

City of St. Helens

Consent Agenda for Approval

CITY COUNCIL MINUTES

Presented for approval on this 21st day of February, 2024 are the following Council minutes:

2023

- Joint City Council and Planning Commission Minutes dated December 13, 2023
- Work Session, Executive Session, Public Hearing, and Regular Session Minutes Dated December 20, 2023
- Special Session Minutes dated December 28, 2023
- Work Session and Regular Session Minutes dated January 3, 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
- ☐ Update file name & signature block on Word document & copy Word document into Council minutes folder in Shared Drive
- ☐ Upload & publish in MuniCode
- ☐ Email minutes link to distribution list
- ☐ Add minutes to HPRMS
- ☐ Add packet and exhibits to HPRMS
- ☐ File original in Vault
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PLANNING COMMISSION & CITY COUNCIL JOINT MEETING DRAFT MINUTES

Wednesday, December 13, 2023, at 4:00 PM

Members Present: Mayor Rick Scholl
Council President Jessica Chilton
Councilor Russ Hubbard
Councilor Brandon Sundeen
Councilor Mark Gundersen

Chair Dan Cary
Vice Chair Jennifer Shoemaker
Commissioner Ginny Carlson
Commissioner Charles Castner
Commissioner David Rosengard (Zoom)

Members Absent: Commissioner Russ Low

Staff Present: City Administrator John Walsh
City Planner Jacob Graichen
Associate Planner Jenny Dimsho
Deputy City Recorder Lisa Scholl
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 PSILOCYBIN PROHIBITION

City Planner Jacob Graichen explained there was a two-year moratorium on the facilitation of psilocybin. He said that moratorium ends at the end of 2024. He mentioned this is the time of year the Planning Department is more able to work on code amendments, and they wanted to use this meeting to discuss the level of concern and their ideas on how to manage this. He said they had done some research in to what other cities have done to implement these guidelines.

Associate Planner Jenny Dimsho shared a presentation on psilocybin facilities in Oregon. She explained Oregon passed a ballot measure that directs the Oregon Health Authority to license and regulate the manufacturing, transportation, delivery, sale, and purchase of psilocybin products and the provision of psilocybin services.

She explained the different licenses including manufacturers, service centers, and facilitators.

She shared some of the experiences other communities have had who have already implemented psilocybin service centers. She said some of the centers were in Portland and only about five were open currently. The others were still in the process of getting approval.

She mentioned that most of the customers who utilize these facilities have been reported as out of state customers. She said the cost of the sessions can range from \$1,000 to \$3,000 and that they are not

covered by healthcare. She also said there is a long waitlist for being able to utilize these services and that the service centers she researched offer a long list of tourism activities and places to stay while you wait. She said it seemed to be advertised as medical tourism. She also said they look like medical offices and sometimes share space with other medical facilities.

There was a small discussion on how these service centers were regulated.

There was a small discussion on the education required to be a psilocybin facilitator.

She discussed some of the next steps that would need to take place to help implement development code around these service centers. She said there could be rules that are adopted, or they could use existing rules.

There was a discussion on what zoning districts they see these centers allowed in or where they do not want to see them.

Vice Chair Jennifer Shoemaker said she considered this alternative medicine but was concerned about the number of them opening in our community.

Council President Jessica Chilton said she wanted to be sure we listen to the people in our community and create guidelines that fit those needs.

Commissioner Ginny Carlson said this is a new form of medicine for those who are beyond the reach of pharmaceuticals, and she felt that even though we may not understand it if it can help someone, she is glad it is available to them.

There was a small discussion about how psilocybin is administered.

Councilor Mark Gunderson expressed concern that there were not more qualifications needed to be a facilitator.

Dimsho shared different options to use the zoning to help keep the locations in specific areas.

Mayor Rick Scholl said he had not heard many individuals discussing the psilocybin service or the measure so he did not see the service centers as being something that would be in high demand to move to this community.

There was a discussion on where service centers and manufacturers of the psilocybin could be located and what an appropriate number of restrictions for them would be.

DISCUSSION OF VACANT STOREFRONTS

Vice Chair Shoemaker opened the discussion by sharing that the Planning Commission has a Proactive Items list and they felt like they had been choosing items to work on that were more on their personal agenda versus what the Community would like to see.

She said there was a consistent group of citizens coming and asking the Planning Commission to address the vacant storefronts. She shared some research done on other communities and how they handle vacant buildings.

There was a small discussion about the different storefronts in St. Helens that were vacant.

There was a discussion on ways to incentivize business owners to keep their storefronts from being vacant.

Councilor Russ Hubbard said the financial burden maintaining a business in specific districts can be overwhelming for some. It can also be a discouragement to new developers coming in who do not receive the grandfathered in rules for the building they might be looking at.

Commissioner David Rosengard said maybe it would be beneficial to investigate other cities, like Astoria, who have a lot of older buildings with storefronts in them and what they have implemented to keep those storefronts open.

There was a discussion about restoration grants or how the City could control the taxation to incentivize the business to stay open. They also discussed the affordability of maintaining occupancy through the code.

Councilor Chilton suggested starting a registry to track the vacant storefronts and then there would be exact documentation on where they are located, who owns them, and what they are being used for.

There was a discussion about involving the Mainstreet program for information to help shape an idea for how to move forward.

There was a small discussion on how to demolish old buildings and the rules that are already in place.

There was a discussion on the current locally designated landmarks list and how there were so many buildings missing that should be on the list. There was a discussion about updating the list to get some of these buildings on it.

Mayor Scholl said the Planning Commission and City Council could get together and educate the community on the significance of historic preservation and why adding their historic building to the list would be valuable.

OTHER BUSINESS

Vice Chair Shoemaker mentioned in the meeting the night before that the Planning Commission was asked about pausing their stipends because of the City's budget crisis. She said everyone in the group was on board with saving the City any money they can if it saves an employee from having to furlough or having to be paid off. She said they wanted to encourage other Commissions to do the same.

Commissioner Carlson said in the spirit of teamwork everyone should feel the pinch if one group must.

Mayor Scholl said the Budget Committee had not been formed yet, and once they were, they would look at all the items in the budget and determine the best route to move forward.

There was a small discussion about ideas that could be discussed at the next joint meeting. There was consensus that vacant storefronts should be on the agenda to continue the discussion from this meeting.

Councilor Hubbard said he would like to see the City Council move forward in asking the Planning Commission more questions before decisions are made and to utilize the Planning Commission ahead of time more often, instead of decisions being made by the Planning Commission and then coming to the City Council. Chair Cary said this was the point of the City Council Liaison coming to the meetings.

