

City of St. Helens City Council

Public Forum Minutes

April 3, 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
Margaret Jeffries, Library Director
Sue Nelson, Public Works Engineering Director
Neal Sheppeard, Public Works Operations Director
Brian Greenway, Police Chief

Others:

Kelly Sheeley	Steve P.	Howard Blumenthal
Dave Murch	Mary Jane Murch	Vita Larsen
Arlyn Ehrlich	Steve Ball	Richard Mason
F. Brandon	Dennis Kreger	Ivy Gaelrun
Nathaniel Kingsbury	Trina Kingsbury	Doug Walker
Cheryl Morrissey	Sandra Barnett	Tim McCollough
Bobbie McCollum	Ken Forcier	Mary Hubbard
Russ Hubbard	Jessica Clark	Christine Menges
Carmin Dunn	Logan Clark	Richard C.
Kevin Bibler	Ruchana O'Brien	Heather Anderson-Bibler
Alexander Cross	Charlie Cuellar	Edwin Barker
Annalee Driscoll	Terry McGettigan	David Foster
Blake Edwards	Memphis Swanson	Shane Doyle
Andrew H.	Jacob Birdzell	Caden Frye
Cayman B.	Hunter Wetherbee	Davon C.
Jacob Robbins	Shanna Harrison	Angela Singleton
Philip Stanton	Molly Matcheck	Jim N.
Pat Updahl	MaryAnn Updahl	A.J. Allen
W.F. Allen	M.Gordon	Brad Hendrickson
Andrew Niemi		

1) **6:00 p.m. - Open Public Forum**

2) **Topic - Sand Island Marine Park Campground - Partnership with St. Helens Sand Island Campground, LLC**

Brad Hendrickson and Andrew Niemi were in attendance to review their proposal for Sand Island.

- Boats, jet skis, and kayaks available for rent.
- Transform the Island into a recreational area.
- Sand Island is the largest park in the City.
- At least half of the residents in St. Helens do not have a boat and have no way to access the Island.
- The shuttle will transport visitors to and from the Island.
- There will be a fee to camp in one of the 37 sites.
- Potential for a lot of activities on the Island.
- Owned the marina for 23 years. The Island is an underutilized asset for the City.
- There will be a \$2 fee for boats to dock, which allows the LLC to lease the docks and enforce the time limits. There are problems with transient boats at the docks and homeless camping on the Island. With a camp host on the Island, they'll be able to monitor it daily.

Mayor Scholl pointed out that the City does not have a police boat. They don't have a way to monitor the Island.

IN FAVOR

- ◆ Maryann Updahl. Her family enjoys Sand Island and uses it frequently. She is in favor of increased structure and safety. This will increase usage and improvements.
- ◆ Doug Walker. He is in favor of better utilization of the Island. It's a great facility and asset to the City. He spoke of the shuttle serve that was done a few years ago. There was a lot of vandalism and theft from the boats on the docks. How will law enforcement access the Island when there is no police boat? Will this plan include the City docks and the Sand Island docks?

Mayor Scholl confirmed that the proposal includes both docks. They have spoken with the County and there is one state certified officer who can transport our officers over and also train them. Councilor Locke added that the camp host will have a radio to contact law enforcement as needed.

- ◆ Dennis Kreger. He is a member of the St. Helens Yacht Club and Dolphin Yacht Club. Their two clubs host a Halloween cruise at the Island every year. How will bigger groups be able to use the facilities. Will there be a reservation process? Do they need to move the event?

Brad reported that he does not plan to change anything on the docks, other than enforcement. They are State Marine Board docks. If you own a boat and purchase a registration sticker it pays for those docks. He would like to work with the clubs to coordinate their events on the Island. The whole point is to utilize the Island.

- ◆ Tina Curry. Talked about the Maritime Heritage Festival on the Island. It was a lot of work because the Island isn't taken care of; including human waste in the restrooms, garbage around the Island, gun holes, etc. She is in favor of having a camp host to oversee it.
- ◆ Carmin Dunn, Parks & Trails Commission member. She is in favor of the proposal. She and her family have never been to it because they don't have a boat. She's in favor of it

being used by the community. It's also important to listen to all the questions and concerns raised and take those back for consideration.

- ♦ Howard Blumenthal, Parks & Trails Commission. The Commission discussed that the proposal will likely make the Island safer. He encouraged them to keep it affordable for users.

NEUTRAL

- ♦ Ken Forcier. He asked how the fee will be collected. Will there be an online form of payment in case people are kayaking in and don't carry a form of payment with them?

Brad responded that online registration will be available, similar to state campgrounds.

IN FAVOR

- ♦ Philip Stanton. He is a part-time resident in St. Helens and has a house on Second Street. He feels like St. Helens is always on the edge of getting around the economic bind. People struggle here, particularly in Old Town. He lived most of his life on Mississippi Street in Portland. Watching people take over the development was tough in the beginning. Looking back, it was super helpful for the development of that street. Brad is probably on the right track. Sand Island is a jewel. He would have never gone over there without a friend taking him. He wants to support all people of all economic levels but you don't want to be in a position where people establish themselves there and then you have to tell them to leave. It's better to have the rules up front.

