

City of St. Helens

CITY COUNCIL

Work Session Minutes

December 16, 2015

Members Present: Randy Peterson, Mayor
Doug Morten, Council President
Keith Locke, Councilor
Susan Conn, Councilor
Ginny Carlson, Councilor

Staff Present: John Walsh, City Administrator
Jon Ellis, Finance Director
Kathy Payne, City Recorder
Margaret Jeffries, Library Director
Neal Sheppard, Public Works Operations Director
Sue Nelson, Public Works Engineering Director
Howie Burton, Water Filtration Facility Supervisor
Nathan Jones, Librarian I

Others: Amanda Renner Nicole Thill

Mayor Randy Peterson called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.



Visitor Comments

No comments received.

Employee Length of Service Awards

We are happy to announce that we have two employees who have reached big milestones in their employment with the City of St. Helens. The following individuals will receive a certificate and pin at the December 16 Council work session.

10 Years

Howie Burton came to work for the City as a Water Treatment Operator in November of 2005. In July of 2013, he was promoted to Water Filtration Facility Supervisor where he continues to serve the public with the best drinking water this side of the Mississippi!

5 Years

Nathan Jones began working for the City in November of 2010 as a part-time Librarian. With the help of a grant received by the Library, Nathan began working full-time on a temporary basis starting in July of 2012. Fortunately, we were able to bring him on as a regular full-time employee in July of this year. Nathan works primarily with children and does an excellent job of providing high quality services to our community!

Congratulations to Howie and Nathan, and thank you for your service!

Parking on 1st Street – Results of Affected Resident Participation

Background

In September 2015, the Council first considered the modification to the existing Municipal Code which allows vehicle parking on the sidewalk on S. 1st Street in front of the addresses between 100 S. 1st Street and 160 S. 1st Street. This is a specific exception to the overall City Code prohibiting parking on a sidewalk in all other areas of the city. Vehicle parking on the sidewalk along this section of narrow roadway has initiated complaints in the past when the vehicles have covered the majority of the sidewalk, restricting or prohibiting safe pedestrian passage. It is often necessary for pedestrians to step out into the northbound traffic lanes to get around the vehicles. When vehicles do not leave at least 3 feet of clear passage, it also creates a violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). However, off-street parking is very limited and guests, contractors, and/or service vehicles typically do not have any other option for parking when making a call to the homes and apartments along this section. The Corridor Master Plan (CMP), adopted in February 2015 as an addendum to the 2011 Transportation System Plan, recommends eliminating all on-street (and on-sidewalk) parking along the east side of S. 1st Street between Columbia Boulevard and St. Helens Street or, as an alternative, to consider narrowing portions of the 8-ft wide sidewalk to the minimum 5-feet and potentially provide limited parking pockets. In either case, the CMP recommends reversing the code that allows on-sidewalk parking.

At least one of the impacted property owners expressed concerns about the modification to the Code and the Council asked to have the issue put on hold to provide an opportunity to further review the issue and provide additional information to the property owners and residents.

On December 1, Public Works Engineering Director Nelson went door-to-door and spoke with four of the five renters and four of the six property owners. Each was also invited to a meeting held on December 8 to further discuss the Code change and get their thoughts on developing alternative parking options. Letters were mailed to the renters and owners that were not be personally reached that day. One of the property owners called and set up an alternative time to meet and go over their thoughts and preferences. One person attended the meeting on December 8.

Summary

Overall, the owners and renters of the homes and apartments between 100 S. 1st Street and 160 S. 1st Street understand the primary issue and the problems that are created when vehicles park across the sidewalk in such a way that pedestrian and ADA passage is restricted. The following is a summary of the discussions with the various property owners and residents:

Owner or Resident	Comment
Owner/resident	Understands reason for Code change. Would prefer <u>no</u> on-street parking be created. Could potentially create additional traffic hazards and problems during high-traffic volume events such as Spirt of Halloweentown and Fourth of July.
Owner/resident	Understands reason for Code change. Generally in favor of on-street parking.
Owner/resident	Against any change to Code. No change is needed. City is protected from legal action by Comprehensive Plan. Change to ordinance is being forced on owners.
Owner	Understands reason for Code change. Concerned if all on-street/sidewalk parking is eliminated it will negatively impact ability to maintain the property i.e., landscapers, contractors, etc. In favor of on-street parking.

Resident	No comment.
Resident	Understands reason for Code change. Generally in favor of on-street parking.
Resident	Understands reason for Code change. Generally in favor of on-street parking.
Resident	No response.
Resident	Understands reason for Code change. Generally in favor of on-street parking. Parking is limited for apartment residents and visitors.
Owner/resident	Understands reason for Code change. Generally in favor of on-street parking. Cares for parent with a wheelchair.
Owner/resident	No response.

