

City of St. Helens

CITY COUNCIL

Work Session Minutes

August 17, 2016

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

Members Absent: Ginny Carlson, Councilor

Staff Present: John Walsh, City Administrator
Matt Brown, Finance Director
Kathy Payne, City Recorder
Margaret Jeffries, Library Director
Sue Nelson, Public Works Engineering Director
Carol Green, Accounting Technician
Heidi Davis, Building/Administration Secretary
Jacob Graichen, City Planner

Others:	Steve Topaz	Dean Adams	Suzi Alexander
	Karlyn Kenny	Gabby Alexander	Hannah Hayduk
	Jim Tierney	Martha Olmstead	Leanne Murray
	Cheryl Young	Portia Swenson	Glen Swenson
	Mark Kreutzer	Nicole Thille	Cody Mann
	Jason Baughmen	St. Helens Soccer Team Members	

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



Visitor Comments

♦ Steve Topaz. He has two areas of comments.

- 1) Waterfront Development. Particularly, the use of the present cooling pond being used as a repository. He showed a picture of the waterfront taken in the 1920's. It shows that it was all pilings at one time. If you go upstairs in the Old Courthouse and look at the picture towards Scappoose Bay, you will see that the cooling pond was once river level and the train tracks were on a trestle. Everything in that area has been filled in and considerably raised. That is an earthquake danger zone. He is concerned about using the membrane with toxic waste. In time, they will fail. The plastic will fracture apart over time. He strongly recommends that no toxic waste that could pollute the river be put there.
- 2) Homeless. He worked with the homeless in Salt Lake City. There are basically three groups; druggies and alcoholics, mentally incompetent and people who have had a bad time in life and need help to get out. We are the next target when Portland pushes out their homeless. They can become a problem quickly.

♦ Dean Adams. He came to a recent Council meeting talking about speeders on S. 15th Street. A speeder recently came over that hill going 80mph in a 25mph speed limit. The driver hit his neighbor's utility trailer and destroyed it and wrecked the pickup transmission. His next door neighbor's daughter was killed on Highway 30 by a policeman's daughter, who was passing in a

no passing zone. It hit her head on and killed her instantly. The DA has dropped the case. The girl has never gone to jail but her dad is a Lieutenant in the State Police Department. He suspects he changed a few things. The speeders on S. 15th Street are getting out of control. Is it going to take a death for the City to do anything? He wants to see stop signs at the top of both hills.

Mayor Peterson understands his frustration. The City is looking into it.

♦Suzi Alexander. She is here with the soccer team to speak with the Council.

♦Karlyn Kenny. She is here with her youth 13 soccer team mates. They participated in Soccer in the Sand in Seaside and took first place in their age bracket. The victory has granted them an invitation to play in the Nationals in Clearwater, Florida in December. It's a huge accomplishment and once in a lifetime opportunity. They are asking for help to raise the funds for the trip.

♦Gabby Alexander. She is on the St. Helens Youth Council. They estimate that they will need about \$15,000 to fund the trip. There are 10 girls on the team and it will cost at least \$1,500 per player for the tournament. The money will help pay for travel expenses, hotel fees, tournament fees and gear for the team. Since July, when they received the official invitation, they have been working hard to raise the funds. They have held a car wash, huge garage sale, sold pepperoni sticks, held a 50/50 raffle and have received cash donations. They have raised about \$7,600. She is asking for the City's help with funding. They plan to have game shirts and sweatshirts with the City logo printed on them.

Karlyn added that they plan to have another garage sale, another 50/50 raffle and will run the haunted house for the City in October. They also plan to solicit St. Helens businesses to ask for their help. They look forward to representing St. Helens and Columbia County in Clearwater, Florida in December.

♦Hannah Hayduk. She had the privilege of meeting the Mayor and Council during the "If I Were Mayor..." contest winners luncheon. If she were Mayor, she would support this team. Not only because she loves soccer but because these are strong, powerful, young athletes who are worth the time and money. They have worked hard and put in a lot of time and effort for this opportunity. They are doing numerous fundraisers. St. Helens will be put on the map if they win. The team will be good ambassadors for St. Helens and Columbia County. Please help their dream.

