

City of St. Helens

CITY COUNCIL

Work Session Minutes

September 20, 2017

Members Present: Rick Scholl, Mayor
Doug Morten, Council President
Keith Locke, Councilor
Susan Conn, Councilor

Staff Present: John Walsh, City Administrator
Matt Brown, Finance Director
Crystal Farnsworth, Communications Officer
Margaret Jeffries, Library Director
Sue Nelson, Public Works Engineering Director
Gretchen Kolderup, Youth Librarian
Jacob Graichen, City Planner
Jenny Dimsho, Associate Planner
Bob Johnston, Building Official

Others: Cheryl Gardner Amanda Heynemann Kannikar Petersen
Les Watters Jenn Farrington Mary Ellen Funderburg

Mayor Rick Scholl called the meeting to order at 1 p.m.



Visitor Comments

♦ Dennis Hills. St. Helens Alano Club. They rent a building from the City. They serve the recovery community and deal with clients from local service agencies. They recently invested money in landscaping. The hot weather and drought increased their water bill drastically. They are asking the Council for a \$250 reduction.

♦ Les Watters. He is here about the N. 2nd Street development. Is there a consistent plan to direct how that area will be used? He does not think it's a good idea to develop a street connecting the lower area to 2nd Street. He understands that emergency services need access, but access and egress for the marina area is not good.

Council President Morten suggested Les go to the planning department to form a committee. The committee would make recommendations to the Planning Commission, who would then make a proposal to City Council.

♦ Steve Topaz. He has questions about the soda tax. Council directed Finance Director Matt Brown to respond.

- Who will handle the tax, distributors or vendors? Brown said the distributors will.
- How will the collection be done and will a fee be charged? Brown said a collection service will collect and tax a 2% service fee.
- Does the City have the power to have these people collect tax fees not in our district? Brown said yes.
- Will it be illegal for people to bring in taxed fluids into the City? Brown said no.
- Will the tax be based on calories? Brown said the tax is based on the number of ounces

- in a sugar-sweetened beverage.
- Diet sodas will not be taxed? Brown confirmed that is correct. Steve talked about recent medical research that shows people who drink diet drinks have a higher rate of diabetes than people who drink sugar drinks.
- Beer and wine should also be included. Brown said alcohol is not included because it's already excised by the state.
- Who verifies that stuff being placed on shelves is bought by a certified vendor? Brown said that is handled by the collection service.

Youth Librarian Gretchen Kolderup was invited to report on her proposal so she could return to the Library for an afternoon program.

Proposal to Reduce Barriers to Library Access

Youth Librarian Kolderup was in attendance to present the Library's proposal. A copy of the PowerPoint presentation is included in the archive meeting packet. The Library's Strategic Planning process occurred in 2016 and was approved by the Council in 2017. Resulting from that process, the Access Service Group convened to focus on fines and fees. They used community feedback, an environmental scan of similar libraries in Oregon, and analyzed library data. Five focus areas emerged:

1. Non-Resident Cards
 - a. Want to make non-resident access easier and more accessible.
 - b. Proposal: Reintroduce quarterly payment for non-resident cards.
2. Overdue Fines
 - a. Some stop using the Library because of accumulated fines or afraid of getting fines.
 - b. The rate on most materials is .25/day. That can accumulate quickly if you have a lot of books checked out.
 - c. Proposal: Eliminate youth overdue fines.
 - d. Proposal: Reduce adult overdue fines and lower the per-item fine cap.
3. Lost or Damaged Item Fees
 - a. The \$30 fee was set 20 years ago and no longer reflects current rates. The Library is able to purchase books at a lower cost.
 - b. Proposal: Reduce lost/damaged item replacement fees to reflect the actual cost to the Library.
4. Access to other Libraries
 - a. Community members have expressed a desire to use their Library card at other libraries.
 - b. Proposal: Join the Oregon Library Passport Program.
5. After-Hours Meeting Room Use
 - a. Community members want to be able to use the Columbia Center meeting rooms outside of normal operating hours. They don't have the staff to cover it at this time.
 - b. Proposal: Offer after-hours meeting rooms for an hourly rate.

