

City of St. Helens City Council

Work Session

October 2, 2019

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

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: John Walsh, City Administrator
Kathy Payne, City Recorder
Matt Brown, Finance Director
Jenny Dimsho, Associate Planner
Sue Nelson, Interim Public Works Director
Brian Greenway, Police Chief
Margaret Jeffries, Library Director
Tina Curry, Event Coordinator
Rachael Barry, Government Affairs & Project Support Specialist

Others:	Gainor Riker	Natasha Parvey	Cheryl Morrisey
	Marci Sanders	Brad Hendrickson	Patrick Birkle
	Bill Blank	Doug Walker	Christine Menges
	Sally Martin D.	Al Petersen	Kannikar Petersen
	Alison Hart	Chuck Daughtry	Amanda Lowthian
	Nicole Thill	Chrissy Marquardt	Stephanie Patterson
	Casey Garrett	Tony Roos	

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

2) **Visitor Comments**

- ♦ Gainor Riker. She is here regarding the closures of downtown streets for Spirit of Halloweentown. There was a lack of notice distributed. Alternate routes need to be in place with adequate signage. People need to be able to get to work and their homes. She requested that the information be distributed in utility bills, newsletters, on the website, etc. She also encouraged the City to communicate with business what is happening. They are a great advocate when visitors come into town to eat and shop. A copy of her testimony is included in the archive meeting packet.
- ♦ Al Petersen. He referred to information submitted into the record, a copy of which is included in the archive meeting packet. He submitted a public records request to the State of Oregon regarding marijuana businesses, including OrGro Tech and ASCP LLC. He received a response from OLCC with only OrGro Tech. They had no results for ACSP LLC. There is no information for the property the City sold to ACSP. He reviewed the lease and purchase and sale agreement. Both are to ACSP, who OLCC has no

record of. He went on to review holding companies that are linked to ACSP. He read a recommended resolution into the record to commence eviction action. A copy is included in the archive meeting packet. The lessee has occupied the property for 10 months and has made no lease or purchase payments.

Mayor Scholl talked about the lawsuit that the City was served with. As a result, they had an appraisal done that resulted in a \$1.5 million dollar value. They were planning to sell it for \$3 million. It is OrGro Tech and is a cultivating campus. They did make their first payment last month.

Councilor Topaz expressed concerns about documents that have not been fulfilled. Mayor Scholl responded that they do not have to fulfil those. They are waiting for OLCC to review the applications.

- ♦ Cheryl Morrisey. She is here in support of Gainor Riker and the other business that are at a severe disadvantage with the street closures. There needs to be another way to route traffic so people can access their businesses. She doesn't understand why they are developing the waterfront but nothing has been done to improve their situation. They took a gamble moving into the location and the City is not helping them. One month out of the year is not going to make it.

3) **Discussion Topics**

3.A Columbia County Tourism Initiative Report - Chuck Daughtry, Alison Hart, Amanda Lowthian, and Casey Garrett

They are here to talk about what the Columbia County Tourism Initiative has done over the past 16 months. They presented a PowerPoint presentation, a copy of which is included in the archive meeting packet. They thanked the Council for their support. They are requesting support in the amount of \$5,000 for this fiscal year.

Council President Morten was very encouraged by their inclusive report. He asked about the sustainability of water recreation. There are a lot of yacht clubs that would love to come here for sailing regattas. We have water and wind. Portland does not have the wind we have here. Kite flying would also be a draw for the entire family. Chuck suggested the Parks & Recreation Program create a sailing program. The potential is here.

Mayor Scholl asked how much a visitor generally spends when they visit a destination. Alison does not have those figures now but can find out and send them.

Mayor Scholl emphasized the need to find a niche. We are close to the coast, the mountains, the gorge, and Columbia River is our front yard.

Councilor Carlson has been part of tourism and community events. People come from all over to visit. You just have to sell it to the locals. Alison talked about the citizen input they work to get.

Discussion ensued about tourism opportunities in Columbia County and the benefits that St. Helens has to offer.

Council unanimously agreed to continue the funding and support of the Columbia County Tourism Initiative. They agreed to allocate \$5,000 as requested.

3.B Update on Sand Island Camping - Brad Hendrickson

Brad Hendrickson was in attendance to update the Council.

- Opened just in time for 4th of July.
- Had about 300 people on the Island on Labor Day.
- The shuttle will operate Memorial Day through Labor Day.
- The Marina is open seven days a week.
- Next step is to build cabins, which will extend the camping season.
- Talked to McMullen Well Drilling about providing water. Need to continue studies. It will be based on how attractive the cabin concept is.
- Plan to construct a covered group shelter this winter/spring.
- Develop parking on River Street this winter.
- There is no trash on the Island. There are receptacles and people are using them.
- The caretaker operates the shuttle and lives on the Island during the camping season.