Mayor Peterson congratulated the team. He thanked them for coming in. The Council will discuss the request and get back to them. As they are out fundraising and soliciting local businesses, he encouraged them to share that they have full support from the City.

♦Steve Topaz. He reminded the Council about the donation jars used for 4th of July. They City may want to consider allowing the girls to place those around town.

Employee Length of Service Awards

We have three 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 August 17 Council work session.

20 Years

Carol Green came to work for the City as an Accounting Assistant in June of 1996. In July of

2013, she was promoted to Accounting Technician where she currently serves.

10 Years

Heidi Davis began working for the City in June of 2006 as the City's Receptionist/Counter Clerk. In October of 2008, she was promoted to the Building & Administration Secretary where she currently serves.

Jesse Templin began with the City as a Utility Worker I in July of 2006. He has since moved up to Utility Worker II where he has served since May of 2012.

Congratulations to Carol, Heidi and Jesse, and thank you for your service!

Semi-Annual Senior Center Report

Cheryl Young, Center Manager, was in attendance to give her report, which she handed out to the Council and a copy of which is available in the archive packet for this meeting.

The Senior Center requested a grant from the City of \$10,000 for their meal program. They are getting down to where they can't rely on the funds in savings that they have been using for several years.

Request from Mark Kreutzer Regarding Senate Bill 1513

He is here on behalf of Columbia River Fire & Rescue and the Oregon Fire District Director's Association. Senator Betsy Johnson is a sponsoring senator of Senate Bill 1513 .

The Oregon Legislature passed SB 1513 in the 2015 session. It allows each county the ability to pass an ordinance allowing abatement of up to \$250,000 of assessed value of the primary residence of the surviving spouse of a public safety employee (police officer, reserve police officer, volunteer and career firefighter) killed in the line of duty. Mark is lobbying all fire districts and cities in Columbia County to pass a resolution in support of Columbia County implementing SB 1513.

There was no objection from Council. Staff will come back with an ordinance.

Request from Portia and Glen Swenson to Place "Blessing Boxes" in St. Helens

A small group of volunteers would like to set up one or two "blessing boxes" in the St. Helens area. These are along the lines of the "Little Free Library" but will include non-perishable food items and/or toiletries. The volunteers would commit to maintaining the blessing boxes in good condition and keeping them stocked.

Glen Swenson, Seventh Day Adventist Church. The boxes would be approximately 3'x3', mounted on a 4"x4" post. They are proposing to put them by Columbia View Park, McCormick Park and by the Library. He spent a few nights on a sailboat at the docks and noticed the number of homeless people using the restrooms and showers. He wants people to know we care.

Councilor Locke asked if Glen has spoken with Community Action Team or the Food Bank. They already provide resources to them.

Portia Swenson explained that the "blessing boxes" would be accessible 24 hours a day. If people want to donate, they can do that at any time as well. Glen would like to try it and if it doesn't work out they will remove it.

Mayor Peterson is intrigued by the idea. He would like more time to talk about the best places to put them.

Councilor Conn expressed her appreciation for their concern and generosity.

Review Proposed Ordinance Amending Planning Commission Rules

City Planner Jacob Graichen briefed the Council on the proposed amendments.

Mayor Peterson asked why a person would not vote after they participated in the hearing. Why is it an automatic yes if they don't vote? Graichen responded that it's been a rule that they have been following. The idea is to prevent people from not voting at all on contentious issues. Peterson would be more comfortable with being able to vote yes, no or abstaining and it not counting. Council President Morten agreed.

The ordinance was tabled to give the Planning Commission time to review the Council's recommendation.

Review Proposed Resolution Establishing Utility Billing Administrative Rules

Finance Director Matt Brown briefed the Council on the proposed rules. He distributed updated handouts, which are included in the archive meeting packet. Utility Billing Specialist Shanna Duggan is also in attendance to help explain the rules based on her experiences.

There was in-depth discussion about the elimination of a utility deposit. The deposits create a possible liability for the City. It's come up with other cities and he would like to eliminate it here before it becomes a problem. The deposits will be credited to users. The purpose of the deposit is to protect yourself from someone who does not pay. Moving to monthly billing, the bills will be 30 days out instead of 60 and will be half as much as what they are now. You'll find out much sooner if someone is unable to pay. He also proposes stricter late fees, reconnection fees and cutoffs. It also makes St. Helens more affordable to move to. Other fees will be in place to cover damage costs. Duggan explained that the deposit has not been used to cover tampering fees. In the past couple times she has had problems with tampering, it was sent to the Police Department, cited into court and the cost was covered through restitution. The deposits currently sit on the account for a year and after good service, they credit it back to the account.

