

City of St. Helens

CITY COUNCIL

Work Session Minutes

November 1, 2017

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

Staff Present: John Walsh, City Administrator
Matt Brown, Finance Director
Kathy Payne, City Recorder
Margaret Jeffries, Library Director
Neal Sheppeard, Public Works Operations Director
Sue Nelson, Public Works Engineering Director
Cindy Phillips, Municipal Judge
Clayton Lance, City Prosecutor
Jacob Graichen, City Planner
Crystal Farnsworth, Communications Officer
Tina Curry, Event Coordinator

Others: Steve Topaz Julie Thompson Amanda Normine
Gretchen Williams Stephanie Patterson Les Watters
Al Petersen Kannikar Petersen Doug Boyes
Becky Stoddard Nicole Thill Dorinda Aschoff
Meagan Tolles

Mayor Rick Scholl called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.



Visitor Comments

♦ Meagan Tolles. She is currently going through a home refinance. During the process, she learned that her home is two and a half feet within the eight feet of public utilities easement. She is requesting a waiver of the easement extinguishment fee.

City Planner Graichen explained the situation. The City allowed the house to be built over the easement in 2004. The Planner at the time signed off on a five foot setback when it should have been an eight foot setback. The City does not have anything within the easement and they will be reaching out to other utilities to find out if they do. Public Works Engineering Director Nelson added that the easement extinguishment will only be for the portion that the house is encroaching.

It was the consensus of the Council to waive the fee.

♦ Les Watters, representing the Museum Association. They gave tours of the courthouse during Spirit of Halloweentown. It was well attended and successful. They would like to be a part of the planning process for next year.

Councilor Carlson complimented Les. She appreciates their hard work. Councilor Conn added that

she heard from out of town guests who really enjoyed it.

♦Dorinda Aschoff. She owns 201 Cowlitz Street. Her neighbor at 301 S. 2nd Street put up a fence that went across the sidewalk. She heard that one panel has to be removed but it hasn't happened yet. Dorinda is petitioning for two panels to be removed.

Councilor Conn pointed out that the owner's house just burned, so it will probably delay her. City Planner Graichen added that it was delayed due to the owner's carpal tunnel surgery.

Discussion of the fence blocking the sidewalk. Council President Morten is opposed to anything that blocks sidewalks. Graichen pointed out that it was a misunderstanding of the street vacation. The owner misunderstood that an easement for the sidewalk needed to remain clear.

♦Steve Topaz. He has two questions:

1. Is there going to be a public critique for the Spirit of Halloween celebration? Hundreds of people came wandering by his place on S. 4th Street. Very little information was presented to the public away from the Plaza.
2. Have we ever thought about using a cooperative development system for the Waterfront property? For instance, boat repair, marine repair, or a water training center. It would include partnerships of multiple businesses and the City.

Report from SHEDCO

Al Petersen, SHEDCO Chair, was present to give their report. But first he wanted to address a couple topics that were raised during visitor comments and after reviewing past Council minutes.

1. The street vacation next to Dorinda. As a Planning Commissioner, he does not think a street vacation with an easement through it should have been approved. He recommends not making that decision in the future.
2. Would like to be part of the Spirit of Halloweentown debriefing.

Moving on to the SHEDCO report.

- The last report was given in July from Jasmine Jordan.
 - During that meeting, Amanda announced that SHEDCO was working on The Bite.
- SHEDCO meetings have been held at various local businesses.
- The design committee donated two Dog Walk dogs to the Black Tie and Blue Jeans event to help raise money for scholarships.
- Partnered with the City for the Scarecrow competition.
 - Business category winners:
 - 1st Place - Drake's Towing
 - 2nd Place - Hagan Hamilton Insurance
 - Residential category winners:
 - 1st Place - Smokin' Joe at 32671 Pittsburg Road
 - 2nd Place - 185 S. 4th Street
- SHEDCO held two Spirit of Halloweentown events; The Bite and the Meet & Treat at Aggie's House. Both events were successful. Lots of local businesses participated events. SHEDCO was able to donate \$1,000 to the food bank and backpack program from money raised at those events.
- He spoke with four food-related businesses and two retail businesses about Spirit of Halloweentown. In general, they were happy. There were some obvious planning miscommunications. Every year you learn.
- Recommendations for Spirit of Halloweentown from SHEDCO:
 - Meaningful communication. Hold planning meetings before October. Email communication breaks down. The only way to solve that is by meeting in a room

- together.
- Clear event schedule parameters. There needs to be a clear understanding of how the City promotes events and who is allowed or not allowed in the schedule. According to the minutes, events created by businesses will be showcased in the schedule.

