

# City of St. Helens

## City Council

Work Session Minutes

January 15, 2020

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**Members Present:** Mayor Rick Scholl  
Council President Doug Morten  
Councilor Keith Locke  
Councilor Ginny Carlson  
Councilor Stephen Topaz

**Members Absent:** None

**Staff Present:** John Walsh, City Administrator  
Kathy Payne, City Recorder  
Matt Brown, Assistant City Administrator  
Margaret Jeffries, Library Director  
Jacob Graichen, City Planner  
Sue Nelson, Interim Public Works Director  
Brian Greenway, Police Chief  
Crystal Farnsworth, Communications Officer  
Jenny Dimsho, Associate Planner  
Rachael Barry, Government Affairs and Special Projects Coordinator  
Tina Curry, Event Coordinator

**Others:** Christine Menges Pam Rensch  
Herb Bailey Mike Mangold  
Nate Smith

THE VIDEO RECORDING DID NOT WORK FOR THIS MEETING.

1) **1:00 PM - Call Work Session to Order**

2) **Visitor Comments - Limited to five (5) minutes per speaker**

- ◆ Herb Bailey & Nate Smith of Hudson Garbage Service. Thanked the Mayor and Council for their support of the Bike Build event. They built and distributed 152 bikes that were distributed from South County all the way to Clatskanie. It was emotional because this is very important to the kids. Herb reported that he has taken on a new role with the company. Nate will be taking on the district of Hudson Garbage Service.

Nate gave some information on his background. Herb said he is not unplugged from the community. He's just taking on a new role at the region office. They are committed to the City. Hudson Garbage celebrates 50 years of service this year.

3) **Discussion Topics**

3.A Communications 2nd Quarter Report – Crystal  
Communications Officer Farnsworth reviewed her report. A copy is included in the archive meeting packet.

Council President Morten has heard frustrations about the low volume on Comcast Ch. 29. It's an important communication tool with our citizens. Finance Director Brown reported that today would have been the first meeting using our new microphones. Unfortunately, the video recording system is not working today.

3.B            Discuss Proposed Lateral Police Officer Applicant Incentive - Brian  
Police Chief Greenway reviewed his report. A copy is included in the archive meeting packet. He gave the Council some history on the profession and the struggle across America to get qualified applicants. Hiring a lateral officer saves the City money and gets an officer on the street faster. They have been very successful with hiring laterals. Many jurisdictions are offering signing bonuses. His proposal is to have a \$10,000 signing bonus for laterals, or they could use the existing housing incentive, but not both. He reviewed what other cities are doing to entice lateral officers. In addition to the signing bonus, he is proposing that lateral candidates be allowed to transfer up to 120 hours of their vacation. One of the challenges with getting a new employee is that they have a lot of personal things to take care of if they relocated here. This would allow them to have time to take off as needed. He proposes the signing bonus being paid in three increments: \$3,000 at the time of hiring; \$3,000 after their six-month anniversary; and \$4,000 after their 12-month anniversary. This is a continued effort to make us the best and safest community in Oregon.

Mayor Scholl loves the idea of a signing bonus. However, he would like to see it stretched over two years instead of 12 months.

Councilor Carlson wants to be sure they feel appreciated in the work environment, not just financially. Greenway agreed with the need to value and recognize employees. It comes down to leadership. There's a fine balance.

Discussion ensued about the hiring bonus and vacation time transfer. Assistant City Administrator Brown added how much money is being saved by hiring a lateral.

Consensus of Council to offer \$3,000 on the hire date; \$5,000 after a year; and \$5,000 after two years.

Councilor Topaz has a different view of the whole mess. He agreed with the original signing bonus of hire date, six months, and 12-months. He doesn't think the new hire should use vacation time for doing things like putting their utility bills in their name when they relocate to work here. They should be given free time to do that. We're competing against other police departments and other industries. He would like to keep as many people here as possible.

Council President Morten clarified that vacation time can be used for time to take care of things that need to be done when they relocate or an actual vacation. He asked if Topaz wants to increase it to 140 hours. Topaz said yes.

