

# City of St. Helens

## CITY COUNCIL

Work Session Minutes

January 7, 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  
Terry Moss, Police Chief  
Neal Sheppard, Interim Public Works Co-Director  
Sue Nelson, Interim Public Works Co-Director  
Liz Esposito, Main Street Program Coordinator  
Jenny Dimsho, Assistant Planner

**Others:** Chuck Daughtry Mark Miller Amanda Frink

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

*This meeting is contained in audio file 010715CCWS.MP3 on file at City Hall.*



### **Oaths of Office**

Municipal Court Judge Cindy Phillips administered the oath of office to Mayor Peterson, Council President Morten and Councilor Conn.

### **Visitor Comments**

No visitor comments received.

### **Semi-Annual Report from Columbia County Economic Team**

CCET Executive Director Chuck Daughtry was in attendance to provide the semi-annual report.

CCET is the economic recruitment and retention for the county as a whole. We are not a part of the County but we represent the entities within the county. There are many companies and agencies that are members of CCET including Portland Community College. He thanked everyone who came out for their breakfast. They had 117 guests. They had a golf tournament on May 5 and had over 100 golfers.

In addition to recruitment and retention, they manage two enterprise zones in the county.

The South Columbia County Enterprise Zone includes St. Helens, Columbia City, Scappoose, Columbia County, Port of St. Helens and Vernonia. The Lower Columbia Maritime Enterprise Zone includes Rainier, Clatskanie, Port of St. Helens, Columbia County and Clatsop County for the Wauna Mill. Cascades Tissue was the 2014 award winner for business expansion. We

hosted an open house for Clearwater Manufacturing and Port of St. Helens in October. They have 10 employees and over \$1.3 million invested in their building on Old Portland Road. They have been bought out by a competitor and will expand to 35-45 employees over the next year. Photo Solutions was another award winner for small business expansion. Last year, their employee count expanded from 14 to 23. They hire the best and brightest kids out of Vernonia High School. They hire for attitude and train for skills. Their sales have grown from \$1.5 million to \$3.5 million in the last year. They have invested over \$500,000 in capitol.

There are several other enterprise zone applications pending in Rainier, St. Helens, and Scappoose. Daughtry reviewed current projects:

- They have spent a lot of time working with A Street businesses in Rainier. It is extremely dangerous with the train running right through the middle of the street. ODOT is involved as well.
- We have been in discussions with ORPET to add products to their recycling lines. There is less plastic being used in products.
- Armstrong is considering expansion. They are a great company with a positive investment in Columbia County.
- Portland Community College is working with several local businesses.
- They met with a group that is forming an artist vendor mall in the old hardware building in Clatskanie. There is a lot of energy at the start of things like this. It's a good group of people and a great concept.
- Trying to get more support for the bicycle workshop in Vernonia. The County is looking at reopening the Crown Zellerbach Trail from Scappoose to Vernonia and then linking it to a trail from Banks.
- He is writing an application to assist with the Shop Local campaign to get a grant. A lot of criticism over businesses not being open when commuters are here is heard but he's not sure that's the issue. We need to figure out what the market is and how we can attract those businesses that can serve the market as it is.
- We are working with CECC (NW Innovation Works) at Port Westward. It's still in the permitting land lease negotiations with the Port. The whole project has been hurry up and wait but there should be more activity in the summer. It is still in play. It will be tremendous in terms of the tax revenue that will be generated.

### **Communications 2nd Quarter Report**

Communications Officer Crystal Farnsworth presented her report which is included in the archive packet for this meeting.

### **Proposed Marijuana and Land Use Laws**

City Planner Jacob Graichen reminded the Council that they requested the Planning Commission discuss this at their next meeting. In order for the Planning Commission to move on, they need the Council's official blessing on moving forward with developing land use laws regulating marijuana. Graichen reviewed what current law allows. It would treat it like any commercial retail and allow it in retail zones. The Planning Commission recommends only allowing the use in Heavy Industrial and Light Industrial zoning districts by conditional use permit. They also recommend 1000 foot buffer from schools.

Mayor Peterson has a little bit of a problem with the use of industrial property for a commercial enterprise. Light industrial properties maybe but the heavy industrial zones should be for heavy industrial uses. Graichen pointed out that churches and parks are allowed in industrial uses. He suggested finding ways to mitigate what would normally not be allowed in industrial areas.

Council President Morten agrees with the misuse of a commercial outlet in a heavy industrial

area. The Planning Commission should take a look at commercial areas. Why have they taken a retail outlet into the heavy industrial zone? Graichen explained their concerns about it being on a major thoroughfare. It takes it off the thoroughfares by placing it in industrial areas. The law talks about protecting children and they don't tend to congregate in industrial areas. The other thought is building classification. For instance, if someone builds a new building and it has a building classification of 'M' for mercantile, if the business fails you are left with a building built to a certain classification that can't be used for much else. That could create an issue in the future as well.

Mayor Peterson is not in favor of creating that space in a heavy industrial areas. Councilors Locke and Conn agree.

Councilor Carlson pointed out the effect on neighboring businesses and routes to schools. Commercial zones are predominately routes to schools. Mayor Peterson understands that but at the same time, we need to protect our heavy industrial zones for economic development.

Graichen will take this back to the Planning Commission and then bring it back to the Council for review.

### **Proposal for Land Use Amendment to Increase Building Coverage on Residential Lots**

Main Street Coordinator Liz Esposito is requesting building coverage be increased by 5% on residential lots. Recent building trends have shown people want larger homes. The Planning Commission discussed this last month.

Mayor Peterson asked if this is consistent with other cities. Graichen reported that it is. They are seeing an increase in single story homes, which requires more lot coverage.

