

City of St. Helens

CITY COUNCIL

Work Session Minutes

November 2, 2016

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

Staff Present: John Walsh, City Administrator
Matt Brown, Finance Director
Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder
Margaret Jeffries, Library Director
Terry Moss, Police Chief
Neal Sheppard, Public Works Operations Director
Sue Nelson, Public Works Engineering Director
Cindy Phillips, Municipal Court Judge

Others:

Tina Curry	Natasha Parvey	Kristine Lambert
Trent Dolyniuk	Stan Chiotti	Amanda Normine
Don Patterson	Nicole Thill	David Sprau
Judy Thompson	Doug Boyes	Brenda Stoddard

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



Visitor Comments

◆ Stan Chiotti, St. Helens Garden Club. He is completing the park use application for the Veterans Day ceremony at McCormick Park. It requires a two million dollar liability insurance certificate. St. Helens Garden Club provides cookies and the VFW provides flags for the ceremony. State and local representatives speak during the event. He should not be required to sponsor and provide insurance for this community event honoring our veterans. The Garden Club only has one million dollars in liability insurance. He is asking that the Council cover the second million dollars.

Council President Morten suggested that Stan work with the St. Helens Community Foundation in the future to help cover insurance requirements.

It was the consensus of the Council to waive the second million dollars of the insurance requirements.

◆ Dave Bildon, VFW. He does not believe that veterans should have to go through all of this to use the veterans parks on Veterans Day. It took Stan a week just to get the signatures on the application.

◆ Natasha Parvey, Director of Keep It Local Columbia County. She thanked Councilors Conn and Carlson for their work on the committee. Their job is to put Columbia County businesses on one webpage. It's a free directory for any business in Columbia County. There are 200

businesses on the website now and they are looking for more. Shop local for the holidays!

◆Kristine Lambert. She is impressed with Portland's public notification. There is a new antibacterial wipe that failed miserably in Europe and in east coast states. When she asked the City to include a notification in utility bills educating users not to flush wipes, she was told that they could not afford it. She encouraged the Council to notify users in their next bill.

Spirit of Halloweentown Debrief

Tina Curry, consultant for the City. She reviewed her responsibilities and experiences:

- Produce and coordinate events, using her experience and best judgement, to meet goals.
- Facilitate new opportunities for businesses and nonprofits to increase revenues.
- Elevate the City of St. Helens through quality events.
- She has produced over 1,000 events through the US and Canada. She draws on her experiences to eliminate the possibility of negative revenue for the City and businesses.
- Connect locals to opportunities.
- Fourth of July was a great success.
 - Eliminated parking issues.
 - Finances were in the black for the first time in years.
 - Tailgating was a success.
 - First time she pushed hard to allow only nonprofits to benefit.
 - Provided sponsorship opportunities for SHEDCO to cover the cost of the helicopter.
 - The City's Relay for Life team was the only group who could sell water.
 - It was a great fireworks show, good community involvement and positive feedback.
 - Ed Lokken really appreciated the award he received in appreciation of his many years of being involved in the fireworks display. Diane Dillard and Jimmy Dillard helped to coordinate his family being in attendance.
- Spirit of Halloweentown
 - When she began working on Halloween it had been abandoned by the community. It improved each year with the help of a budget.
 - She was hired last year to coordinate Spirit of Halloweentown.
 - It became a month-long celebration that had the most people visiting St. Helens ever in the history of the town. This was in spite of the fact that some community members, like Shoestring Players, boycotted it last year.
 - Following the 2015 Spirit of Halloweentown, they immediately began working on 2016 to make improvements and more experiences for out-of-town guests.
 - This year:
 - Created an agenda to find solutions from last year and incorporate more community members and groups.
 - Instituted a fully functioning parking lot, based on a recommendation from Emergency Management.
 - Added more port-a-potties.
 - New logo was created.
 - Added a haunted house.
 - New souvenirs.
 - New Chamber sponsored parade.
 - New tractor ride.
 - Nice, new tent from Wauna Credit Union.
 - New and Very, Very Good Variety Show using local talent.
 - New vendor carts with food options.