Discussion of vacation time transfer. New hires can only transfer what they have banked from their previous job. Consensus to only transfer 120 hours.

Mayor Scholl expressed his appreciation of our officers.

### 3.C Columbia View Amphitheater Discussion - Jenny

Associate Planner Dimsho was in attendance to present this item. A copy of her report is included in the archive meeting packet. A replacement of the gazebo is needed in the park. Before they come up with a funding plan, they need to know how the gazebo will be designed. They can either hire an architect or designer to come up with a stage that fits the space; or they can hire a contractor that does prefabricated stages. Dimsho asked for feedback on the stages in her report.

Some priorities of the Council would be to have a stage that is:

- Open all around it to not block the view
- Elevated
- Storage area for sound equipment
- Avoid fabric that could mold or tear
- Consider all kinds of events for the space
- Handicap accessible
- Visible for boaters
- Compatible with the riverfront development
- Weather protection
- Sound

Council preferred stages #1 and #3, which are wood and steel, with storage.

### 3.D Discussion on Proposed Recreation Center Rental Rates - Matt

Assistant City Administrator Brown presented this item. A copy of his proposal is included in the archive meeting packet.

Discussion ensued about building availability and food allowed. Brown clarified that no one can come there with the anticipation of being fed, such as banquets and weddings. You can bring something like cookies or donuts.

### 3.E Review Site Plan to St. Helens RV Park - John

City Administrator Walsh distributed copies of the proposed RV park. It is a 45-unit mix that is proposed to integrate with the Recreation Center building.

Council President Morten asked what happens to the Recreation Center with this plan. Walsh responded that it would be the office for the RV park during the day and there would be a camp host after hours. Morten agreed that was the original vision for the Recreation Center building, that it would facilitate a host and be the main office to manage the site. What would happen to the Recreation Program? Walsh said that would be up to the Council. Councilor Carlson added that a lot of the Recreation Programs happen off site at the school buildings or parks.

Council President Morten really likes the proposal. He likes that frontage was left open to accommodate expansion.

Councilor Topaz sees problems with this from the get-go. He would like to keep public access available along the stream. The proposal eliminates that. It interferes with the salmon habitat as well. He did some number crunching and came up with a cost of \$4 million. This is the front door to St. Helens and is not appetizing. He would prefer to see a park. This takes away most of the parking for the Recreation Center as well.

City Planner Graichen pointed out that this is preliminary. The consultant who drew this did not take our rules into consideration; such distance from the creek, required parking, etc. Discussion ensued. Council President Morten agrees this is a concept. Councilor Locke thinks it's a good start. A trail along the creek is a priority of the Council.

Consensus of Council to roll the design phase in with the St. Helens Industrial Park master plan.

### 3.F Review Lease Agreement for Masonic Building - John

City Administrator Walsh reported that the use of the building would be for tourism related things. A copy of the lease is included in the archive meeting packet. The term is two years at \$3,000 a month. They could file for tax exempt status as a municipal corporation. Other than the lease rate, the other financial consideration is that they agreed to make some building improvements.

Council President Morten would like to negotiate the monthly rate. Mayor Scholl pointed out it started higher and was negotiated lower. Councilor Carlson added that the owner would now have a tax-exempt building as well as building improvements. Mayor Scholl reported that the funds to pay for the building come out of tourism dollars. The haunted house moving in there will help pay the rent as well. Councilor Carlson is not in favor of spending that much money on a building. Council President Morten had the same concern but then thought about how long that building has been vacant.

### 3.G Planning Division Report - Jacob

City Planner Graichen reviewed the November and December 2019 Planning Division reports. Copies are included in the archive meeting packet.

- Floodplain updates
- Housing Needs Analysis
- Updated the Zoning and Comprehensive Plan maps
- Land Use file retention
- St. Helens Industrial Park Wetland Delineation. Mayor Scholl would like to review what other surrounding jurisdictions have for wetland regulations compared to ours.