Councilor Locke asked how it will be monitored? Kolderup responded that the working group will monitor the programs to see what works and what does not.

Council President Morten recognized the good presentation and appreciates seeing staff in attendance. He asked what kind of financial impact the proposals will have on the City. Kolderup said it's hard to estimate. There should be a small increase in non-resident card fees. There will be a loss with overdue fines of about \$4,500 in children and teen materials and about \$1,000 in adult materials. The lost and damaged items would probably see a loss around \$250. After-hours

meeting room use should result in an increase in fees.

Mayor Scholl asked if staff anticipates libraries moving towards a universal library card? Kolderup doesn't expect to see county-wide libraries due to tax intricacies, but sharing library materials across regional libraries will probably be something we see more.

Visitor Comments Continued

♦Bob Johnston, Building Official. At the last meeting, they discussed graffiti and a request for a definition was made. SHMC 1.04.030 Interpretation of Language states, "All words and phrases shall be construed according to the common and approved usage of the language, but technical words and phrases and such others as may have acquired a peculiar and appropriate meaning in the law shall be construed and understood according to such peculiar and appropriate meaning." He recommends the Council use the common definition found in the dictionary. Council concurred.

♦Kannikar Petersen, Arts & Cultural Commission (ACC). She invited City Council and staff to the Salmon Tree Cycle dedication tomorrow at 6 p.m. at the parking lot of the Columbia Veterinary Clinic. There's been a lot of confusion with the cost of the project. It cost approximately \$100,000. Only \$35,000 of it came from the City, \$15,000 of which came directly from the ACC. The ACC doesn't have full time staff members dedicated to assisting them. Any staff time spent was a donation from the City. \$50,000 was received in grants and in-kind staff time. We should be trying to create a culture of appreciation instead of throwing mud at each other. She wants to personally thank Public Works Operation Director Neal Sheppard for all his hard work on the project. He helped in any way that he could with Public Works resources to make the project less costly. She also thanked Associate Planner Jenny Dimsho. Because of her initiative in coming up with a Kickstarter campaign, the ACC reached out extensively to the community to seek donations. There was a lot of negativity on social media when the project was installed. It bothers her that Dimsho was really bothered by all the negativity. Hopefully, City Council will build staff up when things like that happen.

The Council thanked Kannikar for her hard work on the project.

Council President Morten said the sculptures are placed on the bridges over waterways in the city. His property growing up includes one of those watersheds and he spent a lot of time in his childhood exploring those creeks. For many residents who drive by the first time, of course they aren't going to get it. But the more we talk about it and explain it, the more people will start to understand. We are a water town. He gets it. He studied art his entire career and appreciates Kannikar's efforts and the rest of the Commission's and staff's efforts.

Mayor Scholl said he will be at the town hall meeting with Suzanne Bonamici but Council President Morten and Councilor Conn will be there. Councilor Locke has a family issue and won't be there.

♦Al Petersen. You may run into people who have their own opinions about the art work. He was taught in architectural school that many structures were panned by the public when they were constructed including the Sydney Opera House, the Eiffel Tower, the Guggenheim Museum, and the Vietnam War Memorial. If you run into people in opposition, he hopes the Council will help educate people about art.

Employee Length of Service Awards

We have three employees who have reached a milestone in their employment with the City of St. Helens. The following individuals will receive a certificate and pin at the September 20 Council work session.

10 Years

José Castilleja came to work for the City as a Police Officer in August of 2007. In July of 2013, he was promoted to Sergeant, which is where he currently serves. He was also a Detective at one time during his employment.

Jacob Graichen began working for the City as an Assistant Planner in August of 2007. In July of 2011, he was promoted to City Planner, which is where he currently serves.

Curt LeMont began working for the City as a Parks Utility Worker in August of 2007. In November of 2008, he was transferred to Public Works Utility Worker where he currently serves.

Congratulations, José, Jacob and Curt, and thank you for your service!