NEUTRAL

- ♦ Molly Matcheck. She moved here in August and has been coming here for four years. She will be starting a business and is all for Sand Island. Visitors drive here and leave because there's nothing for them to do here. It's a great place and this is needed.
- ♦ Richard Mason. He is a retired citizen and lives in Yacht's Landing. Will people access the Island on their own?

Brad explained that there will be a public shuttle service to transport people to the Island. People who have a boat will continue doing what they have been doing.

Richard asked if it will be a Coast Guard certified vessel. Brad responded that it's a free shuttle and does not require the certification. However, a Coast Guard license is required if you charge for the service. Richard expressed concerns with what happened several years ago with the shuttle. Brad emphasized that unsupervised kids should not be taken to the Island. They will require a guardian for kids under 18.

Richard asked how they plan to enforce transient boaters when the City doesn't enforce it now. Brad responded that the City does not have the manpower to do it. He lives down there and has employees seven days a week. They will take an inventory of the Sand Island and City docks every day. They will know what boats are there. The boats that are problems will be charged \$2/day and be forced to leave past their time limit. They will be towed.

Police Chief Greenway disagrees that there is no enforcement. They have coverage there five days a week. Citations and arrests have occurred. Towing a boat is not as easy as you would think. In the State of Oregon, that is their house and you cannot just overtake their house. They have to do their due diligence. Mayor Scholl added that the County has not towed boats in the past because of the liability.

- ♦ Shauna Harrison. She has been here her whole life. Something does need to be done. Brad isn't going to solve the transient problem. Brad will offer other options for more usability. We have a serious vulnerable sector problem in our City. It's time to act. She is concerned about Brad putting himself in a vulnerable position because he is not the police and can only do so much. If we're going to have this much activity over there we need proper policing. They need to consider what can happen during an emergency on the Island. She cares about the community and wants to see it preserved. Where will everyone park? Where will the money go? She suggested Brad work with the Recreation Program to hold activities for youth on Sand Island.

Brad responded that he has personally taken EMT's over to the Island. Mayor Scholl added that they will need to call 911 if there's an emergency on the Island and service will get to them. This is change and people don't like change. The City is growing.

- ♦ Bill Allen. Asked if there is a site plan. Will this result in restricted access?

Brad responded that he will have Andrew address the site plan. As far as restricted access, there will be a campground. You can walk through the main paths but not through a camp site being used.

OPPOSED

- ♦ Albert Stroup. He lives in Scappoose and adores Sand Island. He doesn't understand how the Police Department can keep up with this enforcement. Someone needs to be deputized on that Island.

Andrew Niemi reported that he owns and operates a commercial business just inside the City limits. They do need to find ways to help the homeless population. There are days he shows up at the office and finds homeless people camping on his property with their cellphones plugged into the outdoor outlets. It won't solve the homeless problem but it will protect the property and have a positive influence by being on the Island. Andrew was hesitant when Brad first proposed this idea to him. He is a proponent of open, public access to public property. He grew up on the Lower Columbia River from the time he was 11 years old. The difference is they didn't have homeless there that made it uncomfortable for others to be there. That's what has happened to the Island.

- ♦ Sandy Barnett. She lives down there and is neutral. She wants to know about the parking.

Mayor Scholl responded that there is a public parking lot over here that is not utilized. Brad added that there will be paved parking between St. Helens Marina and Dillard's Marina. Eventually he will have parking behind the garages. Scholl added that there has been discussions about a shuttle from the Recreation Center to the Marina. Brad added that they

could also offer valet parking for campers to unload near the dock and staff will park their vehicle.

- ♦ Philip Stanton. A parking problem is a good problem to have.

Councilor Carlson is concerned about parking during fishing season. In this process, will there be posted contact information for someone that is on-call at all times? Is there contact information for people to submit questions and comments to you? Brad said yes. He also reminded Council that this is a partnership with the City. The Council has oversight over everything happening there. They have to report to Council.

- ♦ Patrick Updahl. He is not necessarily opposed to the proposal. The solution is not "a" private company. He suggested opening it up to multiple companies or a short-term lease agreement.

Mayor Scholl talked about all the prep work needed. They are likely going to spend \$100,000 in labor preparing the land. Patrick understands the investment in labor. He thinks opening it up to more businesses will spur economic vitality. Patrick also expressed his concerns with the enforcement of transients.

- ♦ Cheryl Morrisey. She is neutral. She expressed her concerns with parking. She has a boat at the marina and needs a parking space at the marina. How will that be managed?

Brad responded that parking directions will be included when users book a campsite. He has to park down there and understands.

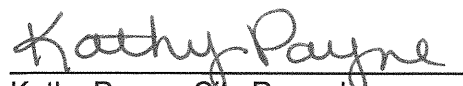
Cheryl also spoke about the park host. She is concerned that the host will not have credentials. That individual may not understand what they're in for. Brad explained that the position will be well described. They will meet the campers when they come off the shuttle and drive their tents and supplies over to the campsites on an ATV. They'll be selling firewood and driving it over to the sites. It will not be a voluntary position. Cheryl asked how garbage will be handled. Brad responded that they will have garbage cans on the Island again that the park host will take care of.

Discussion of police enforcement on Sand Island.

3) **Close Public Forum – 7:01 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted by Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder.

ATTEST:


Kathy Payne, City Recorder


Rick Scholl, Mayor