### 3.H Discussion on Floodplain Regulations - Jacob

City Planner Graichen reviewed his report. A copy is included in the archive meeting packet. They do have some flexibility on floodplain regulations. He is looking for two things:

1. Consensus to proceed with the amendments.
2. The Council's position on elevation. It can be anywhere from zero to three feet.

Graichen reported that current Code requires one foot for residential structures and zero feet for non-residential. He recommends one foot for both residential and nonresidential. After reviewing the slides and discussion, the majority of the Council agreed with one foot for both. Mayor Scholl was in favor of keeping them less restrictive at current Code. Consensus of Council to proceed with the amendments.

### 3.I Discussion of Accessory Structure Regulations - Jacob

City Planner Graichen instructed the Council to disregard the memo in the packet. The window of time to work and focus on Code amendments is quickly closing. His focus this year is to process development proposals quicker. It was discussed at the previous two Planning Commission meeting. Currently, the Development Code requires an Accessory Structure Permit if the structure is 120 square feet or greater. Several years ago, the Building Code changed it to

200 square feet or larger. He proposes to increase the number to 200 to align with the Building Code. The difference has led to confusion with citizens. The Planning Commission concurred with the change.

Council concurred with the proposed change. Graichen will include the proposed change with the next amendment changes.

3.J Millard Road Property Zoning Discussion - Jacob/Jenny  
City Planner Graichen reported that Pam Rensch would like to be here for this discussion and the Chase Road discussion. She is unable to be here this afternoon and requested it be postponed until tonight. Graichen will be here tonight but Dimsho will not, so he would like to at least begin discussions now but allow Pam to bring it up tonight. Mayor Scholl was not in favor of waiting until tonight to discuss it.

Graichen reviewed his memo and attachments. A copy is included in the archive meeting packet. He briefly reviewed the history with this property:

- June 2018 held a public forum to gather input
- Reviewed with Housing Needs Analysis
- At the June 5 work session, Council expressed support of Mixed Use or R7 for the southern portion, leaving a northern portion as Public Lands for a park.

Mayor Scholl disagreed. He said they discussed multi-family around the wetlands, maybe cottage clusters to R5, back around the creek to R10 to match the adjacent properties. Graichen did not agree that was discussed. R10 would be irresponsible based on the Housing Needs Analysis. He is willing to change if that's the direction Council wants to go.

Graichen went on to review the maps and reports included with his memo. The last two maps are possible options for Millard Road Park. Option one includes a larger park area, and option two includes a smaller park area. Does the Council want to select from one of the options or send back to staff for further review? Associate Planner Dimsho added that there are no existing parks in that area. The property has been zoned Public Lands since zoning has existed.

Councilor Carlson understood that it would be a natural area and trail space along the edge, smaller than the proposed. Now she is hearing about the School District redoing their fields. She would prefer one good set of fields instead of multiple fields to keep up with. She's not in favor of committing that much space to a park.

Graichen pointed out that the Comprehensive Plan includes language to acquire parklands for future use. The portion left Public Lands could remain open space for several decades but it's at least in our inventory as we grow.

Mayor Scholl is frustrated and blames staff for what this has turned into. Council envisioned a pocket park by the creek with a walking bridge. He asked Pam Rensch if she envisioned the same. She concurred. Discussion ensued. Councilor Carlson and Council President Morten envisioned the same as Mayor Scholl. Councilor Locke recalls that discussion, but no decisions were made.

Pam suggested rezoning to something developable to make it more valuable to developers. Mixed Use would be the most cost-effective. She discouraged them from rezoning the entire space Public Lands. It would be a travesty to turn this much property into a park.

It was the consensus of the Council to zone the property Mixed Use, from Maple Street to Millard Road.

### 3.K Millard Road Property Chase Road Access - Jacob

Pam Rensch proposed to extend the easement for two years to give the City time to develop a plan for the property. There's a beautiful space for a small pocket park or riparian area. The rest of the property is perfect for a development.

Mayor Scholl talked about the difficulty of funding parks. He suggested using the revenue from selling the property to develop the Ross Road property into a park. He would like to focus on four parks – Waterfront, McCormick, Campbell, and Ross Road. Four done well is better than 13 hodge podge.