Further discussion ensued as Brown reviewed the proposed rules. Communications Officer Crystal Farnsworth will help with distributing the rules. Mayor Peterson encouraged staff to give extra notice to customers who are regularly late and will be most impacted by the increase in delinquent account fees.

Councilor Conn encouraged Brown to work with CAT to create a utility assistance program.

Update on Issues of the Homeless

Jim Tierney, Executive Director with Community Action Team (CAT), was in attendance to update the Council on issues of the homeless in the area. He distributed and reviewed handouts to the Council, which are included in the archive meeting packet.

- US manufacturing jobs have significantly declined over the last 70 years. Those were the family wage jobs that did not require skills.
- The share of gross domestic product the laborer earns is declining.
- Society has shifted from one-earner households to two.
- Referring to figure four of the slide show, providing medical care to the poor reduces financial assistance available to other anti-poverty programs.

- Homeless population:
 - 36% Substance Abuse
 - 23% Severe Mental Illness
 - 21% Non-Special Needs
 - 16% Domestic Violence
 - 2% HIV/AIDS
 - 2% Unaccompanied Youth (under 18)

Martha Olmstead with CAT was also in attendance to talk about the homeless population in St. Helens. She works with the ones you see on the streets and read about in the newspaper and on social media. She has worked for CAT for almost 14 years and has never had to return any money to HUD; not because they don't have the clients but because there are not enough rentals. She does not care what your barriers are, if you're homeless she wants to help. It's heartbreaking when there is nowhere to live. A lot of them are no-income or very low income, have severe mental illness, drug addiction, etc. We need to figure out how we can work together to help people in our community. Rent is going up and we need to find a way to make affordable housing.

Mayor Peterson asked if most of the homeless in the area have some sort of income. Martha responded that some of them have social security benefits and some only have food stamps. The maximum social security benefit is \$733 and a one-bedroom apartment is \$1,021.

Council President Morten has been following the issues in Portland over the last few years. Just recently, an entrepreneur came forward to help facilitate a facility with the City. Is that a good solution? Martha said that is a starting point. At least you know where they're at and they're safe. Counselors know where to meet with them. It's not going to go away on its own.

Jim emphasized that the first step of reducing homeless is stability. Affordable housing in Oregon has greatly been reduced. Their goal is to purchase more homes to create places for people to live.

Leanne Murray with the Human Investment Department of CAT was also in attendance to review her report, which is included in the archive meeting packet. She has been with CAT for about six months. One of her projects has been to educate the public on all the things that CAT does.

Mayor Peterson thanked CAT representatives for coming today. The City has seen the number of homeless increase over the last few years and they want to work with CAT to help.

4th Quarter Financial Report

Finance Director Matt Brown presented his report which is included in the archive packet for this meeting. He had a PowerPoint presentation that he handed out to the Council.

Discussion on Commercial Properties with LID/Utility Back Payments

Finance Director Matt Brown distributed and reviewed updated handouts. A copy is included in the archive meeting packet.

1. Ridgecrest Development. City Planner Jacob Graichen was in attendance to review the Ridgecrest Development re-forestation project, which is further explained in the memo. Council directed Brown to hold off on moving forward until the remaining lots are developed.
2. Current Issued LID and Repayments. Brown reviewed the three outstanding LIDs.

Council directed Brown to send certified letters and wait to see if payments are made in August. If not, bring it back to Council in September.

3. Water/Sewer – Current Customers. Council directed Brown to do the same as number two.

Parks Commission Recommendations

Council President Morten reported that the Parks Commission discussed Civic Pride Park. They voted to move forward on teaming with the Greater St. Helens Parks & Recreation District to create a lease agreement. Council discussed donating the property to the district. Before that can be considered, they need to look into the property history.

The Lions Club has requested permission to maintain the McCormick Park trail exercise equipment. The Parks Commission likes the idea. Council concurred.

