

City of St. Helens City Council

Public Forum Minutes

April 17, 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
Joe Hogue, Police Lieutenant
Mike De Roia, Building Official
Jacob Graichen, City Planner

Others:

F. Brandon	Greg Pettit	Lynne Pettit
Shaun Brown	Shauna Harrison	Howard Blumenthal
Elisa Mann	Nancy Ward	Benjamin Tiscareno
Ethan Ralstin	Sidney Greenleaf	Brady Preheim
Ann Morten	Jerry Belcher	

1) **6:30 P.M. - Open Public Forum**

2) **Topic - St. Helens Hazard Mitigation Plan**

City Building Official Mike De Roia and Columbia County Deputy Director of Emergency Management Shaun Brown were in attendance to review the updated Plan. A copy is included in the archive meeting packet. Brown explained that the Hazard Mitigation Plan is used to re-build better after a disaster. FEMA wants to see that we're aware of problem areas and working towards fixing them. De Roia explained the document update process. Brown emphasized the importance of the City documents to be included with the County's submittal to FEMA.

Councilor Topaz pointed out that the Plan does not include a process if the railroad goes. Brown responded that they are working on that. He agreed that's a huge concern and it can be included in the Plan. They do have another Plan that specifically addresses hazmat rail.

Council President Morten asked if the Plan includes hazardous materials of storage on City property. Brown responded that it does not include storage. There is a hazmat team for fire. Morten is specifically referring to what is being stored on the switching yard between Gable Road and Columbia Blvd. Brown said that would fall under hazmat rail.

Councilor Topaz talk about the batteries in electric cars being dangerous in an accident. Would that be included in the Plan or under Transportation? Brown has not heard anything about it yet. It has not been addressed.

Council President Morten emphasized the hazard of transformers. They are around forever, even when replaced with new ones.

Discussion ensued about hazards. This Plan deals more specifically with natural hazards.

Council President Morten talked about the Dalton Lake and Grey Cliffs areas being categorized as a catastrophic fire zone. The Fire Department has been told not to go into that area during a fire because they would be trapped. Has that been given consideration? People live there. There needs to be some kind of evacuation plan. De Roia responded that the risk and structures are identified in the document. It does not define a plan to mitigate. Brown added that it's an unfortunate risk people take when they move into that area. There are ways to mitigate around your house.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

- ◆ Greg Pettit. He mainly came here with concerns about oil trains but understands that is outside of the scope of this proposal. The City has a ranney collector as its water supply. North Portland has extensive oil and chemical tanks that are built on unstable fill. If we have a catastrophic earthquake, those chemicals would be released into the river. It could potentially impact the City's water supply. Is that taken into consideration?

Brown responded that residents do need to plan ahead to store water and have a water purifier. It's important to be able to take care of yourself.

Councilor Carlson talked about other cities that go to public events and give out information about preparedness. Is there grant funding to do that? Is that part of this Plan? Brown responded that there is not grant funding to give people those products. However, they are already doing that now at the Fair and other community events. City Administrator Walsh added that the City also has a mobile water purification system. Council President Morten added that they are also looking at high elevation water reservoirs to supply enough water to get by in the event of an emergency.

- ◆ Jerry Belcher. He suggested the City adopt an ordinance for the removal of ivy. Several trees covered in ivy have fallen in Dalton Lake. The forest will die off if the ivy isn't removed. There's also a trail that goes through there. The fire district talked about putting in a gate to give an additional access and egress in the event of a fire.
- ◆ Ann Morten. People have been camping and lighting fires in that forest. They'd be gone if the forest catches on fire. She suggested posting a flyer with what is allowed in that area.
- ◆ Shauna Harrison. What areas in St. Helens have been identified as liquefaction zones?

Brown responded that DOGAMI is doing a study on that right now. The results will be available in September.

Shauna asked if all the properties will be given a value in the Plan by the time it is complete? Brown responded that until it's signed, changes can still be made. Shauna also asked if there will be an emergency access/egress for Crestwood Mobile Home Park. City Planner Graichen said there is already an emergency easement.

Shauna asked if there is anything the Planning Department could do to add protection to the fire hazard area. Graichen responded that they could create a fire overlay zone to add more regulations.

3) **Close Public Forum** – 7:04 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder.

ATTEST:


Kathy Payne, City Recorder


Rick Scholl, Mayor