

City of St. Helens CITY COUNCIL

Public Forum Minutes

March 16, 2016

Members Present: Doug Morten, Council President
Keith Locke, Councilor
Susan Conn, Councilor
Ginny Carlson, Councilor

Members Absent: Randy Peterson, Mayor

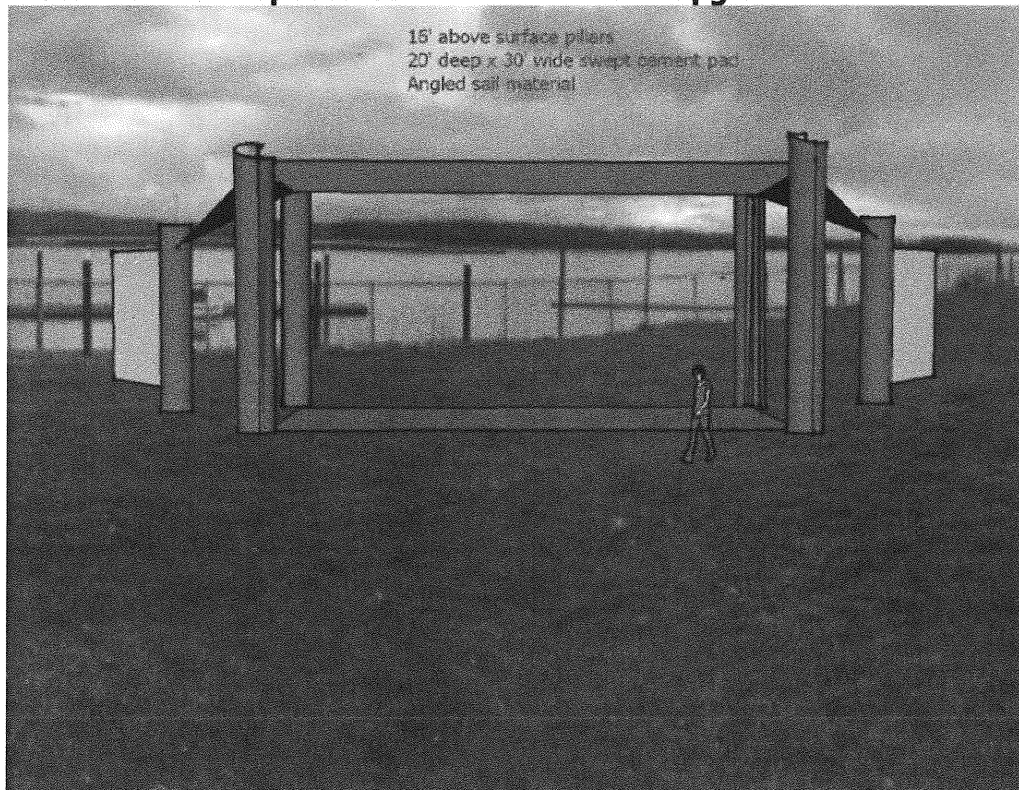
Staff Present: John Walsh, City Administrator
Jon Ellis, Finance Director
Kathy Payne, City Recorder
Margaret Jeffries, Library Director
Terry Moss, Police Chief
Sue Nelson, Public Works Engineering Director

Others:	Cynthia Dailey-Hewkin	Howard Blumenthal	Nancy Herron
	Mike Herron	Robert Braud	Sheila Semling
	John Brewington	Mary Hubbard	Russ Hubbard
	Josiah Pense	Rick Scholl	



Public Forum – 6PM

Discussion on Proposed Columbia View Park Upgrades



Audio recording is not working.

Council President Morten opened the public forum. He welcomed everyone and thanked them for coming.

City Administrator Walsh explained that the proposal for a new stage is only a concept at this point. The City's event planner has been hearing that the current gazebo has made it difficult to bring in large groups and is an acoustical challenge. The stage is based on a maritime theme. The gazebo would be relocated.

Audio recording working.

Councilor Conn added that accessibility was also an issue.

Public Comment

◆Bob Braud. He thinks the gazebo has run its course. A lot of people attend 13 Nights on the River. It's important to have a good facility. The proposed facility fits well with the concept of the waterfront park, which is really important to him. The river is a jewel that we need to focus on. The concept is fantastic as far as he is concerned.

