick Scholl, Mayor



JOINT CITY COUNCIL/PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING

Wednesday, March 16, 2022

DRAFT MINUTES

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT

Mayor Rick Scholl
Council President Doug Morten
Councilor Patrick Birkle
Councilor Stephen R. Topaz
Councilor Jessica Chilton

PLANNING COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT

Dan Cary, Chair
Russ Hubbard, Vice Chair
Jennifer Pugsley
Sheila Semling
Steve Toschi
Audrey Webster

STAFF PRESENT

John Walsh, City Administrator
Kathy Payne, City Recorder
Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder
Mouhamad Zaher, Public Works Director
Jacob Graichen, City Planner
Jenny Dimsho, Associate Planner/Community Development Project Manager

OTHERS

Tina Curry	Carmin Dunn
Ali Hasenkamp	Art Leskowich
Brady Preheim	Keith Buisman, OTAK, Inc.
Jane Garcia	Shannon Simms, Mayer/Reed, Inc.

CALL JOINT CITY COUNCIL/PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING TO ORDER – 5:30 p.m.

DISCUSSION TOPICS

1. Update on Street and Utility Extensions Project for S. 1st Street and Strand Street through the St. Helens Waterfront Property to Plymouth Street

City Administrator John Walsh welcomed everyone and gave introductions. The primary focus tonight is the streets.

Keith Buisman of OTAK, Inc. and Shannon Simms of Mayer/Reed, Inc. reviewed their report and drawings. A copy is included in the archive packet for this meeting. Some highlights were:

- Shift of project focus to downtown

- Create consistent urban form at center of city, which will set up the development to the south
- Connect existing historic downtown to new mixed-use development
- Utilize existing street network to create improved access to river
- Focus festival street and gateway toward existing event and public spaces
- Create cohesive project with first phase of riverwalk and improvement to Columbia View Park
- 1st and Tualatin Intersection
 - Standard treatment is asphalt pavement through intersection
 - Curb extensions at intersections designed to reduce pedestrian crossing distance and form parking
 - Single curb ramp at each corner to be provided
 - Planters distinguish each intersection with some including seat walls
- 1st and Cowlitz Intersection
 - Similar to 1st and Tualatin in geometry
 - Concrete treatment (not raised)
- Strand Street Conversion to one-way north between Cowlitz Street and Plaza Square
 - Increase safety at blind corner created with City Hall building
 - Increases pedestrian accessibility by concentrating parking along Strand Street and opening up pedestrian plaza above Columbia View Park
 - Raised intersection at Cowlitz/Strand and raised portion of Strand Street near City Hall and Courthouse create more opportunities for pedestrian crossing
 - Revised grading along Strand Street allows for ADA parking stalls to be compliant with maximum ADA grades
 - Reduced amount of vehicle control signage (stop signs) to enable more fluid vehicle movement

Walsh credited staff for their tireless work on the project. They are currently soliciting RFQ's for a master services developer to partner with the City. They are trying to be good stewards of public resources by planning ahead. The presentation included just a couple of the intersections and does not include every single one. Columbia View Park and the Plaza area is the core of what brings people to the community.

Councilor Topaz tends to look 25 years into the future, and this is a disaster. The community came together and said they wanted activity at the center of the Veneer property. They would have to build it, which would require getting equipment in and out. One-way roads are nice but will plug things up when heavy trucks are unloading. The biggest problem is going from the Plaza to First Street. The sewer plant has to change, which will take time. It will take a lot of equipment to clean out the lagoon, which will affect the Connector. That's all connected to this property. The proposal is pretty but it's not what the community wanted a few years ago. If they rip out the lagoon, where will it go? What is the timeline for this? If they use the lagoon for the Portland Harbor dumping place, that's a 10-year process. He'd like to see what the whole thing will look like. It's not in the proposal. Getting a garbage truck down here plugs up traffic. The overall picture is the problem. The community wanted the end of the Veneer property to be the center of activity.

Mayor Scholl talked about the blue part of the map including storm, sewer, and power. Walsh added that it will also include the First and St. Helens Street intersection. It was very intentional to connect the old and new. They are working with Columbia River PUD to get as much underground power as possible. Commissioner Webster asked if the natural gas lines can be laid at the same time as the sewer. Keith said they are looking into that.

Councilor Chilton understands Councilor Topaz's concerns about shifting to a one-way. However, they are adding intersections, so the flow will shift. Trucks will still be able to access businesses with the

additional intersections. Mayor Scholl added that trucks are an issue everywhere you go, including Portland.

Councilor Birkle talked about Councilor Topaz's comments about what the community wanted. That was always conceptual. As far as shifting the center of the community to the Veneer property, that was never intended to take away from what they currently have. They've never had anything that said this what the people have agreed upon. Councilor Topaz argued that the people agreed with the architects. The City was going to take over the more detailed design. There are several Codes that would have to be changed to update the city. The City has always used the word "conceptual." There used to be a lot of public involvement. Council President Morten said the public meetings were to establish goals. It needs to be sustainable for commercial, residential, and environmental. No one knows the exact details. It's conceptual. He really appreciates the input from citizens and consultants.

