

City of St. Helens

Consent Agenda for Approval

CITY COUNCIL MINUTES

Presented for approval on this 1st day of May, 2024 are the following Council minutes:

2024

- Work Session Minutes dated February 7, 2024
- Joint Planning Commission & City Council Minutes dated March 13, 2024

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, February 07, 2024

DRAFT MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT

Mayor Rick Scholl
Council President Jessica Chilton (via Zoom)
Councilor Mark Gundersen
Councilor Russell Hubbard
Councilor Brandon Sundeen

STAFF PRESENT

John Walsh, City Administrator
Kathy Payne, City Recorder
Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder
Gloria Butsch, Finance Director
Suzanne Bishop, Library Director
Bill Monahan, Contracted City Attorney
Tina Curry, Contracted Tourism Director

OTHERS

Steve Topaz	Ron Trommlitz
Stephanie Patterson	Nancy Whitney
Richard Mason	Brady Preheim
Colleen Ohler	Brent Keller

CALL WORK SESSION TO ORDER – 2:00 p.m.

VISITOR COMMENTS - *Limited to three (3) minutes per speaker*

- ◆ Steve Topaz. He spoke of his time serving on City Council. City Council is responsible for everything that happens in the city. In 2021, Council approved adding two police officers but that didn't happen and Council was not informed. Reviewing old notes, he talked about resolutions that were approved and connected to bonds that did not receive approval from Council.
- ◆ Nancy Whitney. She addressed utility fees being added to water bills and asked Council what gives them the right to add and spend those fees. Recently, Portland was sued and had to re-pay fees they collected. She is happy to see a police levy on the ballot. However, she expressed concern over Councilor Gundersen saying he they would add the fee if the levy doesn't pass.
- ◆ Ron Trommlitz. He talked about his concerns regarding the 2MG Water Reservoir and the attorney client privilege over the Walker Report. He wants to know what took WPI so long to repair the leaking. Construction costs are only increasing now with all the delays. He blames the City for the failures and delays.
- ◆ Brady Preheim. He addressed concerns he had with Councilor Hubbard; including thinking he had resigned at a previous meeting, receiving a Main Street grant and attending secret meetings, and

not disclosing attending tourism related meetings. Brady thinks the levy is a bad idea but is glad to see they will vote on it. However, it is corrupt for Councilor Gundersen to say they will add the fee to utility bills if the levy fails. He thinks the levy should have been for more.

Councilor Hubbard announced that he has been physically threatened by Brady Preheim on his radio program and wants the City's attorney to address that.

Mayor Scholl talked about the Main Street program and disagreed with Brady's comments. Mayor Scholl appreciates Councilor Hubbard staying on the Council.

- ◆ Colleen Ohler. Thanked Councilor Sundeen for his words at the last Council meeting. She took it to heart and it changed the way she addresses people. She also apologized to Councilor Hubbard for the way she spoke to him at the last meeting. She thanked everyone for their work on the levy and will work on promoting it.

Mayor Scholl thanked Colleen for her work. A simple mistake about deadlines was made. He is an advocate for moving forward.

DISCUSSION TOPICS

1. Annual Report from City Forester - *Brent Keller of Mason, Bruce, & Girard*

Brent Keller reviewed his report. A copy is included in the archive packet for this meeting.

Mayor Scholl asked about the effects from weather. Brent said they will re-evaluate what was planted this fall.

Brent pointed out an area that is readily available to be harvested. However, he suggested they wait another year for a peak in the market.

Mayor Scholl talked about projects and funding. The harvest price is slightly above the five-year average. Discussion of funds that would benefit from harvesting. City Administrator Walsh explained that these are special revenue funds since they don't cut every year so they can't factor it into debt ratio for projects. Council President Chilton suggested using it to fund projects and use other funds for police. Walsh said he and Finance Director Butsch have discussed that during budget strategy, however, it's not consistent with their financial policies.

Council thanked Brent.

2. Fiscal Year 2023/24 2nd Quarter Financial Report - *Finance Director Gloria Butsch*

Finance Director Gloria Butsch presented her report. A copy is included in the archive packet for this meeting. They were right above the 50% mark at the end of December. They are still working on a budget of how they'll look at the end of the year. Walsh pointed out that it's hard to predict when you're only half-way through the year.

3. Report from City Administrator John Walsh

- Submitted a Business Oregon Grant to update electrical services at St. Helens Industrial Business Park.
- Project Sprint's Letter of Interest has been extended through March 31. They are diligently working on needs.
- Three companies have been in contact about re-starting the paper machines.
- Will be sending a letter of intent for a potential police station site.
- Appeals are due on Friday for the police levy.
- Urban Renewal Agency meeting tonight at 6:00 p.m.
- Met with St. Helens Police Association on Sunday. Their next meeting is March 15. Mayor Scholl pointed out that there were posts on Facebook saying the meeting was to discuss no longer having 24-hour service. Walsh said the meeting was to address the 2025 cost of living adjustment

and call-back for officers who are off, particularly for the drug recognition expert and K9 handler, but also in the case that they don't have 24-hour coverage. The meeting was productive and civil. Mayor Scholl would prefer to hear from Walsh or Chief Greenway rather than read about it online.