- New photo ops.
- New message center.
- New decorations.
- New holograms.
- New entertainment options.
- New money for local businesses and nonprofits.
- Record numbers in attendance this year:
 - Shoestring Players had sold-out gatherings.
 - Harvest Festival
 - Kiwanis
 - Hot Rod Rally
 - Little Spooks Parade
- St. Helens has staked a claim to be Halloweentown for everyone to visit.
- This takes a lot of planning and help from the entire City staff.
- She spent many hours making this happen.
- Many community organizations stepped in to make it happen.
- Not everything has to be purchased local to bring in record breaking money.
- Only 19 people attended the planning meetings.
- The vast majority of ticket sales goes to the entertainer. They hope to break even from those. She did not appreciate the slander about the Spirit of Halloweentown event being held outside of the City. There was one event held in Portland because it would have lost more money in St. Helens. She called in a favor and shipped it out. It would have meant that a local restaurant would have to close on a busy Saturday night. One simple phone call instead of jumping to conclusions would have been helpful. It's a shame. These professionals want to be the future of Spirit of Halloweentown activities.
- Thank you to everyone who has helped. It has been a fantastic month, rain or shine. Thank you the City staff who ran to the rescue; Heidi, Crystal, Jenny, Lisa, Sue, Neal, Chief Moss, Shanna, Ginny, Margaret, Jasmine, Jamie, Neal, Dave, Roger and the entire Public Works team. It would not have happened without all of them. Everyone should be excited and hold fast to the belief that you can be part of something that will grow and become wonderful. Today, we're breaking social media records with one post that brought 14 million views. Over 25,000 people attended. St. Helens was elevated world-wide. Can it be better? Can we make changes? Of course.

Mayor Peterson said that we spent more money last year than we took in. How did we do this year? City Administrator Walsh said we at least covered expenses. Parking was very beneficial. Those funds were split between the City, CERT and Kiwanis, since they helped with parking on the weekends. They each received a check for \$8,000.

♦Amanda Normine, SHEDCO Vice Chair. She wrote a letter that is included in the record. Based on Tina's tone, the request to form a tourism council was taken poorly. Spirit of Halloweentown was way better this year. Tourism dollars meant for this community are to help local businesses. It's not meant to hire an event coordinator to cater events locally that sort of help our businesses. She would like community members to be heard. Some of the choices made were not ideal. Part of that comes from no governance for how the money is spent. Tina is allowed to use her network as she sees fit. It's not Tina's fault that she does that. There needs to be guidelines and a group overseeing the event expenses. She would like a work session for the stakeholders to come together and talk. She asked Council what date they would be available.

Council President Morten would entertain a forum or meeting after the election. Amanda understands. There are a lot of upset businesses coming to SHEDCO. She wants to give them a date.

Mayor Peterson said the Council has a retreat in December and will discuss it there. They will get back to her after that. If she hasn't heard back, Amanda will come back to the Council in mid-December.

♦Don Patterson, representing St. Helens Kiwanis Club. His organization benefited from parking cars during the month of October. He thanked the Council and City for giving them the opportunity. The money raised will benefit the local community, particularly children and youth. Thank you to Public Works. When parking problems were identified, they were very responsive.

♦David Sprau. Spirit of Halloweentown is great. We can be proud of it. This is all very positive, yet he hears the word "slander" being used. The only thing that happened is that people chose to tell the truth. We all want transparency in government. Now they're being accused of slander. It's ridiculous and childish. People who tell the truth should be given kudos for being forthright and trying to do the right thing. Let's try to cooperate and be nice to each other.

♦Trent Dolyniuk, owner of Blackbird Catering. His problem is with the traffic plan. In 2005, they did a master St. Helens corridor plan, which identified Columbia Blvd., St. Helens Street and Highway 30 as the entrance into old town. For the month of Spirit of Halloweentown, everyone ran down Old Portland Road. Columbia Blvd. and Highway 30 businesses were less busy this year than last. Old town businesses may have done better. As everyone exited, they all went to Scappoose. He wrongly assumed that we would pump traffic through Columbia Blvd.

Mayor Peterson said his point is well taken. They will look into that for the future. Council President Morten asked if a trolley would be favored to get people from the waterfront to mid-town. Trent is in favor of anything that removes the laser-like focus on old town. Every special event is focused on the waterfront district. Councilor Conn does not believe there was any intent to harm businesses. They were trying to alleviate traffic issues, based on last year's experiences.