Mayor Scholl discussed a little more about the ex parte contact with liaisons and that we need to do some more education on it across the board in all meetings and commissions.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 5:42 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Christina Sullivan

Community Development Administrative Assistant

/s/

Rick Scholl, Mayor

/s/

Dan Cary, Chair



COUNCIL WORK SESSION

Wednesday, December 20, 2023

DRAFT MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT

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

STAFF PRESENT

John Walsh, City Administrator	Brian Greenway, Police Chief
Kathy Payne, City Recorder	Jacob Graichen, City Planner
Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder	Bill Monahan, Contracted City Attorney
Gloria Butsch, Finance Director	Tina Curry, Contracted Tourism Director

OTHERS

Ron Trommlitz	Jane Garcia	Drew McNaughton
Bobbe Trommlitz	Brady Preheim	Andy Bates
Steve Topaz	Michael Curri	Arthur Leskowich
Stephanie Patterson	Steve Toschi	Debbie
Jamie Howsley		

CALL WORK SESSION TO ORDER – 2:00 pm

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

- ◆ Ron Trommlitz. Mr. Trommlitz spoke about his concerns regarding the 2MG Water Reservoir leaking, the St. Helens W-49 contract, and what was included in the Walker Report, believing the City's silence was part of complicity.
- ◆ Brady Preheim. Mr. Preheim expressed concerns about the budget and the expense of a service other than Comcast. He hoped the Council would approve the tourism contract up for review, noting the current contractor had performed above and beyond. He opposed building the new police station and billing it to the water bill which he believed was illegal. Because the police staffing was an emergency, he would support the fee on the bill only for staffing. If the City wanted to build the station, it should get a levy. He was unhappy that a qualified applicant like Jane Garcia would be rejected from the Budget Committee, noting the double standard of other Council-approved committees' members not living within the city.
- ◆ Steve Topaz. Mr. Topaz continued to state that his verbal and written comments had been rewritten and approved by Council. His written comments had been delivered to the Council by email; most of the Council did not open emails sent to them from the public. The Budget Committee meeting should be held within the month. He posed numerous questions regarding nonstandard accounting by City Administrator Walsh's assistant/financial director, the role the contract arranged by Walsh with Mark Comfort played in Cascades leaving, problems of the grow

facility affecting Cascades' decision, the financial requirements to supply enough water to keep the sewer treatment plant operational, the potential of the geotech problems under the Waterfront property affecting the value of the property, the 1st Street Gateway project's underground conditions, and the possibility of removal of federal financing for police projects in the future. The contract for Halloweentown should be reviewed. He spoke of the Gable Road apartment complex adding to the Police Department's workload.

- ◆ Steve Toschi. Mr. Toschi urged no more spending on Riverfront architects until the City got a handle on its finances. The City spent \$1 million on the police station, and it had to be re-designed. Big questions remained regarding the City's finances. The tourism program is working. The finances of the contract were invisible to the public. That's a problem with the City, not the contractor. [His connection broke up.] He asked the Council to move forward cautiously on the tourism contract, offering his help with the process.

DISCUSSION TOPICS

1. **Update on Broadband Feasibility by Strategic Networks Group - *President Michael Curri***

Michael Curri, President, Strategic Networks Group, presented via PowerPoint an update on the broadband feasibility study for which the Council had allocated American Rescue Plan Act funds, a copy of which was included in the archive packet for this meeting, addressing the need for broadband in the area.

Key discussion items regarding broadband feasibility were as follows:

- Mr. Curri acknowledged that whatever cost factors were determined would be the amount of funds requested of the State, noting the importance of public-private partnerships to get the digital infrastructure in place and make the cost reasonable.
- The Oregon Broadband Office was currently working through the question of what rules and conditions they would attach to the funding such as would the City need to match; the City would have the information about who would be targeted with the money, etc., from the study.
- He and the Council discussed next steps and funding.
- Mayor Scholl believed the highest priorities were underserved youth and families and seniors who were unable to afford broadband and did not know about the \$30 subsidy.
- Strategic Networks Group could help the City explore and understand options for contracting with a private company for internet service.
- Council President Chilton spoke about wanting to be able to accommodate the culture shift after Covid of utilizing the internet for other than entertainment purposes. The internet needed to be reliable and affordable.
- Councilor Hubbard noted the average cost to connect a structure to the fiber backbone was between \$3,000 and \$4,000, possibly more if farther apart. Mr. Curri acknowledged the cost depended on the distance, noting roads cost 20-100 times as much as fiber and that Internet is important in everyone's life.
- When Brady Preheim asked about the bundle of phone, television, and internet, Mr. Curri responded that a spectrum of options existed, adding how a public-private partnership would not mean the municipality would own or run the network. The City would need to assess the gaps and the best options to bridge the gaps based on the costs.
- Councilor Gundersen talked about needing to compete with providers already in place and asked if they would use the City's fiber. Mr. Curri replied the details of where the actual infrastructure was would need determined as well as identifying where the gaps were.
- Drew McNaughton spoke about his experience with public-private partnerships.

Mr. Curri will return with a report in two or three months.

2. Review of HB2984 for Commercial to Residential Building Conversions - *City Planner Jacob Graichen*

City Planner Graichen reviewed his memo (included in the meeting archive packet) relating to Resolution 1999 which pertained to System Development Charges (SDCs) and was on tonight's Regular Session agenda for approval. HB 2984 required local government to allow a commercial building or portion of one to be converted to residential use; it did not apply to industrial zoning. The bill aimed to help convert commercial vacant buildings to needed residential use and included restrictions on parking and provisions on how SDC rules were implemented unless there were a specific policy in effect before December 31, 2023.

Key discussion items regarding HB 2984 were as follows:

- He clarified the restrictions on parking would not let the City require the amount of parking needed if a property were, for example, an apartment complex.
- Mayor Scholl spoke about Governor Kotek's plan to address the housing crisis and how it did not make sense for the State to adopt putting together a group of contractors who would probably be difficult for the City when moving forward with planning, etc.
- Council President Chilton was concerned about such rules being imposed on smaller cities, believing they were unfair.
- Mr. Graichen clarified it would depend on the type of SDCs as to whether the City could charge SDCs per unit in a building.
- He and the Council discussed the potential impacts of the new rules.
- Council President Chilton said she would like to see the Planning Commission work on the matter a bit.
- Mayor Scholl spoke about what was going on at the state level; it was an aggressive approach. Housing was a priority and then mental illness, schools, and houselessness which all intertwined. Given the resources, allowing more housing to be available was not a bad thing.
- Councilor Gundersen talked about how HB 2984 seemed more appropriate for bigger cities; Mr. Graichen agreed that larger cities did have more vacant commercial properties.
- Mr. Graichen said the matter related to the cottage cluster rule could help define the issue if the City ended up facing it.

3. Review of Events Management Contract - *City Administrator John Walsh*

City Administrator Walsh reviewed the E2C contract, a copy of which was included in the archive packet for this meeting. He noted the contract had exceeded the City's expectations. The contract in its current form would need a modification to align with the budget to allow the contractor to provide monies back to the City. He sought the Council's feedback on how they would like to move forward.