Mayor Scholl clarified that events had to be submitted by August 1. He agreed that there was a breakdown of communication. He was not aware of The Bite until the middle of September when it was posted on Facebook.

Amanda Normine, SHEDCO Vice Chair, explained that Tina Curry and Councilor Conn suggested they hold The Bite uptown as part of those group events. Tina was aware of it in August, as part of the movement to bring people to uptown businesses. Stephanie Patterson confirmed that they can be on the schedule if there is 50% of participants representing St. Helens businesses. Then they were later told that they can't be on the schedule if it's not Halloween-related. There were other events added at the last minutes and didn't meet the August 1 deadline.

Council President Morten recalled that Council encouraged SHEDCO to involve St. Helens businesses. They did not demand it. He sees the need to align better communication.

Al talked about the confusion when they tried to add The Bite to the schedule. They were first told it could be on there, then told that it has to be 50% St. Helens businesses participating, then they received notice that the event is not geared towards out-of-town visitors and the tourism ordinance says it has to be focused on out-of-town visitors, and the event was not Halloween enough. The event was eventually included on the Discover Columbia County website. He reiterated the need for clear parameters to be added to the schedule.

Mayor Scholl would like to have a clear and concise plan by the second work session in June. They have big events to schedule around.

Al pointed out Tina's report at the July meeting. A lot of potential events were presented but she couldn't announce the events because of confidentiality. There's a reluctance to announce what's planned, put together a calendar, and discuss what is happening. There needs to be open communication. The other event was the Meet and Treat at Aggie's. That was never listed on the schedule. He understands some of the problems after reading the back and forth emails. Some people think they went around someone else's back. Al is an architect and has clients that he works for. His clients do not tell him who he can and cannot work for.

Mayor Scholl thinks that was a misunderstanding. However, this is a big event and security is very important. Al said they had the Columbia County Sheriff's Posse at their event. You cannot say that they didn't have enough security or properly trained security. The Sheriff's Posse got bored and went home. Amanda spoke about the other security that was on site. Mayor Scholl told them that they were fortunate that no accidents occurred.

Al talked about an email with a bill to SHEDCO. It said their activity would be added to the Spirit of Halloweentown schedule after payment was received. It included:

1. St. Helens Police Department services for \$1,400.
2. Sharing of cost for the talent \$850, which they knew about but were never told it had to be paid up front.
3. Liquidated damages, which is speculative income that the City may or may not have made.

Al asked if it is City policy to be charged in advance to be listed on the schedule? Mayor Scholl said no. Al asked if it is City policy to charge for police services in advance? Mayor Scholl does

not believe so. Al asked if it is City policy to charge for speculative revenue? Mayor Scholl said not to his knowledge.

Mayor Scholl talked about the need to improve communication. Al reported that the businesses were happy and their events were successful. They did not follow-through with presenting their events within the timeframe requested.

Amanda said that this has become very stressful for their Board. They are losing Board members. She would like to focus on a solution. SHEDCO needs the support of the City.

Council President Morten said the decisions have to be made by the Council as a whole. It has to be on record in this room. Amanda asked if SHEDCO should have a member come to every Council meeting since the Council will no longer have representation at theirs. Councilor Conn suggested SHEDCO submit regular reports. Clear communication and parameters do need to be established.

Mayor Scholl reiterated the need for a meeting that includes all organizations participating in Spirit of Halloweentown. Amanda agreed. She did point out that a lot of great additions were made this year. People were downtown having fun. There was a lot of positive feedback. They just felt they were being bullied because their events weren't add but they saw other events being added.

