

City of St. Helens City Council

Work Session Minutes

October 16, 2019

Members Present: Mayor Rick Scholl
Council President Doug Morten
Councilor Keith Locke (arrived at 2:04 p.m.)
Councilor Stephen R. Topaz

Members Absent: Councilor Ginny Carlson

Staff Present: John Walsh, City Administrator
Kathy Payne, City Recorder
Matt Brown, Finance Director
Margaret Jeffries, Library Director
Sue Nelson, Interim Public Works Director
Brian Greenway, Police Chief
Crystal Farnsworth, Communications Officer
Jacob Graichen, City Planner
Rachael Barry, Government Affairs & Project Support Specialist
Jenny Dimsho, Associate Planner
Mike De Roia, Building Official
Tina Curry, Event Coordinator

Others:

Joe Kessi	Lynne Pettit	Chip Bubl
Debra Brimacombe	Nicole Thill	Christine Menges
Shannon Vaerewyck	Kathleen Grant	Margaret Trenchard-Smith
Joel Haugen	Melisa Beasley	Grace Beilfuss
Brooke Allen	Zu'Anna Stansbury	Savannah Hoffman
Blake Gohlman		

1) **1:00 P.M. - Call Work Session to Order**

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

- ♦ Joel Haugen. He would like the Scappoose and St. Helens City Councils to hold a joint meeting in early 2020 to talk about how they can collaborate. He would eventually like to develop a trail connecting the two cities.

Council President Morten asked which City he would like to have it at. Joel suggested leaving that to the City Administrators to decide.

- ♦ Zu'Anna Stansbury, Brooke Allen, and Grace Beilfuss. They are on the Safe and Sober Committee for the high school. Their goal is to have an amazing party at a safe venue for the graduating class of 2020. All money raised goes towards food, activities, and prizes. Hours of volunteer time is spent preparing. There are 199 seniors graduating. Each senior has to volunteer 10 hours throughout the year. She talked about the fundraising that is done. They are requesting a donation from the City.

Mayor Scholl said they have typically donated \$500. Council President Morten suggested the City consider asking students to give back if the City makes the donation, such as volunteering in a park. Zu'Anna thinks they would be able to do that.

Councilor Topaz suggested the City partner with a fundraiser. Public relations between the City and students is important.

Mayor Scholl likes that each student is required to volunteer at least 10 hours. He proposes they donate \$500 from Council funds. Council concurred.

3) **Discussion Topics**

3.A Presentation on Dalton Lake Project Proposal - Lynne Pettit, Parks & Trails Commission

Lynne Pettit, Chip Bubl, and Debra Brimacombe were in attendance to speak about the Dalton Lake Project. A PowerPoint presentation is in the archive meeting packet. Current priorities are:

1. bike rack
2. kiosk
3. post for doggie waste bags
4. signage
5. metal signs for kiosk
6. concrete bench
7. social media page for Friends of Dalton Lake Nature Preserve
8. educational Saturday walks
9. press release
10. Columbia City City Council presentation

Lynne went on to review future plans for the property.

Council President Morten would like to see two entrances with parking at each. He appreciates everything they have done.

Councilor Topaz asked if they have considered using the high school for their building projects. Lynne said yes, for the swallow and bat houses. Topaz suggested having tours at night to see the different wildlife that comes out in the dark. He asked them to consider having bird blinds in the woods rather than on the water's edge.

Mayor Scholl loves the enthusiasm around this. It's a beautiful area in the city. Their proposal will preserve it.

3.B Request to Connect 58865 Firlock Park Blvd. to City Sewer – Joe Kessi

Joe Kessi reviewed the property at 58865 Firlock Park Blvd. He submitted a letter to the Council from the Columbia County Sanitarian. A copy is included in the archive meeting packet. The septic system has failed and there is no room for repair. He is requesting to connect to the City sewer system, which is about 200 feet away. Discussion ensued.

The Council was in concurrence to allow the connection.

3.C Communications 1st Quarter Report - Crystal
Communications Officer Farnsworth was in attendance to give her report. A copy is included in the archive meeting packet.

3.D Discuss Request from ShoeString Community Players
ShoeString Community Players President Shannon Vaerewyck, Public Relations Margaret Trenchard-Smith, and Treasurer Kathleen Grant were in attendance to answer any questions. Shannon submitted and reviewed the budget report for the Ultimate Christmas Show. A copy is included in the archive meeting packet.

Councilor Locke arrived at 2:04 p.m.

In response to questions from Council:

- They want to stay in that location.
- Ticket prices recently increased. They could increase them more but fear it would prevent some people from attending.
- Sponsorship packages range from \$100 to \$1,000.
- Have applied for and received grant funding.
- They are 100% volunteers, which helps them remain sustainable.