Key discussion items regarding the E2C contract were as follows:

- Walsh spoke to how tourism funds were not visible to the public due to rules regarding independent contractor's laws, addressing how the account was audited.
- Councilor Hubbard found how the money flowed through everything very convoluted. People wanted to see better accounting. He believed a new contract that went out for bid would help clarify matters and quiet criticism of the contract.
- Finance Director Butsch spoke about being careful due to the public-private partnership. The contract was to provide the events and had a profit-sharing component. It was up to the contractor to report to the City on its profit share. Accounting was the responsibility of the independent contractor, as written in the contract. If the Council wanted more transparency, it would need spelled out in the contract. The matter was not in her hands as the City's Finance Director.

- Walsh said changes could be made which he recommended as far as defining what the subcontractor 5% markup fee was. It would be easy to include in the contract the idea of moving to a franchise model and taking a percentage of sales. The City could also have the contractor entirely responsible for their own expenses and not lean on the hotel/motel tax; the contractor would pay herself from proceeds.
- Mayor Scholl asked the Council to divulge any ex-parte contact, especially with an ex-employee about finances or audits, to the entire Council prior to any discussion. Councilor Hubbard replied he did not have contact but was reading a Tourism Committee report.
- Event Coordinator Tina Curry and Mayor Scholl spoke about the past with the Tourism books and Matt Brown; Ms. Curry noted her company passed the audits 100 percent, both times.
- Council President Chilton said she saw no issues with the contractor but the public needed educated on the relationship between the City and an independent contractor. The City may need to consider making the event coordinator position a City employee in order to know all the details.
- Mr. Walsh recommended extending the current contract at least three months to work on any changes the Council wanted to make, specifically to work on the revenue-sharing details of the contract which was not talked about at all in the current contract and could net \$220,000-\$230,000 more to the City's budget.
- Mr. Walsh clarified only a certain percentage of the special revenue could be transferred to the General Fund to support services.
- Council President Chilton said she would like Butsch involved in working on the contract.
- Councilor Sundeen stated he would like input from Ms. Curry when reviewing the contract. It was hard to understand how the Council had no input over massive City events. The lack of oversight had also been brought up to him.
- Councilor Hubbard noted he had nothing against Ms. Curry; he was trying to address people claiming all Tourism proceeds were hers when they were the City's money.

The consensus of Council was to review the E2C contract.

Break - 3:34 pm

EXECUTIVE SESSION

- Real Property Transactions, under ORS 192.660(2)(e)
- Consult with Counsel/Potential Litigation, under ORS 192.660(2)(h)

Return from Break and Executive Session – 4:04 pm

4. Discussion regarding Police Staffing

Mayor Scholl talked about officer burnout and pending retirements. He and Councilor Sundeen had met with the police union, and they were continuing to work through the issues. Walsh acknowledged the need was a Council priority, and staff was looking at a model that would provide alignment of resources with expenses and at some service alignment reductions.

Key discussion items regarding police staffing were as follows:

- Mayor Scholl said the Council appreciated the Police Department. Officers were burned out and wanted to know there would be hope for relief in the future. The new police station was no longer the priority; the Police Department would prefer to use the \$10/month utility fee to hire more officers.
- Council President Chilton was concerned about the money already spent for the new station which did not reflect well on the Council. She was not confident the Council had truly looked everywhere to find money to hire more officers and did not think it was smart to reallocate money the Council had already prioritized for another project.
- Walsh said the Council had consciously reduced the City's reserve balance from 20 percent to 15 percent, resulting in a \$1.6 million deficit. The Council needed to decide whether to try to get

back to 20 percent reserve in one year or grow it back over several years. Mayor Scholl said such matters would be discussed at the Budget Committee.

- Council President Chilton suggested putting pauses on some projects in order to focus on police because building the city bigger without policing to support it would be putting the cart before the horse. She believed the Riverwalk project should be stopped for now. Mayor Scholl said part of the budget process was a loan already taken out that could be rolled into Urban Renewal to push the projects through.
- Walsh said the scope had already been reduced for the Riverwalk project by removing all the elements that were not grant-funded or SDC-funded. It was on tonight's agenda for approval.
- Mayor Scholl agreed with Council President Chilton that the police station was old and could not be remodeled. The City had a design plan that could be put in a different location. The matter would need to be figured out through the Budget Committee.
- Council President Chilton said if the City were to consider cutting projects out, it should prioritize project by safety and infrastructure needs, and she did not believe the Riverwalk fit either need.
- Mayor Scholl talked about the bond that they could use for the Riverwalk. Walsh pointed out that Urban Renewal funds could not be used for operations. He and the Council discussed Urban Renewal Agency funds.
- Ms. Butsch stated that an Urban Renewal educational session was planned.
- Councilor Hubbard spoke about how he believed the Council's priorities should be life, fire, and safety.
- Council President Chilton talked about how hiring more officers would only be a bandage for an issue the Police Department had been telling the Council about for years: a system was needed for retirements because of how long it took to get police officers on the road. Walsh clarified Staff was planning for the issue in budgetary ways.

5. Report from City Administrator John Walsh

Walsh presented his report. Key highlights were as follows:

- Tonight the Council would adopt a budget officer who would work on the grant agreement for the Economic Opportunity Analysis which was also on the agenda for approval tonight.
- The amendment to the Riverwalk project on tonight's agenda was actually a scope reduction. He explained how the budget was reduced by \$176,000.
- The City was still hopeful Project Sprint would move forward, and there was no indication they would not. He expected communication on the project fairly soon. The City was working with PGE and the PUD to get the new substation to meet the power needs.
- Regarding the Cascades Tissue closure, the City was coming to terms on the lease termination agreement. Staff had a draft and tentative approval from Legal. Cascades would like the matter wrapped up by the end of the year. Staff hoped to do a special session next week to discuss the terms of the agreement.
- He explained the difference between the two proposals for security services at the Mill site for which he sought the Council's input, from the existing Cascades service provider and an extension of the agreement with Moore Site Services. The Council discussed the idea of using the police to do extra patrols instead of private security and whether to separate security from maintenance. Mayor Scholl clarified if anything were to happen, Moore Construction had the best understanding of the Mill of any contractor in the area.

City Recorder Kathy Payne asked if Council wanted to do the community grant program which would normally be advertised in January. Mayor Scholl suggested not doing the program this year due to the City's finances. Council President Chilton recommended making a public announcement if the Council decided not to do the program. Payne would work with Communications Officer King to do a

press release. Council President Chilton said the Council could reassess annually whether to open the program back up.

ADJOURN – 4:39 pm

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

December 20, 2023

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

Staff Present: John Walsh, City Administrator
Kathy Payne, City Recorder
Jacob Graichen, City Planner
William Monahan, City Attorney with Jordan Ramis PC (via Zoom)
Jamie Howsley, City Attorney with Jordan Ramis PC (via Zoom)
Joseph Schaefer, City Attorney with Jordan Ramis PC (via Zoom)

Others: None



At 3:41 p.m., Mayor Scholl opened the Executive Session pursuant to the ORS numbers listed below and then gave Council roll call. Other than Labor Negotiator Consultations, representatives of the news media, designated staff, and other persons as approved shall be allowed to attend the Executive Session. All other members of the audience are asked to leave the Council Chambers. 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 Legal Counsel/Litigation**, under **ORS 192.660(2)(h)**
 - Update on the potential litigation regarding the proposed location of the Public Safety Facility.
- **Real Property Transactions**, under **ORS 192.660(2)(e)**
 - Nothing was discussed under this provision.