Council President Morten agreed with the communication breakdown. Meetings in this room are recorded and on the record. They are not when held at different locations. SHEDCO needs to be here giving reports.

City Administrator Walsh talked about four years ago when the role of Tourism Director was shifted to staff. Spirit of Halloweentown has really grown since then. The roll of communications is a vital part of it. St. Helens is listed as one of the top 10 destinations for Halloween. Councilor Carlson emphasized the need for improved communications between SHEDCO and the Council. People assume SHEDCO is a City group because of the name.

Amanda asked to wipe the slate clean and work together. Mayor Scholl and Councilor Conn agreed with the need to work collaboratively.

Al emphasized the need to deal with issues when someone on staff or contracted by the City takes over a roll that is not in their purview.

Council will discuss setting a date at their next meeting to begin planning for next year's Spirit of Halloweentown event.

1st Quarter Municipal Court Report

Finance Director Brown began the presentation by reviewing his report, which is included in the archive packet for this meeting.

Prosecutor Lance handed out the "Prosecutors 120 day Report". A copy is included in the archive packet for this meeting. He reviewed the new practices in the Court room and how successful it has been. He recognized how fantastic the staff has been with the changes. He encouraged the Council to come watch court in action. He went on to talk about mental illness and how they assist them in court.

Judge Phillips pointed out the improvements in the report. Communication is important.

Mayor Scholl told them to continue what they're doing, building the culture, and staying

consistent. What they are doing is working well. Council President Morten agreed.

Update on New City Hall Office Assistant Position

Finance Director Brown reviewed a one-page handout. A copy is included in the archive meeting packet. The position would sit where Heidi does and become the person who greets customers. Heidi would move to the corner and focus more on Building Department tasks. He reviewed the cost and duties.

After discussing the options, Council directed Brown to come back with quotes comparing costs for part time and full time through a temp agency and in-house. Brown agreed and will also bring back a job description for review.

Discussion Regarding Parks

Finance Director Brown reviewed his memo. A copy is included in the archive meeting packet. A subcommittee met to review the survey results received at the Sugar Sweetened Beverage Tax public forum. The subcommittee included City Administrator Walsh, Public Works Engineering Director Nelson, Associate Planner Dimsho, City Planner Graichen, Parks Field Supervisor Houk, and himself. They made recommendations based on survey results from the public forum and from a survey conducted for the Parks Master Plan in 2015.

Council President Morten pointed out that the public forum feedback was more about a tax issue than a parks issue. Asking the people in attendance to tell us what to do with our parks was a huge disconnect. Brown responded that the intention was to get feedback from a large audience. It was a good opportunity to reach citizens.

Referring to staff recommendation item number one, Council President Morten stated that the Greater St. Helens Park and Recreation District has no desire to take over Civic Pride Park.

Referring to staff recommendation item number two, Council President Morten said the State Marine Board is not interested in taking over Sand Island.

Referring to staff recommendation item number four, Council President Morten explained that Council thought it would be a good idea to create "friends of" groups for new nature parks. It has worked very well.

Mayor Scholl recommended tabling the discussion until the next meeting, so it's fresh on Morten's mind for the December Parks Commission meeting.

Update on Council Chambers Audio/Visual System and Comcast

Finance Director Brown updated the Council on the AV system and Comcast.

- The Comcast box is on order. Additional wiring is needed. When Lewis Audio made the upgrades to the Council Chambers, it was not included. Those costs can be reimbursed from Comcast PEG funds. The Comcast franchise agreement expires this year. City Administrator Walsh said that is a good opportunity to make changes. Consensus of Council to retain Comcast Ch. 29. Mayor Scholl would like to make greater use of the channel for communications.
- Granicus is scheduled to go live at the next Council meeting. People can stream the live meeting from the City's website.
- There have been complaints from staff about the mic boxes being bulky and getting in the way. There is an alternative to cut a hole into the tabletop and recess the boxes into the table. He asked how the Council feels about the boxes. Consensus of Council to leave how they are now.

- Councilor Carlson asked about the phones recently going down. Brown responded that it occurred on a Sunday for a few hours. It was a CenturyLink issue.