Request from Cheryl Gardner regarding Easement at 301 S. 2nd Street

City Planner Jacob Graichen presented the request. A copy is included in the archive meeting packet. Once Skip Baker retired, he applied for a street vacation. A public access easement was reserved as part of that street vacation. Cheryl is requesting the easement be extinguished. Graichen said for the good of public interest, he wouldn't recommend getting rid of the easement. But this isn't a public hearing and the request is only to see if the Council would even entertain the proposal.

Councilor Conn declared that she has no financial interest, but she does live in the neighborhood. People do not walk in that area because it is not completely paved. They walk in the street.

Discussion of the fence obstructing the sidewalk. Council President Morten said plans need to be put in place to preserve safe public passages. He doesn't want to force people out into the streets. Sometimes it is hard to see kids in the street. It's a liability.

The Council agreed to retain the public access easement and request the last fence panel be removed.

Promotional Insert in Resident Business License Renewals

Library Director Jeffries will review the request during department reports.

Discuss TGM Grant from ODOT for Riverfront Connector Plan

City Planner Graichen reviewed the grant with the Council. A copy is included in the archive meeting packet. With waterfront development, there are some issues with Plymouth Street and Old Portland Road that need to be addressed. The grant would look at specific intersections. The only cost to the City is in-kind staff time. Mayor Scholl and Councilor Carlson will serve as part of the advisory committee. The grant acceptance is on the agenda for signature tonight.

Review of Final Plat for Land Partition at 2554 Columbia Blvd.

City Planner Graichen review the final plat. A copy is included in the archive meeting packet. It is on tonight's agenda for the Mayor's signature.

Discuss Proposed Building Code Amendments

Building Official Johnston was in attendance to review the proposed amendments to the Building Code. A copy is included in the archive meeting packet. Rather than specifically identifying the building code year, he proposes changing language to "currently adopted building code." It prevents them from having to change the language every time State building codes are updated. Council concurred.

Review Proposed Branding & Wayfinding Master Plan

Associate Planner Jenny Dimsho was in attendance to review the proposed Master Plan. A copy is included in the archive meeting packet. The City was awarded a grant in 2016 to address complaints about lack of wayfinding on Hwy 30 to lead people into the city. Dimsho reviewed the history of the grant project with the Council. She is hoping for final adoption in October 2017. She asked the Council to review the proposed plan and have any changes or recommendations back to her soon.

Request to Waive Fees for Halloweentown Events:

- Scarecrows: Tales in the Dark (Shoestring Community Players)
- Spirit of Halloweentown Parade (Chamber of Commerce)
- Monster Dash (Rotary)

Consensus of Council to waive the fees.

Discuss Intersections at 1st & Cowlitz Street and 1st & St. Helens Streets

Councilor Locke proposed installing a four-way stop at both intersections. Public Works Engineering Director Sue Nelson researched the issue. To install a four-way stop at a main street, you are required a minimum of 300 cars per hour for an 8-hour period. The minor street coming into the intersection requires a 200-car minimum every day of the week. She does not think those intersections come anywhere close to those minimum requirements. It will be studied during the upcoming connector plan that Graichen presented.

Discussion of the confusion at the intersections to new residents and visitors.

Nelson said the City is potentially liable if they modify the intersections against our adopted guidelines and the state and federal transportation system guidelines. She would recommend against the modifications without the data to back it up.

Department Reports

Public Works Engineering Director Nelson reported...

- Nothing to report.

Library Director Jeffries reported...

- Requested feedback from Council on Kolderup's proposal. Consensus of Council for staff to write a resolution to move forward with changing fees as proposed.
- Seeking Council permission to put a library insert in the 2018 business license renewals that is sent to resident business owners. The insert would promote library cards to business owners and the advantages it would have to them. Businesses in St. Helens are eligible for free library cards.
- A new event brochure was released.
- Tomorrow night is the first Civics for Adults workshop.
- Next week is Banned Books Week.

Finance Director Brown reported...

- The Violets Villa sale went through and a check for the full lien came to the City.
- Tomorrow Roger Stauffer will begin pulling up the carpet and installation will take place next week at City Hall. Some of the used carpet will be used on the stage for 13 Nights. He also received a request from a local church to use the carpet. Council concurred. Staff would like to close the front entrance to City Hall during the installation and direct people to the annex for assistance. It will most likely be Wednesday through Friday of next week. Council concurred, noting the need for clear signage.