There was no objection from the Council to move forward with the proposal.

### **Discuss Need for Police Station Roof Repair**

Police Chief Terry Moss said that when we had the heavy winds in December some flashing came up and had to be refastened. When Marc went up there to repair it, he discovered that we needed a new roof.

There was no objection from the Council to replace the roof. Chief Moss will wait for the third bid to come and then review them with Councilor Locke before proceeding.

### **Department Reports**

**Police Chief Moss** reported...

- Friday was the last day for the open round of applications. Seven applicants will be interviewed.
- We had a slow holiday season at our office.
- Tonight's agenda includes a request for the Mayor sign an IGA between us and the City of Portland to update the database system.
- The third bid for the roof just came in. It was much higher than the other two.

**Interim Public Works Co-Director Nelson** reported...

- Over the past couple of meetings, you guys have seen recommendations from citizens and the Planning Commission on doing an SDC incentive for redevelopment in the downtown area. You also expressed interest in having our SDC consultant give a report. She contacted John Gilarducci from the FCS Group, who has done all of our recent SDC studies.

He has given us a proposal. The cost for the report and presentation to Council is about \$7,700. Ellis would need to re-appropriate funds to Planning or NonDepartmental.

Mayor Peterson suggested City Administrator Walsh check with other cities to see how doing something similar impacted them before proceeding.

**Interim Public Works Co-Director Sheppard** reported...

- Since he's been here, he does not think he's ever seen so much infrastructure damaged as in the last month and a half. Three fences, a bridge, a fire hydrant, a light pole, and a guard rail were all damaged in that time. The good news is that we caught all of them and have their insurance information.

**Library Director Jeffries** reported...

- On Saturday, January 17 at 11 a.m., Gideon Freudmann will perform an electric cello concert.
- Babysitter training will be offered on January 16 and February 6.
- On Thursday, January 22 at 7 p.m., Professor Tod Sloan of Lewis and Clark Graduate School of Education and Counseling will lead participants in a conversation about how our sense of community is created, eroded and transformed in the age of the internet.
- She was approached by a member of the Cowlitz Ukulele Association. They are interested in forming a ukulele group in St. Helens. On Saturday, February 7 at 10 a.m. they will be meeting at the Library to gauge interest.

**Finance Director Ellis** reported...

- He's working on sending out the draft calendar to Budget Committee members.
- Hopes to have the mid-year report done for the next meeting.
- Springbrook will be offline January 29 through February 2. There will be minimum impact to customers. Crystal will include information in the monthly e-newsletter.
- Council computers are in. Max can come over after the work session to get everyone set up.
- The audit is completely done. It has been sent to the state. They will present the report at the next Council meeting.
- There is a 4.5% rate increase that will be reflected on the next bill. He is writing an information sheet to post on the website and make available to customers. As things are improving, he is optimistic that future rate increases will be less.

**City Recorder Payne** reported...

- The City/County Quarterly meeting is next Tuesday.

**City Administrator Walsh** reported...

- The SHEDCO Elf on the Shelf event was extremely successful. There were 117 kids that came in to get a prize.
- The McCormick Park bridge project is moving forward. Jenny is working on that with the Parks Commission.
- There is not enough new information to warrant an executive session.

**Council Reports**

**Mayor Peterson** reported...

- He intends to leave Council assignments the way they are unless someone wants to do something different. See him before tonight's meeting if anyone has a request.
- This weekend, there is going to be a whole bunch of little basketball players in town. All the gymnasiums in the school districts are being used for a basketball tournament. The Sports

Boosters are looking for volunteers.

- He questioned the smoke-free public forum. Councilor Locke said that was his request. Public Health has requested that we designate the parks as smoke-free. In the past, Council has received requests from businesses about making areas smoke-free. People smoke on benches on the sidewalk and it carries into their business. Jeffries would like to discourage smoking on the Library porch as well.

**Councilor Conn** reported...

- She attended the swearings-in at the County for the elected officials on Monday.
- She spoke to a member of the Columbia County Art Guild. They are planning to file a 501(c)(3) and are working on creating a collaborative artist space for lessons and work for local artists.
- Yesterday, she attended the Business Oregon Leadership Summit. It focused on strengthening world economies by supporting Oregon natural resource industries. She was particularly interested in the industrial lands readiness workshop. She made good contacts and exchanged information with other agencies.

**Council President Morten** reported...

- He forwarded an email to Council and staff from the City of Sandy's Parks & Recreation Director. They distribute a semi-annual newsletter of all the events in the city. We could do something similar.
- Asked Sheppard to speak about the Water Filtration Facility power and phone outage. Sheppard explained that the phone lines were down for four days. The facility had to be physically manned around the clock. We are looking at some different options. The power outage affected the reservoir and pump stations as well. He was disappointed by CRPUD's response time. Morten spoke to CRPUD about a priority list. Municipalities should be a higher priority.
- He is concerned about many of the power poles in St. Helens that are leaning. He will be talking to CRPUD about those. They need to be brought up to standards.
- He's excited about Sand Island getting finished with the new bathroom facilities.

**Councilor Carlson** reported...

- She appreciates all the hard work done during the power outage.

**Councilor Locke** reported...

- Nothing to report.

**Executive Session**

**ORS 192.660(2)(e) Real Property Transactions**

An executive session was not needed.

**Other Business**

No other business.

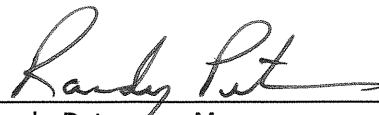


There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:23 p.m.

ATTEST:



Kathy Payne, City Recorder



Randy Peterson, Mayor