Discussion of Chase Road needing to be widened. That will need to happen at the time of development.

Council concurred with Pam's proposal to extend the easement for two years.

## 4) Department Reports

Library Director Jeffries reported...

- Requested permission to open the Library one hour late on Friday, January 24. A staff meeting begins at 8:30 a.m., followed by a training with CCMH for interacting with people in crisis. Council concurred.
- Would like to have a fixed space to create a maker lab for the Library's hands-on science and technology program. Youth Librarian Gretchen Kolderup invited Marian Christiansen to the Library to learn about the maker program. They asked Marian if she would be willing to make the space currently occupied by the Learning Center separate from the leased space. Marian requested a proposal. After reviewing the proposal and speaking with staff, Jeffries realized there are different ideas for that space. The building is owned by the Columbia Learning Center. Their mission has changed. Her proposal is to use the space, up until July 1, to have the space vacated and readied for the Library's use. They wouldn't fully occupy the space until the fall because summer is so busy. The Building Official said they would need to address emergency lighting, hardware on doors, and build a sidewalk. That space will need to be accessed through the courtyard. Marian did ask for the City's assistance to empty the space. Jeffries will speak to the Columbia Center Board tomorrow. She plans to propose a \$300/month rent. Discussion of CCET moving down the hall and the Library utilizing their space. Jeffries will report back with more information.
- There is a "Swedish Roots in Oregon" exhibit in the hallway and in the Library. It has a lot of information about people of Swedish heritage in Oregon. It includes a segment about the Peterson baskets. Brandon Sundeen will present a program about the baskets next week.

Chief Greenway reported...

- Tonight's agenda includes a request to declare seven old police vehicles as surplus property.

Interim Public Works Director Nelson reported...

- Public Works crews have been:

- Working incrementally to repair and rebuild the steps from Grey Cliffs Park up to the bluff. It looks amazing.
- Removed fencing and vegetation at the end of Strand Street.
- Spent a lot of time preparing for storms.
- Did a lot of work prior to the heavy rains that were predicted at the end of December so we wouldn't have some of the same issues we've had in the past.
- Took down Christmas decorations.
- Cleaning up the landscaping along the highway as time allows.
- Have had a lot of interest on the water line project that is out to bid right now.

Councilor Topaz acknowledged Nelson's report at the State of the City address. Many people didn't realize how much Public Works does.

City Planner Graichen reported...

- Having Community Development Administrative Assistant Christina Sullivan has been great. He wants to be more efficient this year and not allow files to sit around long. Sullivan will be helpful for the file processing as well as being the Planning Commission secretary. Dimsho can take on more of the public hearing process and allow Graichen to catch up with some of the development review.

Finance Director Brown reported...

- The IT contract is included on tonight's agenda. He recommends remaining with Centerlogic.
- He and Walsh have discussed moving some of the tourism operations under the General Fund. That would eliminate the need for interfund loans. Consensus of Council to keep tourism in its own fund to be more transparent.

City Recorder Payne reported...

- Nothing to report.

City Administrator Walsh reported...

- The community survey is now live and available on our website.
- Have received a revised proposal from Tokola for the Waterfront property. Does Council want to hear their presentation at a future meeting? Do they want to go out for bid for future developers?

Council President Morten would like to see their presentation but would also like to prepare to go out for bid. He is hesitant to keep going down the path with Tokola. It's been a long, long time since they presented and then never moved forward. Walsh believes there is some City benefit to hearing their presentation.

Mayor Scholl suggested putting it out for an RFQ. Tokola's proposal can be considered then. He would like to work with a marketing specialist for the property.

Discussion ensued. Consensus of Council to hear from Tokola at one of the next couple meetings.

- Shared a Rose Garden preliminary proposal for the Council to review.

Event Coordinator Curry reported...

- Will report tonight.

5) **Council Reports**

Postponed Council reports until tonight.

6) **Other Business**

None.

7) **Adjourn** – 5:08p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder.

ATTEST:

  
Kathy Payne, City Recorder

  
Rick Scholl, Mayor