Communications Officer Farnsworth reported...

- Showed a new promotional video from Brian Trenchard Smith and asked Council for their verbal approval and comments to move forward with publishing. Council liked the video.

City Administrator Walsh reported...

- He and Dimsho gave a presentation on the Oregon State Regional Trails program in Salem. St. Helens had the only water trail proposal to make Grey Cliffs safer and easier for non-motorized boat users. They received good feedback on the project.
- Working with EPA technical assistance funds to look at strategies for dealing with the lagoon.
- Staff is working on the community wide assessment grant right now. It will involve Phase I and II of the environmental assessment. It's a three-year project.
- There has been some remodel work in the Council Chambers. Most places use a table for visitor comments and we have a podium that a lot of people trip over. Would the Council agree to move toward a table set up for visitor comments? Council concurred.
- Halloween is progressing well.

Council Reports

Councilor Locke reported...

- Councilor Locke proposed a dock registration fee of \$2 to limit a lot of the problems happening at the docks. Staff has confirmed that this would not conflict with the State Marine Board requirements to offer day use access to the docks. Councilor Conn said a space should be designated for those day use boaters so that overnight boaters do not take up every available space at the docks. Council concurred with the \$2 fee. Staff will propose changes to the Code.
- There is a light in the County parking lot that is not an LED. Nelson said the LED replacement project only replaced lights in public right-of-way. Council President Morten suggested the City recommend the County align their lighting with the City's. Mayor Scholl will talk to Columbia County General Services Director Casey Garrett about it.

Councilor Conn reported...

- The Arts & Cultural Commission meeting next Tuesday will be held at the Columbia Center Auditorium since the carpet is being ripped out in the Council Chambers.
- The Library Board heard the soda tax proposal.
- Saturday is the Out of Darkness Suicide Prevention Walk. They are trying to raise awareness for suicide prevention.
- She invited people to attend the Civics for Adults classes at the Library. It is non-partisan and free.
- She attended the Future Connect event through PCC yesterday. They were celebrating the increase in investments for scholarships. The County and Oregon Aero made sizeable donations that were matched by the PCC Foundation. They also had a tour of new OMIC classrooms.
- She requests to be excused from the next Council meeting to go on a family cruise. Council concurred.

Council President Morten reported...

- He would like to consider the \$250 Alano Club request. Mayor Scholl recused himself from the discussion as he is a board member. The Council was in agreement in giving a credit but would like to see a presentation from the Alano Club as was proposed by the presenter. Administratively, those funds would come out of discretionary funds.
- He likes the look of the room upgrades and the historic photos to preserve our history.
- Salmon habitat is essential. The City has come a long way in helping improve Milton Creek habitat for salmon by installing stumps and making other improvements. The art criticism

from people driving by in their cars is a lack of understanding the sculpture. When he first saw the sculpture, he thought "what the heck is that?" But then when he understood what it was, it recalled a lot of his childhood memories and an appreciation for the salmon habitat. He looks forward to seeing what happens as a result of the sculptures. Conn said that an explanation kiosk will also be installed on the sidewalk across the highway from the sculpture that gives an explanation of the sculptures.

- Thanks to the Library for moving forward and keeping pace with other libraries across the nation.

Mayor Scholl reported...

- He is looking forward to Halloween. It is going to be a busy month.
- The League of Oregon Cities Conference is coming up. He will be attending the conference and a mayor educational seminar.

Executive Session

ORS 192.660(2)(e) Real Property Transactions

Motion: At 3:18 p.m., upon Locke's motion and Morten's second, the Council unanimously voted to move into executive session under ORS 192.660(2)(e) Real Property Transactions.

Motion: At 4:02 p.m., upon completion of the executive session, Councilor Conn moved to go back into work session, seconded by Councilor Morten, and unanimously approved.

Other Business

No other business.



There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder.

ATTEST:


Crystal Farnsworth, Communications Officer


Rick Scholl, Mayor