The Executive Session was adjourned at 4:02 p.m.



ATTEST:

Kathy Payne, City Recorder

Rick Scholl, Mayor

An audio recording of this meeting is archived at City Hall.



COUNCIL PUBLIC HEARING

Wednesday, December 20, 2023

DRAFT MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT

Mayor Rick Scholl
Council President Jessica Chilton
Councilor Mark Gundersen
Councilor Russell Hubbard
Councilor Brandon Sundeen – Via Zoom

STAFF PRESENT

John Walsh, City Administrator
Kathy Payne, City Recorder
Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder
Jacob Graichen, City Planner
Jenny Dimsho, Associate Planner
Tina Curry, Contracted Event Coordinator

OTHERS

Wayne Weigandt	Jennifer Gilbert
Nick Hellmich	Steve Toschi
Briana Koch	Stephanie Patterson
Steve LeSollen	Brady Preheim
RLT	Lisa Marsh

OPEN PUBLIC HEARING – 6:30 p.m.

TOPIC

1. Comprehensive Plan Map and Zoning Map Amendment (CPZA.2.23) at 475 N. 12th Street (Stamp)

City Planner Graichen covered preliminary matters. There were no potential or actual conflicts of interest or bias in this matter. There were no objections from the audience for the Council to make a fair decision.

Graichen went on to review the staff report, a copy of which is included in the archive packet for this meeting. The property consists of four lots. It is zoned Light Industrial (LI) and surrounded on three sides by residential zoning. Graichen talked about the surplus of LI land. The adjacent LI land is surrounded by a wall, separating it from this property. No objections were received. Planning Commission unanimously recommends approval of the amendment.

PUBLIC TESTIMONY

Applicant

- ◆ Wayne Weigandt. He acquired the property over a year ago. The size of the property and zone made it difficult to develop as industrial. His proposal is to develop residences there. None of the neighbors have objected to that proposal. This will be positive for the City.

Discussion about the property. The request is for it to be zoned residential and developed as such.

No other public testimony.

CLOSE PUBLIC HEARING – 6:48 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder.

ATTEST:

Kathy Payne, City Recorder

Rick Scholl, Mayor



COUNCIL REGULAR SESSION

Wednesday, December 20, 2023

DRAFT MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT

Mayor Rick Scholl
Council President Jessica Chilton
Councilor Mark Gundersen
Councilor Russell Hubbard
Councilor Brandon Sundeen – Via Zoom

STAFF PRESENT

John Walsh, City Administrator
Kathy Payne, City Recorder
Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder
Jacob Graichen, City Planner
Jenny Dimsho, Associate Planner
Gloria Butsch, Finance Director
Tina Curry, Contracted Event Coordinator

OTHERS

Wayne Weigandt	Jennifer Gilbert	Jennifer Massey
Nicholas Hellmich	Steve Toschi	Arthur Leskowich
Briana Koch	Stephanie Patterson	Shauna Stroup
Steve LeSollen	Brady Preheim	
RLT	Lisa Marsh	

CALL REGULAR SESSION TO ORDER 7PM

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

- ◆ Steve Toschi. He talked about all the time he has spent conducting audits as an attorney. He is offering his skills to assist the City. He will work with the Budget Committee members so the public will know the financial state of the City and what to expect next year. If there is a request for a levy, people will know it's based on accurate information. What has happened to the money? Employees are being notified of possible layoffs. He applied to serve on the Budget Committee and looks forward to working alongside the Council. He does not believe they can rely heavily on the audits. They need to rely on the work of the Budget Committee.
- ◆ Brady Preheim. He is following up on questions about tourism. Councilor Hubbard asked why Matt was not in jail, which Brady thinks he should have been put in jail. Matt accused the tourism director of taking funds and did not know what was in his own bank accounts. He was negligent in his duties and unresponsive to the Council. Brady recommended Councilor Hubbard go back and watch that meeting. Tourism is a contract; you don't get to ask questions about what everything costs. E2C was audited and it showed no problems. He disagreed with City

Administrator Walsh about taking \$120,000. That money is dedicated to tourism. The money received from hotel/motel tax is required to go to tourism. They can't steal her money.

- ◆ Nicholas Hellmich. He is an advocate for Psilocybin Therapy. It has positive impacts on mental health and offers a holistic approach. It is relatively safe when administered responsibly in a controlled setting. It will have a positive economic impact on the City. He has Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and it has helped with his mental health. He has become a better person with it.
- ◆ Adam St. Pierre. He had a problem with the Zoom link. There was discussion a few months ago about permitting for large events. There are studies that show how many officers are needed per size of event. It's important that the Police Department signs permits so there is proper public safety available.
- ◆ Low Mason, citizen and member of the Budget Committee. He recommends Brady Preheim and Steve Toschi for the Budget Committee. They are both very passionate about the City and would be an asset.
- ◆ Tina Curry. Update since the last tourism report:
 - Sun Maid Raisins won two awards for their campaign in St. Helens in 2022
 - Best Campaign on a Budget
 - Best Holiday Campaign
 - KOIN News invited Crooked Creek Brewery for an interview. The first thing the interviewer said was that he came to Halloweentown and discovered the craft brew house.
 - An author has signed a book deal to write three books based on Halloweentown and a murder that begins at a bookstore here. She is a 2020 Oregon Book Award recipient.
 - Three brick and mortar buildings have been completely remodeled because of the money coming in from Halloweentown.
 - Potential hotels want to know what the tourism program offers.
 - Distributed a flyer showing activities that are offered year-round. A copy is included in the archive packet.

DELIBERATIONS

1. Comprehensive Plan Map and Zoning Map Amendment (CPZA.2.23) at 475 N. 12th Street (Stamp)

Motion: Motion made by Councilor Gundersen and seconded by Councilor Hubbard to approve the Comprehensive Plan Map and Zoning Map Amendment at 475 N. 12th Street. **Vote:** Mayor Scholl, Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

RESOLUTIONS

2. Resolution No. 1996: A Resolution to Set 2024 City Public Meetings and Holiday Closures Schedule for City of St. Helens Council, Boards, and Commissions

Mayor Scholl read Resolution No. 1996 by title. **Motion:** Motion made by Council President Chilton and seconded by Councilor Gundersen to adopt Resolution No. 1996. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Scholl, Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

3. Resolution No. 1997: A Resolution to Appoint a Budget Officer for Fiscal Year 2024-25

Mayor Scholl read Resolution No. 1997 by title. **Motion:** Motion made by Councilor Gundersen and seconded by Council President Chilton to adopt Resolution No. 1997.

Discussion. This appoints the Finance Director to that position. It's part of the budget process.