Council President Morten presented flowers to Deputy City Recorder Lisa Scholl and thanked her on behalf of Council, staff and the community for her work and leadership role with Relay for Life.

Council President Morten excused himself from the rest of the meeting.

Department Reports

Public Works Engineering Director Nelson reported...

- Tonight's agenda includes approval to award a contract for the reservoir rehabilitation. They are recommending the second lowest bidder be awarded the contract because the lowest bidder did not submit the required qualification materials.
- Oregon State and the Oregon Marine Board are conducting a filming project on the docks. They looked at 35 different dock facilities and specifically the pump out stations. Out of those 35, ours is the best maintained. They also felt that the City's plumber, Tim Illias, was the best informed and most knowledgeable about the station. The filming is for a training video.

Library Director Jeffries reported...

- This year's budget included additional funds for professional development.
 - Three of the library assistants attended the Oregon Library Association's Staff Support Conference.
 - The new library technician started cataloging classes.
 - The new youth librarian attended the American Library Association Conference. She's also connecting with Oregon youth librarians and has offered St. Helens to be the site for the quarterly meeting of the Oregon Young Adult Network, which is the professional subgroup for youth librarians in Oregon.
- Finished summer reading program.
 - A border collie performance team was held in the courtyard last week. There were 110 people in attendance.
 - Held a summer reading party last week. It included games, ice cream and prizes.
- Fall programs will be announced soon.
- The Library Board has met twice this month, once with the library consultant.

Finance Director Brown reported...

- Tonight's agenda includes an agreement with TVI Investments. He has reviewed fees of the existing investment company and TVI is able to offer reduced fees.
- He would like to enter into an agreement with Wells Fargo for banking services. Some of

the advantages are reduced fees, use of employee purchase cards and electronic reports.

- A loan adjustment agreement also needs to be signed by the Mayor for clean water services. It will be included on tonight's agenda.

City Recorder Payne reported...

- Nothing to report.

City Administrator Walsh reported...

- Grants:
 - Received notice from Oregon Parks & Recreation Department that there will be funding for a pavilion in McCormick Park. That is a \$16,000 grant.
 - Received a grant from DLCD Transportation Growth Management. It will pay for the second phase of the corridor project.
- Work should begin for the LED street lighting project in November.
- The next Waterfront Advisory Committee is September 12.
- He sent a memo to the Council updating them about labor negotiations.
- The City of Columbia City is asking to waive plan review and inspection fees for their new community center. We will be thanked with a plaque on the front of their building.
- Halloween will be bigger and better this year. Tina Curry is working on a report to show expenses and revenue. She will present it at the next Council meeting.

Council Reports

Mayor Peterson reported...

- He will not be at the next meeting, September 7.

Councilor Conn reported...

- The Library is deep in strategic planning and trying to maximize the use of the consultant.
- SHEDCO is talking to Joe Shultz about insurance and liabilities.
- The Arts & Cultural Commission received an official rejection for the mural on the post office. There is a nation-wide policy that prohibits them from accepting murals or other physical improvements to their facilities.
- She will be attending the Northwest Economic Development Conference in Ellensburg, Washington next week.
- Disclosed that she will be working on a couple things on the ballot this year.
 - Co-chair of the school bond.
 - Consultant for the jail levy.

Councilor Locke reported...

- Asked why one of the pedestals on the dock is not working. Nelson responded that it was an experiment to see if a new type of plug could be used. They were hoping to put GFI's on each unit but it trips the system.
- Paul Gerdes tracks the boats on the dock. He would like the rules to be changed. The 10 days per month is fine but it is allowing people to be there 10 days one month and go right into 10 days the next.
- We are trying to improve our city and become a destination port. He's not sure if anything can be done about the Marine Patrol. They receive awards every year for stopping more boats than anyone else in the nation. We do not have a good reputation with boaters.

Executive Session

ORS 192.660(2)(e) Real Property Transactions

This was postponed until tonight.

Other Business

No other business.



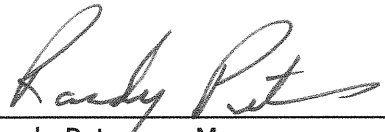
There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:24 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder.

ATTEST:



Kathy Payne, City Recorder



Randy Peterson, Mayor