

City of St. Helens

CITY COUNCIL

Work Session Minutes

May 3, 2017

Members Present: Doug Morten, Council President (arrived at 1:20 p.m.)
Keith Locke, Councilor
Susan Conn, Councilor
Ginny Carlson, Councilor

Members Absent: Rick Scholl, Mayor

Staff Present: John Walsh, City Administrator
Matt Brown, Finance Director
Kathy Payne, City Recorder
Margaret Jeffries, Library Director
Terry Moss, Police Chief
Neal Sheppard, Public Works Operations Director
Sue Nelson, Public Works Engineering Director
Gretchen Kolderup, Youth Librarian
Jasmine Jordan, Mainstreet Coordinator
Jenny Dimsho, Associate Planner
Cindy Phillips, Municipal Judge
Riki Frappier, Municipal Court Clerk
Melanie Payne, Legal Assistant
Adam Hartless, Code Enforcement Officer

Others:	Agnes Petersen	Kannikar Petersen	Diane Dunn
	Robert VanNatta	Darrold Sandberg	Kathy Innocenti
	Linda Demaray	Jud Yarbor	Janet LeSollen
	Steve LeSollen	Chris Burgess	Kathleen Jenkins
	Cheryl Young	Ben Tiscareno	

Councilor Keith Locke called the meeting to order at 1:02 p.m.



Visitor Comments

♦Agnes Petersen. She distributed binders of information and a copy of the St. Helens Municipal Code dated May 1, 2017 to the Council. A copy of the binder information is included in the archive meeting packet. She recommends keeping Municipal Court. She disagreed that the Court is spending more money than it receives in fines. The binder that has a picture of her office explains it in more detail. She also disagreed that other cities with courts spend less than what they are bringing in. She distributed comparable budgets from other cities.

Agnes talked about local store thefts, as listed in the other binder. The purpose of court is not for fines, it is for public safety. Without Municipal Court, the petty thefts will not be prosecuted. Does the Council want to protect their community?

♦Kathy Innocenti, manager of Top Notch Thrift Store. She is in favor of keeping Municipal Court and continuing to prosecute lesser crimes. Top Notch is plagued with shoplifting on a daily basis.

It's important to send a message that shoplifting will not be tolerated.

♦Robert VanNatta. He has worked across the street for 47 years. His father was city attorney for St. Helens 75 years ago. Municipal Court is vital. Without it, you may as well get rid of the Police Department. City code regulations need a court to be reinforced.

♦Spud Sandberg, owner of Ace Hardware. Theft is a problem and is only getting worse. He agrees with comments made and the need to keep Municipal Court.

♦Jud Yarbor. He owns property near the City watershed. People are illegally living in that area and he wants to retain the means to prosecute them when they're caught.

♦Linda Demaray. She is here about the house at 920 Plymouth Street again. The problem is not going away.

Code Enforcement Hartless reported that 920 Plymouth Street is first on the list and should be taken care of within the next week. There was a mix up with the contracting company and should be okay now. There are 12 properties on the cleanup list. Two have been completed. It's been a lot of work.

♦Janet LeSollen, 375 S. 13th Street. They have made great progress. The egress has been cleared.

Agnes pointed out that City code allows for cleanup of properties to be handled through Municipal Court.

♦Chris Burgess. He has worked for Walmart security since 2011. He's made 460 apprehensions. More than half of them had meth or heroin on them or had warrants out for their arrest. Walmart does not allow him to search people's backpacks or bags. When the police arrive, they normally find something illegal during the search. If petty thief's take a back banner, how often will he be just sending an email with the report and a photo? He supports keeping Municipal Court.

Report from Youth Librarian on Library "Makerfest"

Youth Librarian Gretchen Kolderup was in attendance to give her report. She reviewed a PowerPoint presentation, which is included in the archive meeting packet. The maker movement is about learning, fun, collaboration, opportunity, and much more.

Annual Report from Arts & Cultural Commission

Diane Dunn and Kannikar Petersen, members of the Commission, were in attendance to give their report. They reviewed a PowerPoint presentation, which is included in the archive meeting packet.

- Trash can painting.
- Awards at Columbia County Fair & Rodeo.
- Community art projects.
- Bike racks.
- Gateway sculpture project phase II.
- Suggestions to the Council:
 - Develop a volunteer pool.
 - New commissioner training.
 - Social media.
 - Fundraising support.

Council President Morten thanked Diane and Kannikar for their report.

Annual Report from Bicycle & Pedestrian Commission

Ben Tiscareno was in attendance to give the report for the Commission. He reviewed a PowerPoint presentation, which is included in the archive meeting packet.

- Need for more bike racks. Showed photos of racks that identify with businesses.
- Bicycle Friendly Community feedback.
- Bike share service.

Council President Morten thanked Ben for his report.

Discuss Municipal Court Opportunities

Finance Director Brown recapped recent events and reviewed his memo dated May 3, 2017, included in the archive packet for this meeting.

City Administrator Walsh clarified that our City Charter requires us to have court. It also describes a process to transfer it to make sure the duties of court continues.

Councilor Conn explained that the Council considers the mission statement and goals when making decisions. The meeting with the stakeholders and testimony received have helped clarify her opinions. She would be very comfortable with sending misdemeanors to the County and retaining City ordinance and traffic violations at the City.