Vote: Yea: Mayor Scholl, Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

- 4. Resolution No. 1998:** A Resolution Determining that a Nuisance Exists Upon Property Located at 2015 Cowlitz Street within the City of St. Helens and Directing that Notice to Abate the Nuisance be Posted on Said Premises

Mayor Scholl read Resolution No. 1998 by title. **Motion:** Motion made by Councilor Gundersen and seconded by Council President Chilton to adopt Resolution No. 1998. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Scholl, Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

- 5. Resolution No. 1999:** A Resolution Adopting a Policy Regarding System Development Charges for Conversion of Buildings from Commercial to Residential Use in Non-Industrial Zones

Mayor Scholl read Resolution No. 1999 by title. **Motion:** Motion made by Council President Chilton and seconded by Councilor Gundersen to adopt Resolution No. 1999. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Scholl, Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

APPROVE AND/OR AUTHORIZE FOR SIGNATURE

6. Extension of Agreement with Drake's Towing & Recovery for Exclusive Towing Services
7. Second Amendment to Agreement with Oregon Patrol Service for Bailiff Services
8. Extension of Agreement with Advantage JC Excavating for Clean-up of Various Properties inside City Limits
9. Grant Agreement with Department of Land Conservation and Development for 2023-2025 Technical Assistance
10. Extension of Agreement with Wetland Solutions NW, LLC for Services related to Wetlands
11. First Amendment to AKS Engineering & Forestry, LLC Agreement for Salmonberry Reservoir Water Right Permit Renewal
12. Sixth Amendment to David Evans & Associates Agreement for Columbia Blvd. Sidewalk & Safety Improvements
13. Amendment to Agreement with Mayer/Reed, Inc. for Design, Construction, & Permits for Riverwalk Phase I & Columbia View Park Amphitheater

Motion: Motion made by Council President Chilton and seconded by Councilor Gundersen to approve '6' through '13' above.

Discussion. Clarification about number 12. It's extended for closeout activities.

Councilor Hubbard recused himself from the vote for number 13.

Vote: Yea: Mayor Scholl, Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard (except for #13), Councilor Sundeen

REVIEW APPLICATIONS FOR AND APPOINT MEMBERS TO BUDGET COMMITTEE

14. Budget Committee Applications

Six qualified applications were received for four positions. Ballots were distributed to the Mayor and City Council to each vote for four. Deputy City Recorder Scholl called Councilor Sundeen to take his vote over the phone. City Recorder Payne will tally the votes for announcement later in the meeting.

CONSENT AGENDA FOR ACCEPTANCE

15. Library Board Minutes dated November 13, 2023
16. Parks & Trails Commission Minutes dated November 13, 2023
17. Planning Commission Minutes dated November 14, 2023

Motion: Motion made by Councilor Gundersen and seconded by Council President Chilton to approve '15' through '17' above. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Scholl, Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

CONSENT AGENDA FOR APPROVAL

18. Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Budget Calendar
19. City Council Minutes dated November 15, 2023
20. Animal Facility Licenses
21. Accounts Payable Bill Lists

Motion: Motion made by Council President Chilton and seconded by Councilor Gundersen to approve '18' through '21' above. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Scholl, Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

WORK SESSION ACTION ITEMS

None

COUNCIL MEMBER REPORTS

Council President Chilton reported...

- Met with Jim Coleman recently and had a really good conversation.
- Attended the Toy 'N Joy Fundraiser.
- Rang the bell for Salvation Army at Safeway. A homeless man even put money in the can. It was a humbling experience.
- Attended the joint City Council Planning Commission meeting. It went well with good teamwork.
- Merry Christmas!

Councilor Sundeen reported...

- It was a good Parks and Trails Commission meeting last week. A few things discussed were:
 - Improving signage
 - Documentation of the history of the parks
 - Jerry Belcher is leading the discussion of the Urban Trail
 - There were questions about dogs in public buildings and how "well-behaved" is defined. They have referred the discussion to the Safety Committee.
 - Still one vacancy
- There were good discussions at the joint City Council and Planning Commission meeting. He looks forward to working with them more in the future.

Councilor Gundersen reported...

- Agreed that the joint Planning Commission and City Council meeting went well. He feels that everyone was heard.

Councilor Hubbard reported...

- The Library applied for a \$116,000 grant, which would fund a part-time Makerspace Technician.
- Councilor Sundeen led a great historical Christmas presentation at the Library.

MAYOR SCHOLL REPORTS

- Agreed it was a good joint City Council and Planning Commission meeting. They worked well together. There was discussion about vacant storefronts. Mainstreet agreed to help with that.
- The Toy 'N Joy auction was really good.
- Project Sprint is still moving forward. Meeting their needs for power is the biggest hurdle right now.
- Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!
- Sorry to hear about yesterday's tragedy. He is praying for the family.

OTHER BUSINESS

After a tally of votes, a tiebreaker was conducted for appointment to the Budget Committee. It resulted in the following applicants with the most votes: Ivan Salas, Jennifer Gilbert, Jennifer Massey, and Steve Toschi.

Motion: Motion made by Council President Chilton and seconded by Councilor Gundersen to appoint Ivan Salas, Jennifer Gilbert, Jennifer Massey, and Steve Toschi to the Budget Committee. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Scholl, Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

ADJOURN - 7:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder.

ATTEST:

Kathy Payne, City Recorder

Rick Scholl, Mayor



COUNCIL SPECIAL SESSION

Thursday, December 28, 2023

DRAFT MINUTES

This meeting was held via Zoom only.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Mayor Rick Scholl
Councilor Mark Gundersen
Councilor Russell Hubbard
Councilor Brandon Sundeen

MEMBERS ABSENT

Council President Jessica Chilton

STAFF PRESENT

John Walsh, City Administrator
Kathy Payne, City Recorder

OTHERS PRESENT

David Rabbino, City Attorney with Jordan Ramis
William Monahan, City Attorney with Jordan Ramis
Scott Keith, Reporter for Spotlight Newspaper
Scott Jacobson

CALL SPECIAL SESSION TO ORDER – 4:03 p.m.

At 4:06 p.m., Mayor Scholl recessed the Special Session and went into Executive Session under ORS 192.660(2)(h) Consult with Legal Counsel/Current or Potential Litigation to review the Cascades Tissue Lease Termination Agreement with City Attorney David Rabbino.

At 4:21 p.m., the Special Session was reconvened.

APPROVE AND AUTHORIZE FOR SIGNATURE

2. Cascades Tissue Lease Termination Agreement

Attorney David Rabino reported that Cascades Tissue will be responsible to pay the City \$600,000, which will be allocated to pay for sludge removal, payment for various parts and equipment that they are removing from the facility, and funding to provide security of the premises for the first six months of next year. They are also agreeing to help train City personnel to take over the mill, conducting winterization of the premises, taking care of repairs, and preparing machinery for auction. Cascades Tissue has also agreed to work with the City to solve the pending litigation, which the City will dismiss the pending appeal and Cascades Tissue will vacate the existing limiting judgement. That will clean up title issues. He recommends proceeding with the agreement. It has been negotiated in good faith and is reasonable for both parties.

Mayor Scholl agreed that this fair. Councilor Hubbard agreed. The most positive part of the closure is the end to the litigation.