Mayor Scholl explained the history of the Island. It is a manmade island. Brad did a lot of work to enhance the City park. Brad agreed that the City should be very happy with the return on investments. The City is no longer handling the maintenance. They did have to cut down some trees because they were dangerous but they will be planting new ones. The deer really like the vegetation that has been put in.

Council President Morten pointed out that Brad has saved the City between \$25,000-30,000 in staff time. That doesn't include the percentage of profits that the City will receive from camping. It's a win for citizens who have a free shuttle to go over to the Island. It's a tremendous asset to the City.

Discussion ensued about assets that Sand Island has to offer.

3.C Planning Division Report - Jenny

Associate Planner Dimsho was in attendance to give a report to the Council on the Planning Division. She reviewed a list of Planning priorities, a copy of which is included in the archive meeting packet.

Council President Morten commended Dimsho on her grant writing abilities and how it has saved our citizens so much money. He is glad she has kept an open mind on the use of facilities.

Dimsho reported that she was just notified a couple days ago that they were granted \$19,000 through the Nike Impact Fund, which is for increasing physical activities for kids. They applied for a 1,000 foot off-street trail connection between Nob Hill Nature Park and Tualatin Street pedestrian path. There is a small wetland that they plan to install a boardwalk over. Columbia River Youth Corp high school students will do the actual construction. Council President Morten appreciates the collaboration with the Parks and Trails Commission and staff. Dimsho added that they have a year to use the funds, so will make it a priority.

Councilor Carlson pointed out that the kiosk in the Plaza is not lit at night. Dimsho will contact the electrician.

Discussion ensued about records retention. The City follows the State's retention schedule as much as possible.

3.D Discussion Regarding Scope of Work for S. 1st Street and St. Helens Street Intersection Improvements - Sue

Interim Public Works Director Nelson introduced Tony Roos who is a Principal Engineer at Kittelson and Associates. A copy of the proposal is included in the archive meeting packet.

Councilor Locke said he started this project in an effort to put a four-way stop there to increase safety. He doesn't believe that anyone local was consulted about the need.

Council President Morten pointed out that the Urban Renewal is going to reconfigure all of S. 1st Street into the riverfront development, potentially in a very short time. Was that taken into consideration during the planning?

Councilor Carlson has heard public comment about the cost. She asked for clarification on why it costs more than new development.

Councilor Topaz asked them to design a safe intersection but cut the cost by 40%.

City Administrator Walsh pointed out that this intersection is ground zero for planning work. There are two major transportation projects that start and end at this intersection. 1) The Riverfront Connector; 2) the Gateway Project. It is extremely important that this intersection be done correctly. We need to do a really good job designing this intersection. Mayor Scholl agreed that this intersection will be built to stand the test of time and not be short-term.

Tony responded to questions. Did they account for future traffic? The preliminary analysis was done for the two-stop control versus four-way stop control. Kittelson did the Riverfront Master Plan and has all the traffic data. They know the projected travel volumes. From the cost standpoint, there is quite a difference between a green subdivision versus retrofitting existing infrastructure. They could cut the fee down by 40% if they didn't care about that. The detail that is put into the plans to be sure that they are accurate and detailed is what drives the costs up.

Discussion ensued about the intersection.

3.E Discussion Regarding Stage Sponsorship - John

City Administrator Walsh said that the stage has been talked about for a while. They have been receiving a sponsorship from Wauna Credit Union the last three years, which he is very grateful for. There was an understanding with that sponsorship that there would be a new stage. He is looking for support from Council to: 1) have Wauna Credit continue the sponsorship; and 2) move forward with a plan and design for a new stage. The idea is to increase the size of the dance area and push it back further and update the electrical.

Mayor Scholl would like something in honor of Gracie because she donated the first stage. Dimsho believes that there is a rock plaque already there in her honor.

3.F Review Recreation Manager, Recreation Sports Program Specialist, and Recreation SHARP Lead Job Descriptions - Matt

Finance Director Brown reviewed the job descriptions, copies of which are included in the archive meeting packet.

Councilor Topaz would like to add requirements for certifications in childcare, sports safety, and similar. Brown responded that the two positions Topaz is referring to go through background

checks through the school district, as well as finger printing. It's an after-school program and not teaching positions. The people who will likely apply for this position have experience in coaching and certifications. They can train them once they're hired as well. Their goal is to make them future leaders in the community.

4) **Department Reports**

Police Chief Greenway reported...

- Nothing to report.

Interim Public Works Director Nelson reported...

- Crews have been out mowing and keeping things up to date.
- Does the Council want to see the Scope of Work for the S. 1st Street intersection put on the next Council meeting agenda for approval or wait until the next meeting to discuss further? Consensus of Council to add it to the next agenda for approval.