Trent said the only thing that alarmed him that Tina said, is that we can't afford to buy local. That would be like him trucking in water because he couldn't afford his water bill. He's tired as a hospitality industry being continually devalued by people buying trays of crap from outside the area because they don't want to pay a hospitality price.

Executive Session

ORS 192.660(2)(d) Labor Negotiations

ORS 192.660(2)(e) Real Property Transactions

ORS 192.660(2)(f) Exempt Records/Confidential Memos

Motion: At 1:46 p.m., upon Morten's motion and Conn's second, the Council unanimously voted to move into executive session under ORS 192.660(2)(d) Labor Negotiations, (e) Real Property Transactions and (f) Exempt Records/Confidential Memos.

Motion: At 3:06 p.m., upon completion of the executive session, Conn moved to go back into work session, seconded by Carlson, and unanimously approved.

Municipal Court 1st Quarter Report

Finance Director Brown reviewed his report. Judge Cindy Phillips was also in attendance to review her narrative. Municipal Court is working hard to make St. Helens livable.

Discuss Proposed Building Permit Fee Increase

Building Official Johnston reviewed the proposed fee increase. It was the consensus of the Council to move forward with the building permit fee increase.

Discuss Appeal Process for Unsafe Buildings

Building Official Johnston recently posted three buildings to be vacated using the State Building Code based on lack of utilities and sanitation. Two of those appealed the postings. That would require a Board of Appeals hearing. Mayor Peterson suggests they hold a hearing prior to the next Council regular session. Deputy City Recorder Scholl will work with Johnston on the hearing notifications. The hearings will be held November 16 at 6 p.m.

Discuss Proposed Building Municipal Code Amendments

Building Official Johnston reviewed the proposed housekeeping amendments. There were no concerns from Council. He will bring back an Ordinance for approval.

Council President Morten asked if there is a way to address unsightly properties. Johnston explained the nuisance process.

Review Proposed Hankey Road Right of Way Dedication

City Administrator Walsh reviewed the memo written by City Planner Graichen. Public Works Engineering Director Nelson asked why the Council is reviewing the dedication when Hankey Road is owned by the County.

This item was tabled until the next meeting to get more information from Graichen.

Urban Renewal Advisory Committee Discussion

City Administrator Walsh reviewed his memo. A copy is included in the archive packet for this meeting.

Councilor Carlson suggested adding a knowledgeable business community representative to the Committee. She recommends Keith Forsythe.

Council President Morten wants to make sure the Council is not bullying the other members. But he also wants to make sure they're not changing the Council's goals. Discussion of the Committee. Council concurred with the proposed Committee members and agreed to only have two councilors participate. Locke and Carlson both volunteered. Finance Director Brown went through the entire process in Forest Grove and is happy to be part of this one. Columbia 911 was added to the list. Walsh will see if Keith Forsythe is willing to participate as a citizen at-large.

Department Reports

Public Works Engineering Director Nelson reported...

- Dock repairs began today. They will be working the next couple weeks.
- Godfrey Park Storm is still ahead of schedule. It will be finished in the next couple weeks.
- Council President Morten asked if there were any reports of a fuel leak in Columbia River? Nelson has not heard anything.

Public Works Operations Director Sheppard reported...

- Nothing to report.

Library Director Jeffries reported...

- Their consultant met with a focus group of 10 educators last week. They were pleased to discuss the relationship between the school district and the Library.
- Received an email from the school superintendent requesting to meet with her and the Youth Librarian to discuss after-school and summer programs.
- A strategic planning session will be held with community members this Saturday. They expect about 60 people in attendance.

Finance Director Brown reported...