Mayor Scholl said the City would be in contact with them.

3.E Review Assistant City Administrator Job Description
City Administrator Walsh explained the motivation behind this position. A copy of the job description is included in the archive meeting packet.

Councilor Topaz was concerned about conflicts of interest with the finance oversight. Mayor Scholl pointed out the audit that is done annually. He and Morten disagreed with it be a conflict. Discussion ensued.

3.F Review Final Plat for Forest Trail Subdivision - Jacob
City Planner Graichen was in attendance to review the status of the final plat for Forest Trail Subdivision. A copy of his memo is included in the archive meeting packet. He said that Rich Bailey is concerned about his daily interest, given the loans he has to develop the property. The next time the Council meets is in three weeks. Graichen requested that the Council conditionally approve the Mayor's signature when the final plat is ready. He does not think that this is setting a precedence.

Discussion ensued. The Council was in concurrence with the request.

3.G Request from Arts & Cultural Commission to Decommission Art Bench and Relocate Another - Margaret
Library Director Jeffries reviewed the request. A copy is included in the archive meeting packet. The Council was in concurrence to allow the wooden bench next to the fire station to be decommissioned. They were also in concurrence with relocating the stone bench from in front of the Columbia Center to the Columbia Center courtyard.

4) Department Reports

Police Chief Greenway reported...

- Thanked everyone for their support of the Police Department. The last couple weeks have been challenging.

Interim Public Works Director Nelson reported...

- The purchase of a boom lift is included on tonight's agenda for approval.
- They have been busy with many projects over the summer and into the fall. Some of the highlights are:
 - Installing new Wayfinding signage.
 - Finishing touches at Veterans Plaza.
 - Private developments that require staff to be on site.
 - New veterinarian office on Columbia Blvd.
 - CCMH frontage improvements on McNulty Way.
 - Apartments at Matzen and McBride Streets.
 - Middle school project.
 - Gable Road project.
 - Rich Bailey's subdivision on Sykes Road.
 - Crack sealing project.
 - Culvert project on N. Vernonia Road.
 - Highway 30 landscape strip.
 - Spirit of Halloweentown set-up.
- Encouraged Council to contact her if they have any questions.

Library Director Jeffries reported...

- Author Amy Stewart will be at the Library on Tuesday night. She has a series of books about the Kopp sisters, who were historical figures.
- She was contacted by the Census Bureau to be a place for people to come and respond to the census. Staff will be trained on how to assist. They will learn more in December.
- November is National Novel Writing Month (NaNoWriMo). The municipal liaison for the program is Becky Bean, who is a freelance writer. She has been running the program for five or six years. There will be a kick-off event soon.
- Met with Teresa Knight of the Columbia Arts Guild and Les Watters of the Columbia County Museum Association. They have planned some collaborative events next year.

Finance Director Brown reported...

- The AV equipment is scheduled to be upgraded the last week of November.
- The Bike Build organizers have requested to rent the Recreation Center for the build event. The City normally charges a fee to rent the facility. He is requesting the fee be waived. Council concurred.
- Tonight's agenda includes a new contract with Judge Lindgren. There is a change to automatically renew the contract annually unless she is notified in February otherwise. There is also a change for her fee to follow the CPI.
- An RFP for IT Services will be included in the next Council packet.
- The quarterly Municipal Court report is included in the packet. He pointed out the chart showing the clearance rate. The rate was up to 181% this last quarter. They are transitioning from one software to another and discovered a lot of cases that could be cleared.
- Distributed a Friends of Parks and Trails handout for Council to review. A copy is included in the archive meeting packet.

- A community member has requested permission to set up a non-profit, similar to the 'Friends of' program. They would like to be able to accept donations and do work at the Botanical Gardens. Part of the funds would be used to purchase additional land to expand the park. Brown has some hesitation as a Finance Director. He would not have knowledge of what money was donated and what was spent. Discussion of 'Friends of' programs.
- Working with Government Affairs and Project Specialist Barry to set up a steering committee for Parks & Recreation. Looking for interested persons to participate.

City Recorder Payne reported...

- Lynne Pettit emailed her with a follow-up to her presentation on the proposed Dalton Lake project. She asked when she would hear back from the Council. Mayor Scholl responded that he will discuss it during his report.

Event Coordinator Curry reported...