◆Cynthia Dailey-Hewkin. Since the park is called Columbia View Park, how much of the new design would interfere with the view? She showed a picture of what was in the 2011 CRPUD calendar. The sign that was there was taken down because of the view. The gazebo was donated. Were there stipulations that went with that donation? Councilor Conn said no. The other question she has is about loud noise. She has come to concerts and has had to wear earplugs before. How do you decide on this? Council President Morten explained that they will take as much input from citizens as they can. Next, they will seek input from professionals who design waterfronts, musicians and local event coordinators. She thanked the Council.

◆Steve Topaz. The gazebo is quaint, needs to be repaired and should be. The number of people who can watch is determined by the amphitheater. If you want more people, you'll need another amphitheater. It needs to have a back to produce good sound. The Council should consider putting in a large stage with a hard top and a back on it and face the opposite direction on the Boise Veneer property. Steve expressed his concerns that a fabric top will end up sounding like a beating drum. There is no place to hang speakers or lights in the proposal. There needs to be adequate power and drainage. The Veneer property would be adequate for parking as well.

Council President Morten asked Steve for clarification about a hard backed staged. Steve explained that the back of the stage should be solid, so sound does not reflect off the river.

◆John Brewington. He is on the Parks Commission but is here representing himself tonight. He has been involved in more festivals downtown than probably anyone at the City. He held the first festival downtown in 1979, which was Port of Fun. Steve is right about sound reflection and a soft top. You have to be very careful where you place something because of the wind coming upriver. The courthouse serves as a windbreak. If you move back too far, you will no longer have that windbreak. There needs to be acoustic testing. The gazebo was donated by Grace Sutherland, of Grace's Antiques. When Port of Fun first began downtown, they used the end of the street in front of Grace's as a beer garden with bands. It acted as a natural amphitheater. He was Chair of 13 Nights on the River for the first three years it began. It is a great event and should continue. He would like the gazebo to be kept if it needs to be moved. The Council could consider having two different venues, a smaller one and larger one. He cautioned the Council about doing anything too quickly. Digressing to another topic, he

reported that St. Helens Kiwanis organizes a parade every year. This year it will include a carnival and vendors on the waterfront. He requested the Council waive the special use permit fees, since the money will be used for local charities. He also requested assistance with security.

Council President Morten asked John to make that request at the Council regular session following the public forum.

◆Sheila Semling. She asked the Council to consider the performers. If it starts to rain during the performance, the top needs to cover the instruments and all the electricity. She would like to see the present gazebo kept and the new band shell, or whatever is used, in a newer location. Handicap accessibility on the Boise property is better than anywhere else.

◆Russ Hubbard. He is in agreement with the last three people. The gazebo should be kept as is and where it is. The scale of that park is just right for the bands that play. Temporary structures could be put up on the Veneer property for large bands. The Planning Commission should have a hand in looking at this as well.

◆Rick Scholl. He understands that the Veneer property will eventually be developed. He recommends keeping the gazebo as it is for now and make a decision when the property is developed. Bigger is better.

Council President Morten mentioned that the funding source has not been brought up. Walsh explained that a local business is interested in a three-year funding commitment, which includes the naming rights. There is an option for an additional three years. It would be fully paid for and benefits the community.

Walsh reviewed the stage photo. The fabric sales would be moveable for whatever type of event you were having. If you needed a background for a moving night, you would put the backing up. It would be left down during the offseason to not interfere with views. The Waterfront Advisory Committee has been looking at different arrangements of the property to serve the public. One of the consultants on that committee is an architect and a musician. He looked at the proposal and agreed that it would work well. He did think that constructing it before June is a bit ambitious. There are electrical needs, acoustics, stage and plaza to be considered.

◆Steve Topaz. The most meaningful comment he heard was that we need to see how it fits into the design of the waterfront. The planning needs to incorporate the ideas that are in the waterfront. The City of Portland is charging groups an astronomical fee to hold festivals and events. They may consider moving here. We need to be prepared by considering the waterfront development. We also need to keep the wind tunnel in mind as we plan.

◆John Brewington. Isn't the gazebo currently used for a lot of weddings? He would hate to see that lost.

◆Rick Scholl. His concern is the cost and durability of the tarps. They are expensive and we get a lot of wind. What are the replacement costs? The river and wind will not show mercy.

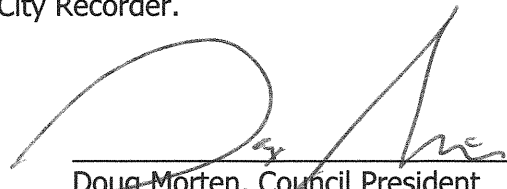
There being no further business, the public forum was closed at 6:35 p.m.



Respectfully submitted by Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder.

ATTEST:


Kathy Payne, City Recorder


Doug Morten, Council President