- He was recently appointed to the Energy and Environment Policy Committee for League of Oregon Cities (LOC). They are working through issues about electrical service and transmission.
- The State is working through the Regional Significant Industrial Sites program that allows cities to recover costs in industrial properties where they put in infrastructure.
- There will be a Request for Proposals (RFP) for realtor services at the next meeting
- He has been here a long time and loves the community. He thanked the staff for their dedication. They will get through this, complete the Waterfront development, and fill positions.

COUNCIL MEMBER REPORTS

Council President Chilton reported...

- Since joining the Council, she was told that bullying is part of politics. She does not condone it. It's not okay to attack people and should not be allowed to happen. It's bad culture and should not be allowed.
- She is an advocate for transparency. There is a lot of stress, questions, frustrations, and rumors right now. They need to be transparent with no secret meetings and no secret communications. Everyone has good intentions for St. Helens but they need to consider how it's done.

Councilor Sundeen reported...

- He thanked everyone for being involved and engaged.
- He's also disturbed by the lack of civility. It's taken a toll on him. It should be okay to ask questions and meet with people. It's helpful if someone is part of the solution. Communication is key.
- Parks & Trails Commission meeting next week.
 - There is a position vacancy
 - Thanked Dana Lathrope for her work as past Chair
 - Incoming Chair is Lynne Pettit

Councilor Gundersen reported...

- Council members are working together to solve problems. There are things he supports that others might not. It's a way to share ideas and not corruption. He is only one vote. He's had enough of the actions and words people are making towards Council members and Walsh. He will leave if it continues. Council is a team and they should have each other's backs. It's not easy.
- Attended a celebration at the National Guard Armory.
- He will attend the Planning Commission meeting next week. Mayor Scholl reminded him to declare ex-parte contact if hearings come to Council.

Councilor Hubbard reported...

- His focus is on employment and getting people back to work. He recently met with companies from Indonesia and California about their needs and will be meeting with another one soon.
- They are working on the effects the solar plant will have on Columbia River PUD (CRPUD). Mayor Scholl said CRPUD has his full support.

MAYOR SCHOLL REPORTS

- Citizens Day in the Park is June 22. Highway 30 Cruisers will host a car show. Staff normally help with setup, vendors, etc. Sponsors donate most of the cost for food. It's a nice event for citizens but can be smaller this year. He requested approval to spend \$1,000, Council assistance that day, and help recruiting volunteers. He will contact Highway 30 Cruisers and the Alano Club about volunteering.

Councilor Sundeen offered to help with the event and suggested they recruit board and commission members.

Mayor Scholl will work with staff to create a list of volunteer needs.

City Recorder Payne pointed out that their office is very busy right now and appreciates the Council taking more on.

- The Code of Conduct was approved on June 7, 2023. Board and Commission members and contractors need to be held to a higher standard. It does not take away First Amendment rights, it's about integrity, accountability, and respect. Community love, security, and fun needs to be brought back. He is disheartened with what is going on. They will get through this. A lot of cities are going through the same financial struggles. He is not happy with employees, former employees, and board and commission members participating. They can come talk to him civilly.
- He supports the police and jail levies. He suggests they campaign those together. They must find a way to get along.
- Commended Walsh for all his work. He keeps a level head, and cares about and values staff.
- Don't believe everything you read on Facebook. There's been a lot of negativity.
- He is happy to serve with each Council member.

ADJOURN – 3:28 p.m.

EXECUTIVE SESSION - None

Respectfully submitted by Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder.

ATTEST:

Kathy Payne, City Recorder

Rick Scholl, Mayor



PLANNING COMMISSION & CITY COUNCIL JOINT MEETING DRAFT MINUTES

Wednesday, March 13, 2024, at 4:00 PM

Members Present: Mayor Rick Scholl
Councilor Russ Hubbard
Councilor Brandon Sundeen
Councilor Mark Gundersen
Vice Chair Jennifer Shoemaker
Commissioner Ginny Carlson
Commissioner Charles Castner
Commissioner Scott Jacobson
Commissioner Brooke Sisco

Members Absent: Council President Jessica Chilton
Chair Dan Cary
Commissioner David Rosengard

Staff Present: City Administrator John Walsh
City Planner Jacob Graichen
Associate Planner Jenny Dimsho
Community Development Admin Assistant Christina Sullivan

This meeting was held in the Council Chambers.

At 4:00 p.m., Mayor Rick Scholl opened the Joint Planning Commission and City Council Meeting. The purpose, rules, and goals of this meeting were explained. The mayor is the presiding officer, the group must have respect for others' time, and no decisions are to be made at these meetings.

DISCUSSION OF VACANT STOREFRONTS

Mayor Scholl did a small recap on the previous discussion and how the two entities agreed they would like to see a thriving Main Street. He said in the discussion they had invited St. Helens Mainstreet to be a part of the discussion.