Motion: Motion made by Councilor Hubbard and seconded by Councilor Gundersen authorizing Mayor Scholl to sign the departure agreement with Cascades Tissue. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Scholl, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

ADJOURN – 4:28 p.m.

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

December 28, 2023

This meeting was held via Zoom only.

Members Present: Rick Scholl, Mayor
Mark Gundersen, Councilor
Brandon Sundeen, Councilor
Russell Hubbard, Councilor

Members Absent: Jessica Chilton, Council President

Staff Present: John Walsh, City Administrator
Kathy Payne, City Recorder

Others Present: David Rabbino, City Attorney with Jordan Ramis PC
William Monahan, City Attorney with Jordan Ramis PC
Scott Keith, Reporter with the Spotlight Newspaper



At 4:06 p.m., Mayor Scholl opened the Executive Session pursuant to the ORS numbers listed below and then gave Council roll call. Other than Labor Negotiator Consultations, authorized representatives of the news media, designated staff, and other persons as approved shall be allowed to attend the Executive Session. All other members of the audience are asked to leave the Zoom 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 Legal Counsel/Current or Potential Litigation, under ORS 192.660(2)(h)**
 - Review of Cascades Tissue Lease Termination Agreement

The Executive Session was adjourned at 4:20 p.m.



ATTEST:

Kathy Payne, City Recorder

Rick Scholl, Mayor

An audio recording of this meeting is archived at City Hall.



COUNCIL WORK SESSION

Wednesday, January 03, 2024

DRAFT MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT

Mayor Rick Scholl
Council President Jessica Chilton
Councilor Mark Gundersen
Councilor Russell Hubbard
Councilor Brandon Sundeen

STAFF PRESENT

John Walsh, City Administrator	Brian Greenway, Police Chief
Crystal King, Communications Officer	Mike De Roia, Building Official
Jenny Dimsho, Associate Planner	Bill Monahan, Contracted City Attorney
Gloria Butsch, Finance Director	Tina Curry, Contracted Tourism Director

OTHERS

Ron Trommlitz	Jane Garcia	Brady Preheim
Steve Topaz	Scott Jacobson	Eddie Dunton
CDC	Shannon Sims	Lori Armstrong
MM	SB	

CALL WORK SESSION TO ORDER – 2:00 pm

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

- ◆ Chief Brian Greenway. Chief Greenway read a statement to the public and the Council apologizing to Heather Epperly and the Halloween Parade Committee for his public comment at the October 18, 2023, Council meeting where he disagreed with her statements about the police's level of service at the Halloween Parade which contradicted the City's mantra where public comment is a time for listening, not for dialogue. He had also offered his apologies to Ms. Epperly in person, noting they both were committed to strengthening communications surrounding future parades.
- ◆ Rick Scholl. Mayor Scholl apologized to Councilor Russ Hubbard for suggesting Councilor Hubbard had ex parte contact at the last work session when he was in fact referring to a City document.
- ◆ Brady Preheim. Mr. Preheim spoke about how, per the Administrator Code, 91 percent of the money collected from the hotel/motel tax would be spent on tourism. That percentage could not be reallocated to the General Fund as City Administrator Walsh said at the last work session. To remove those funds from the Tourism Director would be foolhardy as no one else knew what to do with the money. It would be another mistake made by the Council. He believed the Council needed to sign the tourism contract and if sending it out for RFP, it should be started now for 2025, not for the contract that expired a month ago. Preparations for next year's Halloweentown began last summer.

- ◆ Ron Trommlitz. Mr. Trommlitz spoke about the Walker consultant's report which Mr. Walsh had said was being withheld. The report could disclose the City's participation leading up to the 2MG reservoir rehabilitation failure which he addressed. He spoke about how concrete core samples should have been taken before the W49 contract was bid, the core sample results taken six weeks after the settlement and mutual release agreement, and the results of the petrographic examination.
- ◆ Steve Topaz. Mr. Topaz asked if the denial to share his slides via USB drive was an administrative decision; it had been allowed up until last year. He would send the Council what his slides said. He said the community should have a final say as to the changes to the Riverwalk Project. St. Helens had historically been a large polluter of the Columbia River, and he addressed how the city still was, wondering if the City had asked the Army Corps, DEQ, and other agencies how federal involvement in the clean-up plan of the river would affect the City's plans. He spoke about how the flow of contaminated groundwater caused cave-ins, demonstrating the land next to the river was unstable and about the studies of the waterfront, the cooling pond, the creosote plant, and the mill plant.
- ◆ Lori Armstrong. Ms. Armstrong said she was in attendance to represent the Christians in the community and expressed concerns about the decorations in the square not representing what Christians celebrate. She spoke about the Wiccan and Pagan decorations, asking who made the decisions for the statues in the County-owned center square. The Christian community would like to put a Nativity scene in the square next Christmas and a cross for Easter, and she would like feedback and direction.

DISCUSSION TOPICS

1. Review Revised Riverwalk Plans - *Shannon Simms, Mayer/Reed*

Associate Planner Jenny Dimsho reviewed via PowerPoint the recent timeline, process, bids, and revisions as well as the \$2.3 million in grant funding for the Columbia View Park project. The remainder of the \$3 million construction budget and all the design work was the Urban Renewal Agency contribution. She clarified the project was bid from July to September of 2023 and the Local Government Grant program knew the City was planning on construction in 2024. The Land and Water Conservation Grant had a five-year horizon.

Mayor Scholl asked staff to think about whether it would make sense to put the project out for bid again.

Shannon Simms, Mayer/Reed, reviewed the redesigned project proposal which took into account the value engineering discussed with staff after analyzing the bids that were much higher than anticipated. Efforts were refocused on just the main Riverwalk component which was largely unchanged from the design in the previous bid package. The stage area redesign was removed from the project scope proposal; the existing playground and splash pad were not changed.

Key discussion items regarding the revised Riverwalk plans were as follows:

- Mr. Walsh noted the revisions made were an attempt to downsize the project enough to preserve the elements so they can happen in the future when funds become available and also meet the expectations of the grant.
- It was confirmed the south pathway going all the way to the end one day would connect to Phase 2 when there is additional funding which had always been the plan for Phase 1.
- Ms. Simms clarified that what they designed already for the stage would fit in the future or with minor adjustments.