Review of Financial Policies

Finance Director Brown reviewed the financial policies. A copy is included in the archive meeting packet. He will plan to come back in December for adoption after the auditors have an opportunity to review.

Mayor Scholl asked if a policy should be created for tourism events. Brown responded that he can research other cities policies and bring them back to Council for review.

Department Reports

Events Coordinator Tina Curry reported on Spirit of Halloweentown activities...

- Responses to Al's report:
 - Al asked if it is customary to bill people in advance for service. Generally, it is not. However, SHEDCO still owes the City over \$4,000 from the Rain or Shine Festival. She is in charge of keeping the tourism budget in check and was protecting the City from another unpaid bill.
 - Kimberly Brown's agent told her that Amanda agreed that any lost income the City had from not doing an event during SHEDCO's event would be shared with the City. Tina averaged the minimum amount and applied that charge.
 - In response to the security, emergencies can happen at any given time. That cost was based on the time of the event and road closure.
 - Stephanie was hired to be the community liaison, specifically SHEDCO and the Chamber. She attended two SHEDCO meetings and had multiple email contacts with them.
 - To be listed on the Spirit of Halloweentown agenda it has to be a Halloween-related event.
 - SHEDCO was informed that the Bite could have included a costume competition or decorate the tables with a Halloween theme. They chose not to do that, so they weren't listed.
 - The Aggie event was not listed because Kimberly Brown's agent made it quite clear that the SHEDCO event was just for the community who felt left out when she's only here to see the tourists. It's quite common to have clauses in celebrity agreements that you can't appear within a certain period of time for any other group within a geographical boundary. Al's an architect and probably not aware of that.
- It was the best year ever.
- Uptown vendors thanked the City for the shuttle. It increased sales.
- After a couple Chamber Board members decided that the City couldn't rent the building for the museum, it worked out even better to put the museum in the Masonic building. They received great reviews about the museum.
- People loved the aliens and stones on the waterfront.
- The new props and celebrities enticed guests to come from all over the country and world.
- New facades were added to the buildings.
- Exciting plans to make St. Helens a tourism destination throughout the year.
- She thanked Stephanie for her assistance. Vendors want to come back and had positive experiences working with her.
- Thank you to Public Works crews for all of their work. They went above and beyond to make the guest experience a good one.
- Thank you to Mayor Scholl and City Administrator Walsh who kept up with the daily tourism

decisions.

- Thanks to the admin staff for all of their assistance and keeping things legal.
- Thanks to the Cert team for their assistance.
- Sponsors and vendors were super supportive.
- A new map was printed. About 4,000 were distributed.
- Invested in the stain glass pumpkin from the movie and banners.
- Had some vandalism. Working on a solution.
- The Wauna Credit Union stage helped people stay out of the rain.
- Challenges remain the same with educating the public about funding.
- Looking forward to more upward momentum as 2018 planning begins.
- Proposing to lease the Masonic Ballroom and keep open on the weekends for a museum, Spirit of Halloweentown gift shop, and photo ops. She also plans to sell sponsorships to help cover the cost of keeping it open. The lease is approximately \$1,000 a month.
- Proposing to keep the coin challenge going. That would continue to draw people to the Houlton District and Highway 30.
- Proposing to move the rocks closer to City Hall within an area called, "The Underworld." People could take photos with dragons flying overhead, try on wings, and roast s'mores over a gas fireplace. There would be a nominal fee to enter the area, which would include a beverage or s'mores kit.
- Mayor Scholl asked Tina when a planning meeting for next year's event will take place. Tina explained that organizations normally just contact her with the dates of their events to be added to the event agenda. She is planning to have a meeting and post a preliminary agenda in January.

Community Liaison Stephanie Patterson reported on Spirit of Halloweentown activities...