Library Director Jeffries reported...

- Had a program last night with a joint presentation from the Oregon Historical Society and the Mazamas. It was well attended. There is a desire to have more of these kind of events in partnership with the museum association and genealogy group.

Finance Director Brown reported...

- Nothing to report.

City Recorder Payne reported...

- Council approved a notice of abatement at 406 S. 12th Street in August. The abatement timeframe has past. The property is in foreclosure. The bank has requested a 30-day extension to clean it. Council was not in agreement with the 30-day extension due to the type of garbage.
- Council has discussed a "Parking Lot" to carry-over discussions from one meeting to the next. If the Council wants to move forward with it, it needs to be clear who is assigned to it and what the deadline is. Also, do they want it added to the agenda or part of the Administration report? Consensus of Council to have it part of the Administration report on a monthly basis.

Event Coordinator Curry reported...

- Reminded the Council that all events are listed on www.discovercolumbiacounty.com.
- Plymouth Pub did their best sales ever this past Saturday.
- 2C's Vendor Mall was up 52% from the same Saturday one year previous.
- The shops on S. 1st Street were all busy.
- It was cold and rainy.
- Peter Facinelli from Twilight will be here the second weekend.
- The maps have been received.
- The story book walking tour is complete.
- Played a new St. Helens commercial.
- Contests on KINK FM.
- Working with groups on specialized Twilight events.
- Halloween parade on Saturday.
- Actors from Halloweentown will be here Saturday as well.
- Thanks to Public Works crews for their assistance.

Government Affairs and Project Support Specialist Barry reported:

- Creating a plan to re-engage the community.
- Reminded the Council to check their emails for information about upcoming events and scheduling training.

City Administrator Walsh reported...

- Barry is working on listing organizational priorities that will help the Council with goal setting. It will help as we move forward and shift priorities around.
- The ethics complaint was a learning opportunity for all of us. Councilor Topaz filed an ethics complaint to the Oregon Government Ethics Commission (OGE) based on the meeting being held outside the City and the subject matter related to the executive session. On Thursday, the OGE is going to rule on whether they will open an investigation or dismiss it. They will likely rely on the staff report. The OGE representative did reference an ORS that shows meeting outside the City is reasonable. The recommendation is to open an investigation. The meeting was advertised as an executive session but was really more of a workshop. OGE said we could have done it with no notice and called it a workshop or training, but out of caution we over notified.
- Enjoyed the League of Oregon Cities (LOC) Conference. St. Helens really stands out.

5) Council Reports

Councilor Locke reported...

- Yesterday, he and Barry had a meeting with Hamer Electric at Cascades. They have been doing the electrical work there since 1995. They talked about what is available and useful there. PGE has to be the final one to make the decision. A lot of the equipment there is old and doesn't meet safety standards.

Councilor Carlson reported...

- Toy 'n Joy is coming up.
- Chrissy from the Chamber of Commerce is the point person for the Scarecrow contest.
- Portland Audubon Society is on Sauvie Island. She would like to have them come to St. Helens as well.

Councilor Topaz reported...

- He's worried about the marijuana plant mess. Business Oregon will not help a facility that has marijuana. The Scientific Journalist has a number of articles about the bad things happening with marijuana. A lot of the oils help people over 50 but not under 50. The question came up about what's legal. OLCC has one thing but they're not the Court. He'd really like our attorney to find out what the law says versus the licensing. Some of the decisions are based on what they can do and not what they should be doing.

Councilor Carlson reported...

- Following up with Topaz's report, she would like to have the tenant give a report.

Mayor Scholl pointed out that they are not a tenant. They are purchasing the property. The City is not who approved the sale of marijuana or the OLCC who regulates it.

Council President Morten reported...

- He was very encouraged at the LOC Conference.

- Bend is one of the leading cities in the nation for recreational tourism. He spent quite some time touring an incubator facility for start-up tourism businesses.
- Attended the ethics seminar. He repeated the request he made months ago to have a local attorney attend meetings. He's being sued by the Ethics Commission and does not like that.

Mayor Scholl reported...

- Glad to see a document drawn up for the St. Helens Industrial Park. It is frustrating to have this one subject take up so much time. The City is not in partnership with ACSP or OrGro Tech. They sold them property. There are certain individuals that brought that attention.
- He attended the LOC Conference as well and learned a lot.
- Continuing to work with the County on the Watershed property trails.
- Will inform citizens earlier next year about street closures.
- The City is moving forward. They have the citizens best interest in mind.

6) **Other Business**

7) **Adjourn** – 4:05 p.m.

Executive Session

Respectfully submitted by Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder.

ATTEST:


Kathy Payne, City Recorder


Rick Scholl, Mayor