- Mayor Scholl believed the cost to move the playground could not be that expensive, noting it would be nice to have the playground on the other side. He asked for the Parks and Trails Commission to be consulted about the possibility.
- Council President Chilton did not believe the playground could be taken apart and put back together safely.
- Ms. Simms described the stormwater facility, clarifying it might not be the size as shown in the revised site plan because the rest of the design team was mobilizing to update plans to match the displayed scheme.
- Councilor Sundeen advocated for very low-maintenance in the planned slope area, asking Ms. Dimsho to attend the Parks and Trails Commission meeting next week. She replied that she had asked that the revised project be added to the Commission's agenda.
- Mayor Scholl agreed with Councilor Hubbard about making the stage fit now so that what would be built now would not have to be torn out.
- Ms. Dimsho clarified the City was not chasing \$2.3 million in grants; the grants were required and were entirely for the Riverwalk project.
- She further clarified the funding for the design costs outside of the grants would come from the Urban Renewal Agency and the special Public Works fund which was a loan program through the state. The grants required the City's contribution which was addressed by Finance Director Gloria Butsch.
- Ms. Dimsho said she hoped moving forward and going out for bid, the cost for the project would not be above what the City had. The City had numbers in hand from going out to bid that said that would not happen. The Urban Renewal Agency would cover whatever it takes to get the project built.
- Ms. Simms addressed why the estimate from September 2023 was so wildly different from the one in January 2024, explaining how the site design project was now much simpler which should be more aligned with the anticipated budget.
- Council President Chilton spoke about why she wished the Council had been more included on what would be removed from and what would remain in the project design. Ms. Simms noted the OPRD grants were not able to be used for the stage construction, which is why the stage and the playground were separated out.
- Staff had thought about whether aspects could be done in-house to bring costs down, with regard to demolition in particular. With not a lot of demolition work involved and not a lot of cost savings to be found, they ended up pursuing just the contractor providing all services.
- Staff clarified bidding for the project would begin in early February with bids closing at the end of February/early March and hopefully contracting for March with a start date in April.
- Mr. Walsh noted that the Urban Renewal Agency and the Council were two separate entities even though the same people served in both groups. It would become clearer how the money flows with the regular budget and the Urban Renewal Agency budget orientation.
- Ms. Dimsho clarified the project was expected to take one year and that it was already anticipated that summertime activities would be shuffled due to other construction during the same time period.
- Mayor Scholl spoke about how, as a citizen, he found the plan very nice because of the concrete involved.
- Council President Chilton recommended educating the public on why there would be a new walkway when the playground was falling apart.
- Councilor Hubbard spoke about his belief that the Parks Commission needed to enter into putting a number on yearly maintenance. He and Mayor Scholl discussed whether the City was responsible or if a private option was better.

- Council President Chilton stated if the City did look at shifting the playground, she would not feel comfortable unless provided information on how to move the playground and if it would damage the equipment.

2. Building Division Semi-Annual Report - *Building Official Mike De Roia*

Building Official Mike De Roia presented via PowerPoint his report covering July to December of 2023, which was included in the meeting packet and highlighted the Division's workload, inspectors and intergovernmental agreements that help maintain their levels of service, Building Codes Division (BCD) updates at the state level, completion of the specialized plumbing inspection course to obtain certification, BCD's technical bulletin on the psilocybin regulations, and current major projects under construction. He had some Code update classes to keep up with. As time allowed, he was trying to get the Fire and Floating Code sections of the Municipal Code updated.

He clarified that Dairy Queen had been approved for land use but had not yet submitted for building permits. He noted he let people know to contact him or his team if they encounter any problems with the State Inspection's Accela program.

3. Discussion regarding Police Staffing

Mr. Walsh noted Chief Greenway had talked to Sheriff Pixley about staffing/coverage.

Mayor Scholl said the City should probably schedule a meeting with the Police again to talk about the hybrid schedule.

Mr. Walsh spoke about revising the Union collective bargaining agreement (CBA) regarding call backs. The City needed to talk with the Union as overtime was currently voluntary and the City was limited in its ability to call officers back. Staff would like to get language in the contract to require officers to come back and work once the Police Department has more capacity.

Key discussion items regarding the Police staffing were as follows:

- Council President Chilton did not believe now was the right time to require officers to come back due to the officers communicating they are overworked. Councilor Sundeen noted the Police were willing to have the conversation about call backs.
- Mr. Walsh clarified that eliminating 24-hour coverage was definitely on the table.
- He further clarified the City did not have the budget to hire additional officers right now and would have to make decisions on how to maintain a level of service.
- Mayor Scholl said he would like to look at other revenues to get the hiring process going, maybe even between now and the budget process, at least for one or two officers.
- Mr. Walsh spoke of running the proposed budget scenarios with Finance Director Butsch, both with and without construction of the police project, noting the Police would like more officers rather than the new building.
- Council President Chilton asked even if the City traded the building for staffing would it not be enough. Mr. Walsh replied the \$10 fee on the utility bill could be taken along with a tweak in the Code to pay for officers which would help a lot. He confirmed the payment had been paying debt service on something that did not exist. Mayor Scholl added it also paid for the design.
- Mayor Scholl asked if it would be possible to take the debt and roll it into Urban Renewal and use it for projects. Mr. Walsh replied staff had met with the City's bond funders. Rather than paying interest on borrowed money, the City could actually put the money to work.
- Ms. Butsch clarified the City would eventually have to give the money back in some way and had until September 2024 to substantially use the bond proceeds.
- Council President Chilton noted the Police had asked for three officers last year. What was under discussion would not really help them much. Times were different now, and the Council did not have a current staffing report.

- Mayor Scholl stated he wanted other services provided by the City as well; the Council had a whole City to run. Council President Chilton noted all of the other services were funded. He replied only the police budget had gone up 140 percent.
- He said the City needed to look at the budget in a collaborative effort.
- Council President Chilton noted if the Council kept putting bandages on the problem, it would never end. Mayor Scholl replied that throwing money at the problem was not working either. She asked if the City had met with the Police to go over their budget. Mayor Scholl replied he wanted to ask questions about the police budget; he had not been able to.
- Councilor Sundeen said the City needed to look at the police budget just like it needed to look at every other budget. He was concerned if the station were put too far on the backburner it would never happen.
- Mayor Scholl stated the matter could not wait until Budget Committee meets. He believed it required immediate Council action to have a special meeting with the police in Council Chambers to talk about staffing and the police station.
- Councilor Hubbard said he wanted to hear from Chief Greenway if he was in charge of the police budget.
- Mayor Scholl noted that nobody was accusing anybody of anything but just trying to look where money could be saved and find ways of creating more officer positions.
- Council President Chilton noted the police had been asking for a sustainable plan.
- Mr. Walsh said if the City moved forward with using the \$10 water bill to pay for staffing, the police could start the staffing process immediately.
- Council President Chilton explained how it was difficult to do lateral hiring of officers; one reason was because St. Helens had very high standards.
- The Council discussed when they and staff would meet with the officers and police administration and whether to make it a special session in the event the Council wanted to make a decision.

The Council decided to schedule a meeting next week with officers and police administration to discuss options.