Erin Salisbury, the President of St. Helens Mainstreet, started the conversation about different ideas that they had to support the infrastructure in the downtown and Main Street corridor. She asked why they thought it was important to fill these vacant storefronts.

Mayor Scholl said he thought it was important for connectivity.

Vice Chair Jennifer Shoemaker said it was important because the Planning Commission had resolved to become a Proactive Commission and one of the items was to address Vacant Storefronts. She said even though the Commission may have their own agendas, she felt this item was important to the Community. She said she received feedback from the community that this should be addressed and that is what started the discussion.

Councilor Brandon Sundeen said he thought it was important because it gives the vision and appearance of a vibrant and active City.

Commissioner Ginny Carlson said this might help get incentives started to help property owners fill those spaces. She said it might open some partnerships and open affordability to small business owners.

Councilor Russ Hubbard said he would like to see more builders have incentives to restore these buildings. He said there was already a lot of hoops for developers to jump through for building code, so offering an incentive would help offset those expenses.

Commissioner Scott Jacobson said he would like to see an overall business plan for downtown so that there was more fluidity of businesses in the area.

Commissioner Charles Castner said more vibrance and vitality in the business district and a connection between the property owners and the business owners.

Councilor Mark Gunderson said it was important to him to see the unique shops and small businesses in the storefronts.

Commissioner Brooke Sisco said she would like to see them open to show livability and make this an even better place to live.

Salisbury said Mainstreet is a national entity and mentioned there is a need for a vibrant downtown, because it was like the heart of a community. She said it circulates financial and social health throughout the community. She mentioned the Houlton District used to be so lively and she would love to see it restored.

Marci Sanders, Chair of the Economic Vitality Committee, shared some of the first steps to fix the vacant storefronts. She said to have economic vitality in the district, they would need to focus on a comprehensive inventory of the businesses and property owners in the Main Street corridor. She said they had already taken steps to get a list of the businesses and now they are working on the buildings and property owners. She said they would use this database to narrow down the vacant storefronts. She mentioned out of the 158 storefronts there were about 18 that were dormant or vacant in some shape or form. She also shared a study which tried to estimate the lost revenues that vacant storefronts have on a downtown. The impact of vacant storefronts is magnified the more of them a downtown has.

There was a discussion about Mainstreet partnering with the Planning Commission and City Council to either change codes, enforce codes it already has, or finding other tools to educate the public on how to move forward.

There was a discussion on how to form a task force to discuss how to create and provide education and incentives to move forward with assessing the issue of vacant storefronts.

DISCUSSION OF POLICE STATION LOCATION

City Planner Jacob Graichen introduced the architects with Mackenzie Architects that were involved with the design of the Police Station and locations.

City Administrator shared the back story on why these new sites were being considered instead of the Kaster Road location. The City had originally had ten sites, narrowed down by an Adhoc Committee. The City staff and City Council narrowed it down to four new locations as possible places.

Thomas Beckham with Mackenzie Architects was there to share four different sites for the new police station. Beckham said there was a list of criteria they used to narrow down the sites and were prepared to use those again if needed.

Beckham went through each site and shared the different pros and cons as to why they may or may not work for the new police station.

The consensus among all City Council and Planning Commission members was that the location at 18th Street and Columbia Boulevard or the location off Old Portland Road and Port Avenue next to the

Columbia County Sheriff's Office would be better selections than the other two. There was a discussion about retrieving more information on financials that would be involved in helping to narrow down the decision on which one is best.

There was a discussion about the importance of building a new station. All agreed it was an immediate need.

There was a discussion about a meeting with other City Departments, including Engineering and the Police, to determine changes that need to be made to accommodate a new site.

DISCUSSION OF 2024 DEVELOPMENT CODE AMENDMENTS OVERVIEW

Graichen shared some of the Development Code Amendments that were being discussed with the Planning Commission as potential codes that need modernization and how they had cleaned them up.

He went into detail about the Housing Analysis and some of the changes that will be made. He shared about attached housing, three or more units, units above businesses, single room occupancies, and rules for having residential and non-residential on the same level. He said there would be a special notice about clarification on the amendments to make the citizens aware.

DISCUSSION OF ARCHITECTURAL STANDARDS

Vice Chair Shoemaker shared that now there was a full Planning Commission, they could move forward in the direction of focusing on Vacant Storefronts.

There was a discussion on how to form a Mainstreet Revitalization Task Force without having a quorum, to do the background research and come back and share with the full groups. Two Councilors, Councilor Gunderson and Councilor Sundeen, were selected to be on the Task Force. Vice Chair Shoemaker said since there are two Commissioners absent, she would discuss with the Planning Commission which three members would be involved and get back to the group with the members.

OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 6:31 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Christina Sullivan

Community Development Administrative Assistant

Rick Scholl, Mayor

Jennifer Shoemaker, Vice Chair