Recommendation

Follow the recommendation of the City's Transportation System Plan as amended by the Corridor Master Plan and revise the Municipal Code to eliminate the provision allowing parking on the sidewalk on the east side of S. 1st Street in front of the properties at 100 through 160 S. 1st Street. Direct staff on the Council's preference to further investigate the possibility of modifying the existing sidewalk to provide parking pockets along the same section.

Council and Nelson discussed the potential of adding parallel parking and reducing the sidewalk to five feet in width. This may impact landscaping if it is in the right-of-way. However, there may be areas that parking cannot be added due to driveways and utility poles. They won't know until a survey is completed.

Mayor Peterson directed staff to get an estimate on what a survey would cost and bring that information back to the Council.

Discussion on Marijuana Business License Fee

City Administrator Walsh reported that the fee is related to administration, service and enforcement of the license. The higher the fee, the more likely it will be challenged. Portland is \$3,750. He recommends \$2,500 for St. Helens. It can be adjusted in the future.

Council concurred with \$2,500 as a start. It will be on tonight's agenda as a resolution.

Discussion about Library Staffing

Library Director Jeffries reported that the Youth Librarian has resigned and a vacancy will occur. They also have an employee who will be on maternity leave next year. Jeffries recommends posting a short-term part-time Library Assistant position to cover that gap. A current library assistant will continue the in-house story times. They will not be able to continue the outreach outside of the library until that position is filled.

Council was in consensus to proceed as staff recommends.

Review Proposed Identity Theft Prevention Program Policy

Finance Director Ellis summarized what the program is about. A copy is included in the archive meeting packet. It provides for improved security.

Department Reports

Public Works Engineering Director Nelson reported...

- The power pedestals at the docks have not been working since last week. A service technician came out and discovered it was an electronics failure in the control unit that controls the communication between the kiosk and the internet. It needed to be reset.

Public Works Operations Director Sheppard reported...

- Marc Knudsen and Jim Thorp are retiring at the end of this month. There will be a pizza party on December 31 for them. Jim's job, which is a Wastewater Collection Operation, was advertised internally. Scott Jauron met the qualifications and was awarded that position. Scott's job, which is a Water Operator, will be advertised internally as well. They will be recruiting for a Utility Worker I position to fill the position of whoever is offered the Water Operator position. He and Nelson will be reviewing Marc's job description before opening that position.
- Thank you to Holly Haebe and the CENT team for their work during the flooding. There was more citizen involvement this time as well.

Library Director Jeffries reported...

- Nothing to report.

Finance Director Ellis reported...

- Nothing to report.

City Recorder Payne reported...

- Nothing to report.

City Administrator Walsh reported...

- He received a request from CCMH to assist with a grant application. It is through the Oregon Health Authority up to \$500,000 for jail diversion services. They would like Jenny Dimsho to assist and will pay her wages. The application is due February 9. Council was in support.
- The Christmas Tree Lighting was a soggy success. He thanked the volunteers.

Council Reports

Mayor Peterson reported...

- Thanked everyone for their hard work during the flooding. He appreciates it.

Councilor Conn reported...

- Attended the Oregon Business Plan's Leadership Summit on Monday. They discussed the proposed transportation package, Oregon jobs, education, boosting rural economic development and outdoor recreation. She appreciates the opportunity to attend.

Council President Morten reported...

- He acknowledged the volunteers that made the Christmas Tree Lighting a success, especially SHEDCO. It was very well done.
- This is our last meeting of the year. He thanked the Council for a really good year. Mayor Peterson added that they have made some big decisions this year. Council worked together well.
- One of the things that he likes to see is that St. Helens kept out of the headlines because we didn't have any major flooding instances with our infrastructure. Thank you to the hard working Public Works staff.
- Department head evaluations are due by the end of year.
- He will be here for the retirement of Jim and Marc on December 31. He regrets missing the last one.

Councilor Carlson reported...

- She and Lieutenant Graham met with Judy from NAMI this morning at Walmart to help with

the gifts for those suffering from mental illness in our community. NAMI raised \$9,500 for Columbia County.

- She and Councilor Locke are working with the Youth Council to address their issues and get more people involved. They have seen a lot of change since the beginning.

Councilor Locke reported...

- There are 15 members on the Youth Council now. They really need more sophomores and juniors to join. They are going to lose their seniors and most of the others are freshman.
- The Christmas Ships dinner went really well. Thank you to Sunshine Pizza, IGA Market, Dockside, Klondike and Noi's Thai Kitchen. There were about 60 people eating.
- He agreed that a lot was done over the last year. The next year is sure to be even better.
- After this meeting, he will be moving the peanut butter and jelly collected through Holiday Hope to the fairgrounds.

Other Business

No other business.

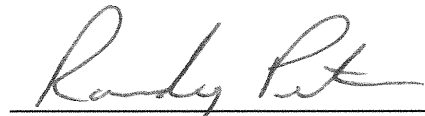


There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:55 p.m.

ATTEST:



Kathy Payne, City Recorder



Randy Peterson, Mayor