- Bing's paid their sewer bill. They are now current. However, they are still behind on their LID payments, about \$7,000. We are number three on the title report, so there's not much we can do.
- Received new city credit cards. Working with Walsh and Scholl on a new policy and ethics manual for when and how to use credit cards. It should come to the Council in the next couple meetings.
- Auditors are on-site today and tomorrow. Does Council want to continue to have them give a presentation upon completion? Council concurred.
- Does the Council desire to see additional information included in the quarterly Court report? Council agreed what they receive is sufficient.
- In the process of switching to Wells Fargo, he has been reviewing positions and processes. There are five different people who put together bank deposits. When they move to Wells Fargo, staff will no longer take checks to the bank. An electronic deposit process will be conducted on site. It is faster and will allow staff to see NSF checks sooner. One idea, was to create a banking and utilities specialist to handle those deposits. Staff will not be required to go to the bank every day. He would like to assign one person to do bank deposits. He talked to the auditor and he was fine with the process. He anticipates an increase in pay because it will require more knowledge. He would like Council's input before taking it to the union rep. It will be a major efficiency improvement. Council agreed to move forward. Brown will return with a job description for approval.
- When the senior discount program was changed, that revenue was intended to go to CAT to help with a low-income program. As far as he is aware, that process was not started. He is meeting with CAT next Wednesday to talk about the program. He's likely to charge it to the right-off account, which was budgeted at \$12,000 this year. Right now there are over 600 accounts that receive the senior discount. That's about a \$77,000 loss for the City. It was going to be a \$95,000 difference from the previous program. An account has not been set up yet. Council said the funds were supposed to come from the fines and the savings. For this year, it's between \$15,000-20,000. Council agreed with the formation of a fund.

Deputy City Recorder Scholl reported...

- Kiwanis Holiday Hope requested to partner with the City for use of our folder/stuffer, collection of peanut butter and jelly and sponsor \$20 for the IGA family holiday meal. Council concurred.

City Administrator Walsh reported...

- We learned a lot from Spirit of Halloweentown this year and last. There's still room for improvement. Staff was very helpful and Tina was always available by phone.
- Time to think about Christmas. Suggested a piano player during the lighting in the Plaza and then move to the Waterfront tent during the Christmas ships. More decorations will be added to the Plaza. The light balls will go back in the trees. A bonfire during the Christmas

ships will take place next to the Wauna Credit Union tent.

- The HEAL Cities grant was successful. Assistant Planner Jenny Dimsho has done a fantastic job.
- Discussion of a Council retreat date. It was the consensus of the Council to wait until after the election to set a date.

Council Reports

Mayor Peterson reported...

- Without staff help, Spirit of Halloweentown would not have been as successful. It is all very appreciated. Spirit of Halloweentown did not get to this level without Tina. Morten added that Walsh has been instrumental as well.

Councilor Conn reported...

- Thanked everyone involved with Spirit of Halloweentown. It gets better every year.
- Congratulations to the Spirit of Halloweentown Scarecrow Contest winners:
 - 1st Place – Barlow Bikes & Boards
 - 1st Runner Up – St. Helens Police Department
 - 2nd Runner Up – Drake's Towing

Council President Morten reported...

- Today's Spirit of Halloweentown debriefing was very good. He thanked Public Works staff for all of their work.
- Council needs to be working on department head evaluations.
- Asked Council to work with Walsh on retreat agenda items. It was the consensus of the Council to get input from boards and commissions as well. Scholl will help with a questionnaire.
- He met with Parks Commissioner John Brewington and Keith Forsythe, who is on the St. Helens Greater Parks & Recreation Board. They were in agreement to move forward with a renewable lease for Civic Pride Park with conditions.
- There was a comment made earlier in the evening about organizing a tourism group. It would be nice to have one person who represented the entire business community. Conn said that would be made easier if there was a represented merchant's group.

Councilor Carlson reported...

- She was here every weekend working 6-9 hours a day during Spirit of Halloweentown. She really enjoyed seeing how happy people were and talked about relocating here. She is impressed by City staff helping and all the volunteers and nonprofit vendor carts.
- She is selling tickets for the Toy 'n Joy auction and dinner. She suggested the City have a sponsored table. We were one of the minorities without a table last year. There is a lot of need in the community.

Councilor Locke reported...

- Spirit of Halloweentown keeps growing. A family from Florida came and attended the teen dance. They suggested we consider making Spirit of Halloweentown a year-round event. It was very successful.
- He has been making a list of what needs to be done on the paper mill site to discuss at the retreat. He would like to hold the retreat there again but wants to get the heater fixed.

Other Business

No other business.



There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder.

ATTEST:



Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder



Randy Peterson, Mayor