- 650,000 people have visited www.discovercolumbiacounty.com.
- Spirit of Halloweentown
 - Thanked Public Works, Parks, and Police staff for making Halloween a real success this year.
 - Exceptional sales reports are coming from merchants.
 - Peter Facinelli from Twilight lighting the pumpkin was successful.
 - Rino Romano "Benny" will be lighting the pumpkin this weekend.
 - Haunted Hearse and Hot Rod Rally this weekend.
 - Street entertainers this weekend.
 - No issues with the bathrooms, except that people do not like using port-a-potties.
 - About 8,000 people at the parade.
- Asked if there is a way to make the concrete circle in the Plaza flat instead of concave.
- Associate Planner Dimsho is working on a new stage design for the waterfront. Wauna Credit Union is excited that we are moving forward on this.
- Working on new Christmas lights. They have a team that is going to redo all of our Christmas lights.
- Merchants have been asking how to designate First Street as only retail.

Council President Morten requested a debriefing following Spirit of Halloweentown.

Associate Planner Dimsho reported...

- Excited about the ribbon cutting ceremony for the Veteran's Plaza.

Government Affairs and Project Specialist Barry reported...

- Reviewed the Good News section of the packet. This will help Council stay updated and be consistent as they're sharing information with community members.

City Administrator Walsh reported...

- Appreciates the community engagement piece that Barry has brought to the City.
- The economic impacts from Spirit of Halloweentown is phenomenal.
- Would like to have a State of the City address in January and something similar to Scappoose's annual community meeting.

5) Council Reports

Councilor Locke reported...

- He was late today because he was invited to the High School Cancer awareness ceremony. They talked about how their life's and their families life's have been effected by cancer.
- Keith Meeuwsen asked him if the City would consider having a work session at the high school.

Councilor Topaz reported...

- Submitted a reimbursement request to Council President Morten for mileage attending the Portland Harbor Cleanup meetings in downtown. He reported on the meetings.
 - Final design report was due to the EPA in June. It's still not done.
 - The City of Portland has a granting mechanism. They created a method for interested parties to be informed of the status. The grant was funded by a fee on the water bill. That lead to confusion. It's very important that fees added on water bills are very clear about what they're funding.
 - Some of the remedial techniques to keep the toxic waste in the river have made it so that some people along the waterfront cannot use that area now. Some of the EPA techniques are good for lakes but not the river.
 - The cleanup is expected to occur between 5-15 years after they begin digging dirt.
- He put information in the Council's boxes about how the cannabis business is slowly going down the tube. The City could end up with a bankrupt company and in financial trouble. He recommends getting financial advice on how good the business will be in the next three to 10 years.

Council President Morten reported...

- The Parks & Trails Commission endorsed the recommendation of the Dalton Lake Nature Preserve Project. Next steps recommended by Dimsho:
 - Work with ODOT on a signage placement plan.
 - Apply for grants.
- Asked Dimsho to talk about trails. Dimsho pointed out the undeveloped right-of-way from Nob Hill to Columbia Blvd. A grant was received to develop that trail route.
- Encouraged staff to attend the Veteran's Memorial Plaza dedication on November 1 at 12 p.m. It has been a big project for staff in partnership with the VFW and veterans. Requested Council purchase a cake and beverages for the ceremony. Council concurred.

Mayor Scholl reported...

- Met with the Community Access group of freshmen at the high school. They talked about ways to get involved in the community.
- The ceremony for the National Guard deployment was well attended.
- He recommends donating \$1,500 to the Shoestring Community Players to keep them out of the red. Discussion ensued. Mayor Scholl talked about the link between Shoestring Community Players and Brian Vaerewyck not releasing the rights to the Spirit of Halloweentown domain. Building Official Mike De Roia updated the Council on the status of the building. They do have a temporary occupancy and they are aware of the improvements needed to meet Code and acquire full occupancy. Directed staff to contact Shoestring Community Players Chair Shannon Vaerewyck.

- He doesn't agree with paying mileage for Councilor Topaz to attend Portland Harbor meetings. If they are that important and the dredgings come here, he would prefer staff to attend. Councilor Locke pointed out that past practice is to ask before attending the meetings. Council President Morten added that it's also important to report on the meeting when you attend, including written and verbal information. Mayor Scholl talked about the confusion it can lead. If someone only listened to part of his report, it would sound like we are adding a fee to our water bill. It wasn't very clear. It leads to misinformation. He repeated that it should come from staff in a report if it's that important to attend these meetings. Walsh reported that he has attended some of the Portland Harbor Community Advisory meetings. It's a good platform for community engagement. It's been occurring for about 20 years. There a technical and non-technical side. Mayor Scholl requested a written report to not lead to confusion.

6) **Other Business**

7) **Adjourn – 3:55 p.m.**

Executive Session

Respectfully submitted by Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder.

ATTEST:


Kathy Payne, City Recorder


Rick Scholl, Mayor