Judge Phillips referred to item number one. When a misdemeanor is reduced to a violation it reduces the opportunity for the defendant to seek court-appointed counsel and get a jury trial. The D.A.'s office does that to handle those cases more efficiently. If the City decides to transfer misdemeanors to the County, they should transfer the entire case. Referring to item number six, the D.A. is a County employee and the State Court is funded by the State. Having an IGA with the County will not resolve the entire problem. The State Court is already at capacity. Processing times will increase.

Councilor Carlson believes this kind of change will take more than six months. They need to consider what is best for the community. Brown and Phillips have both done a lot of work.

Councilor Conn believes that Brown's recommendation was a compromise.

Councilor Locke agreed with Carlson. He's not ready to make a decision at this time. They need to gather more information to discuss.

Council President Morten doesn't want to make a rushed decision. He doesn't like all the stress and frustration assuming this will be a disaster. The process should just play itself out. He asked Brown how quickly he needs a response if the Council is in favor of making changes. Brown responded that it is essential to have an answer today. For the purposes of budgeting for next fiscal year, he is anticipating everything staying the same. Having an answer will benefit employees anxiously awaiting the outcome. Councilor Conn added that some of the employees are seeking answers to prepare for the future. Councilor Carlson understands their desire to know but nothing can happen in less than a year. Phillips pointed out some ways for improvement in the interim.

Council President Morten has not heard anything about monetary gains of one system or the other. That seemed to be the big issue. He would like to move forward with more facts and figures. They are not prepared to make any decisions at this time. Brown responded that he initially looked at it from a financial standpoint and was asked by the Council to review it from a service level standpoint. He would be happy to return with more data and facts.

Council President Morten would like to keep this open for more review.

Agnes Petersen recommended that Council appoint a study committee to review the nuts and bolts. She suggested appointing members of the community who understand the system.

3rd Quarter Main Street Program Report

Mainstreet Program Coordinator Jasmine Jordan was in attendance to give her report.

- The RARE program coordinator led a workshop for the Winter SHEDCO Mainstreet Work Plan. It went really well. They generated a list of high impact and low maintenance projects. A copy is included in the archive meeting packet.
- Spring promotions.
 - Spring cleanup.
 - Inspiration in the Rain project.
- Redesigning the website.
- SHEDCO newsletter.
- Updated vacancy report.
- Working with Associate Planner Dimsho on the Branding and Wayfinding project.
- Submitted an application for a new RARE student. Will find out soon if they are selected to participate again.
- Will find out if we received the Oregon Mainstreet Revitalization Grant in a few days. The grant would be used for repairs and upgrades to El Tapatio.

Discuss Potential to Invest in Equipment for Communications/Tourism

This was Mayor Scholl's topic. It will be discussed at a later date.

Discussion 2-Hour Parking in Plaza and City Hall Parking Lot Dilemma

Chief Moss reported that the new Code Enforcement Officer has begun enforcing the parking rules, which hasn't been done for several years. The businesses are in favor of parking enforcement.

Finance Director Brown explained that several staff members park in the Plaza for both convenience and lack of parking in the staff lot. Staff has discussed:

- Eliminating the 2-hour parking signs around the Plaza.
- Installing a mechanical gate at the entrance into the Waterfront property to park City vehicles.

Building Official Johnston pointed out that staff was issued parking passes for the City lot. Council could consider allowing those passes to be used for parking in the Plaza as well.

Executive Session

ORS 192.660(2)(e) Real Property Transactions

Motion: At 3:01 p.m., upon Locke's motion and Carlson's second, the Council unanimously voted to move into executive session under ORS 192.660(2)(e) Real Property Transactions.

Due to the audio/visual audio conference feature not working, a cell phone was used to bring in the City attorney for this discussion. Hopefully, it was audible for recording purposes.

Motion: At 3:59 p.m., upon completion of the executive session, Conn moved to go back into work session, seconded by Carlson, and unanimously approved.

Discussion 2-Hour Parking in Plaza and City Hall Parking Lot Dilemma – Continued

City Recorder Payne liked what Johnston said about parking passes to park in the Plaza. However, that would appear to neighboring businesses that City staff are given special privileges to park.

Councilor Conn is not in favor of opening the Waterfront property for parking.

Councilor Locke pointed out the public parking lot behind 2C's. It has plenty of parking. He would like to support the wishes of the downtown businesses.

Public Works Engineering Director Nelson reminded the Council that parking has not been enforced for years and it doesn't seem to be an issue. There is a constant turnover of parking spaces and never seems to be a problem.

Discussion of parking enforcement. It was the consensus of the Council to continue to enforce parking rules.

Review "If I Were Mayor..." Student Contest Entries

We received three posters, two essays, and one digital media presentation. A copy of those are included in the archive meeting packet. Ballots were distributed to the Council. The winners will be announced at tonight's Council meeting.

Department Reports

Reports have been carried over to this evening.

Council Reports

Reports have been carried over to this evening.

Other Business

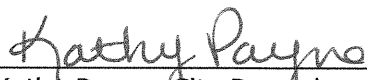
No other business.



There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:16 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder.

ATTEST:


Kathy Payne, City Recorder


Doug Morten, Council President