4. Report from City Administrator John Walsh

Mr. Walsh presented his report. Key highlights were as follows:

- He reviewed the decade of Waterfront planning efforts leading to where the City was today with the work coming to life.
- A meeting will be held tomorrow with the Riverfront businesses and Downtown residents to discuss the upcoming construction impacts from the streets and utilities project. Staff was looking at going out to solicit private developers again this year, likely in the summer.
- Project Sprint's letter of intent would come due in a couple weeks. Staff had been working hard to get the information Project Sprint needed to decide whether to move forward. He noted Project Sprint had not proposed any buildings on top of the existing mill footprint.
- Cascades left on good terms, leaving the property as good as or better than they found it. Staff had been drafting a redevelopment strategy leading into some kind of a business plan model. He spoke about the range of interest in the redevelopment and some possibilities for the future of the site.
- Mayor Scholl asked for the Council to be kept apprised as staff started getting proposals and ideas. He would not mind sitting down with people who had dealt with mills in their town shutting down. The Council discussed potential uses of the former Cascades site.
- Because the existing machines would only be valuable if they were kept with rolls turning and some minimal amount of heat on them, Mr. Walsh authorized Rory Moore to spend four hours a week turning the machines at least for the next few weeks.

- Councilor Hubbard spoke about talking with Mark about the water being shut off at the site and that Mark wanted to start up the fire hydrants. He believed Kalama, Vancouver, and Portland Fire should be notified that the City was on limited protection.
- Council President Chilton thanked Mr. Walsh for the plan he came up with to keep the mill buildings safe and operational.
- At the last meeting the Council expressed a desire for a short-term extension of the tourism contract. Mr. Walsh asked how the Council envisioned the extension. He acknowledged Mr. Preheim's comments about the use of the hotel/motel tax funds were accurate.
- Discussing the contract was on tonight's regular session agenda.
- The Council and Mr. Walsh discussed reviewing the tourism contract. Councilor Hubbard spoke about how he wanted a full review including input from taxpayers and citizens, to start fresh since the current contract was over.
- Council President Chilton suggested when reviewing the contract, the City Attorneys should be consulted about independent contractor rules. Mayor Scholl agreed with Councilor Sundeen that it would be good if the Council could help get rid of some of the controversy around tourism and make it work better for all involved.
- Staff submitted a \$150,000 grant last Friday to the Marine Board for Courthouse Docks improvements/repairs.

ADJOURN – 4:24 pm**EXECUTIVE SESSION – None**

Respectfully submitted by Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder.

ATTEST:

Crystal King, Communications Officer

Rick Scholl, Mayor



COUNCIL REGULAR SESSION

Wednesday, January 03, 2024

DRAFT MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT

Mayor Rick Scholl
Council President Jessica Chilton
Councilor Mark Gundersen
Councilor Russell Hubbard
Councilor Brandon Sundeen

STAFF PRESENT

John Walsh, City Administrator
Crystal King, Communications Officer
Jenny Dimsho, Associate Planner
Suzanne Bishop, Library Director
Tina Curry, Contracted Event Coordinator

OTHERS

Jennifer Massey	Christina Sullivan
Jim Coleman	Sidney Sullivan
Kai Huschke	Brady Preheim
Nick Hellmich	CDC
Steve Toschi	Arthur Leskowich
Eddie Dunton	

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

- ◆ Nick Hellmich. He heard public comment earlier and does not want a nativity scene in the Plaza. That exposes the City to litigation. The presenter was not speaking for all Christians. He also pointed out that the City's YouTube channel allows comments, which could be misconstrued.
- ◆ Brady Preheim. He suggested a levy be done for police funding. The police station could be remodeled using the garage space, and then add additional storage space. He is not in agreement with putting Councilor Hubbard in charge of tourism when he doesn't know what tourism is. Tina Curry makes it look easy. She doesn't have a contract and decisions need to be made now. This is probably the most successful tourism program in the state.
- ◆ Christina Sullivan, speaking as a private citizen. There are 15,000 people living in St. Helens. Just because people aren't coming here to complain doesn't mean they agree. She hopes they make decisions that are best for the whole city and not just the few coming here with an agenda. There has always been drama associated with tourism no matter who has run it. Based on the income and attendance, tourism is very successful now. They should be thanking E2C and Tina Curry for

her commitment. The City is in a financial crisis and spending time revamping the contract is a misuse of time and money.

- ◆ Steve Toschi. He addressed serious budget problems that need to be worked on now. The Budget Committee needs to meet sooner than planned to begin working on those problems. Tourism is very successful. The contract with the current contractor should be extended for six months.
- ◆ Jim Coleman. Every time someone has a problem with Tina Curry, those people are attacked, including himself. There is constant controversy. The Council made a controversial decision to add a \$10 Public Safety Fee to utility bills. He does not agree with the discussion at the work session to not build a police station and instead just spend all the money. The money should only be used for the police station.
- ◆ Jennifer Massey. She would like the Council to make a collaborative goal to be transparent this year.

ORDINANCES – First Reading

1. **Ordinance No. 3298:** An Ordinance to Amend the City of St. Helens Comprehensive Plan Map for Certain Property from Light Industrial, LI Designation to the General Residential, GR Designation and the Zoning District Map from Light Industrial, LI Zone to the General Residential, R5 Zone (475 N. 12th Street)

Mayor Scholl read Ordinance No. 3298 by title. The final reading will be held at the next meeting.

CONSENT AGENDA FOR APPROVAL

2. OLCC Licenses
3. Accounts Payable Bill Lists

Motion: Motion made by Council President Chilton and seconded by Councilor Sundeen to approve '2' and '3' above. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Scholl, Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

WORK SESSION ACTION ITEMS

Special Session scheduled for Wednesday, January 10, 2024, at 6:00 p.m. to discuss the current fiscal year Police Department budget and the police station project.

COUNCIL MEMBER REPORTS

Council President Chilton reported...

- Happy New Year!
- Working on a resolution for the police staffing issues.
- Advocate of moving forward with the police station plans. Ethical to continue to do what they said they were going to do with that money.
- Encouraged public to educate themselves about the waterfront project and Project Sprint.
- A comment was made about the negative comments made at Council meetings. She reminds herself that there are over 14,000 here and most of them are not attending these meetings. She never came to any meetings before getting elected. That doesn't mean that she didn't care, she just expected the people who were elected to represent her. They must listen and think of everyone.

Councilor Sundeen reported...

- Happy New Year!
- There is still an opening on the Parks and Trails Commission.
- There is interest in revamping the Japanese Gardens at McCormick Park.

- He appreciates being here and working with the Council. His goal is to improve communication with the public. Sometimes just sitting down and talking with someone is all they need to help bring understanding.
- Requested to talk about the Budget Committee timeline.

Councilor Gundersen reported...

- He looks forward to the police staffing and funding meeting coming up.
- He agreed with Councilor Sundeen's goal to improve communication with the public.

Councilor Hubbard reported...

- Unfortunately, the Library did not receive the Makerspace Grant.

MAYOR SCHOLL REPORTS

- They have had to budget like everyone else. They need to be proactive with some of these current budget decisions before the new fiscal year budget goes into effect.
- He looks forward to 2024 and the upcoming projects.

OTHER BUSINESS

City Administrator Walsh looked at prior Budget Committee meetings. They all fell within the same time frames in previous years. The budget is being actively worked on now.

Mayor Scholl pointed out that Tina Curry is doing a great job. The problem is with the contract and not her.

ADJOURN – 7:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder.

ATTEST:

Crystal King, Communications Officer

Rick Scholl, Mayor