Vice Chair Hubbard asked if the design provides for future utility laterals. Keith said yes. They are prepared for future utilities. Vice Chair Hubbard asked if they are prepared if someone comes in with a different idea. Keith said there will be opportunities to make changes. City Planner Graichen added that there is no finality on the blocks. Public Works Director Zaher explained that it is designed with flexibility. Vice Chair Hubbard asked why they didn't use a master design. Zaher said the risk is too high for a master developer right now. They hope to attract that as infrastructure is developed.

Chair Cary loves the turnaround to the water. How will someone driving down South 1st Street know to go down there? Mayor Scholl said they can use wayfinding signage. Shannon agreed that signage will help direct them. It will be very visible as you enter the area. It's also about people who live here and not just visitors. Councilor Topaz suggested directing traffic from Old Portland Road to Plymouth Street. Chair Cary agreed that it's included in the Master Plan.

Commissioner Pugsley loves the concept. The Riverfront District is a historical asset. She hopes the project is seamless and developers follow guidelines to make it fit architecturally. Walsh added that they are considering that for First Street landscaping, furniture, and lighting.

Council President Morten said there has been a lot of talk to integrate Houlton with the downtown area. It's important to not forget Columbia Blvd. It's a beautiful drive.

Mayor Scholl is amazed at the rendering of the one-way on Strand Street between City Hall and the Courthouse. Chair Cary is concerned about the bollards during events. Associate Planner Dimsho explained that the sidewalk space will be pulled past the restrooms. Vice Chair Hubbard asked about the location of food carts during events. Discussion of putting them on the sidewalk area above the park or in the street if it is closed.

Councilor Topaz said the restroom is ugly. He suggested sinking it to the level of the park or move the entrance to the park side. Shannon said they are going to make it more aesthetically pleasing with a bench and plants. They could also add a large sign or mural to block the entrance. Councilor Topaz said there is power in the restrooms for the area.

Council President Morten asked if there was a crosswalk from City Hall to the courthouse. Keith said there is not a dedicated crossing. He pointed out the crossing area that could be utilized between the buildings. Commissioner Pugsley wondered if it will be obvious that drivers can travel through there. Mayor Scholl asked how wide it is. Keith said it is between 16-18 feet. Chair Cary asked if the bollards are there to protect pedestrians from vehicles. Shannon said that it helps with visual safety.

Commissioner Pugsley asked about interpretative signage for history. Shannon said they have identified a few locations in the streets area, two at First and Tualatin Street, one further down the block, and then several more as part of the Riverwalk project.

Council President Morten asked about artwork. Keith said there is potential at the turnaround. Councilor Topaz said artwork in the turnaround is a safety concern for pedestrians trying to view the art. Chair Cary pointed out that people drive very slowly at the turnaround in Seaside.

Councilor Chilton is concerned about losing public parking spaces around City Hall and the Courthouse. Keith pointed out parking areas that will be available. Dimsho added that the current parking does not meet standards. It's dangerous with people backing up and people walking between in drive aisles. They are making it safer and providing as much parking as possible. Commissioner Semling asked if they could add a second level for parking in the lot across from theater. Walsh agreed it would be a good location.

Commissioner Toschi said this is a consistent vision with the Riverwalk plan. It's important to get started and keep it moving. Councilor Topaz's concerns about moving traffic and large trucks is important to address. People come here for events. There is also a lot of room for people to live down here.

Councilor Topaz said getting people in and out of town must be addressed. A lot of people come down Columbia Blvd. They somehow need to close Gable Road to Highway 30. Columbia Blvd. needs to be improved to tie together the Houlton area with downtown. Mayor Scholl said that was done with the Connector Plan. They are addressing one problem at a time. This helps enhance the whole city. This development feeds the Urban Renewal. All the taxing agencies were on board with the Urban Renewal.

Mayor Scholl talked about the public land space available and the importance of access to the water. Dimsho elaborated on the urban trail on the bluff. It provides additional access to the Riverfront.

Council President Morten talked about when Boise Veneer was selling their property 14 years ago. All the "what ifs" came to fruition. He feels good about serving on the Council. Mayor Scholl thanked Council President Morten for his service over the years. Council President Morten said the room is full of brilliant minds.

Mayor Scholl announced that there will be a Boards and Commissions Appreciation Reception on April 28 at the Community Center.

Walsh reported that they actively began this project in 2014. Many of those in attendance were part of the process. It's amazing to see the similarities from then to now. The project value with public access, reserving the cultural heritage, desire for sustainable development, and private investment of the property has always been there. The project is planning to bid later this year.

ADJOURN – 6:46 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder.

ATTEST:

Kathy Payne, City Recorder

Rick Scholl, Mayor

Dan Cary, Planning Commission Chair