- She thanked the Mayor and Council for all of their hard work and support.
- When she spoke with the Council a few years ago, the projection from the National Retail Association was at \$7.4 billion spent annually in the US for Halloween. Now, it's at \$9.1 billion. The average person spends \$77.52. They think it has reached to \$86.13 per person this year. That covers candy and costumes. There is a huge potential for growth.
- This year, she worked with community members, nonprofits, service groups, etc. to find out what their needs and concerns were. She addressed several concerns that stemmed from misinformation and rumors. The three biggest rumors were:
 - Marnie was not coming this year and the merchants would make considerably less money this year.
 - The traffic pattern was designed to take people away from shopping districts and the merchants would see no benefits from the October crowds.
 - Taxpayer dollars were used instead of tourism dollars. Spirit of Halloweentown was put on at the expense of our schools, infrastructure, and public services.
- It was an information and education process. She began talking to people and addressing those concerns on Facebook.
- The traffic pattern was to address safety concerns. The shuttle worked great to get pedestrians and shoppers up to the Houlton District. She was very concerned when the original location for the Oddities and Peculiarities Museum fell through. It was important to her and the retailers. They eventually learned that an event was not needed up there. The game pieces, coin search, and shuttle did the job.
- SHEDCO expressed concerns about why certain things were not put on the agenda. Halloween events were cross promoted on the agenda. In order to have a successful event, you cannot just use the City agenda. You have to cross promote. The major criteria was:
 - Was it a Halloween-themed event?
 - Was it marketable to people outside the community on a broad-based tourism event, rather than a local event offered for the community alone? There was a lot

of confusion about tourism dollars and controlling the allocation.

- She suggests having an information packet available to any group who wants to do an autonomous event. The City is creating the framework and groups need to do the work for themselves. There were several instances she had to contact groups to ask them why they have not gotten their information to the Chronicle to publish in the agenda.
- Groups are responsible for their own branding.

Mayor Scholl agreed that groups are responsible for their own marketing.

Councilor Conn loves the idea of having information packets. How will they be disseminated? Stephanie believes it will be discussed at the first kick-off meeting. Hopefully, they will be available soon but will take time for approvals.

Council President Morten appreciates the report on the effectiveness of the shuttle. Is there any validity in providing a shuttle for Christmas lights, 13 Nights on the River, etc. The shuttle seems to be a catalyst to bring the community together. Stephanie would like to see the shuttle expanded, at least for tourism events. They would have to look at 13 Nights and determine if it is only for transportation. There's a lot of options.

Communications Officer Farnsworth reported...

- She reviewed her Spirit of Halloweentown 2017 Communications report. A copy is included in the archive meeting packet.
 - www.discovercolumbiacounty.com had 332,000 visits for 2017.
 - Reviewed TV media, online media, and newspaper coverage.
 - Posted an onsite map in the Plaza for people to mark where they are visiting from. They're from all over the world.
 - Talked about the importance of having all information match. Different organizations and individuals are sharing information and they don't all list correct times, locations, etc.
 - She limited Spirit of Halloweentown posts on the City's government social media pages. Instead, it was primarily directed to the Spirit of Halloweentown page.
 - She emphasized the need for additional staff during Spirit of Halloweentown.

Mayor Scholl gave Farnsworth kudos for a job well-done. She worked hard during Spirit of Halloweentown weekends. She has a vision and creativity. It was fun to be part of.

Councilor Carlson values Farnsworth's experience and expertise at guarding the City's integrity. She is here on the weekends and running around. Her efforts are very appreciated.

Walsh agreed with the need for unity between organizations.

Council President Morten and Councilor Conn pleaded for Farnsworth to stay with the City. What she's doing works.

Public Works Engineering Director Nelson reported...

- Congratulated everyone involved with Spirit of Halloweentown activities. People were wandering around the Plaza every day, all times of the day.
- Preparing for winter.

Library Director Jeffries reported...

- Arts & Cultural Commission (ACC) Chair Kannikar Petersen is here to present to the Council. Kannikar reported that she heard from Columbia River Peacemaker Quilt Guild on Monday.

They want to apply for a grant from Columbia County Cultural Coalition (CCCC) to help with a quilt show in 2018. You have to have 501(c)(3) status or be a government entity to apply and they have neither. She thought of three organizations that could help: 1) Arts & Cultural Commission, 2) St. Helens Public Library, and 3) SHEDCO. CCCC is a pass-through for grant money from Oregon Cultural Trust. The money comes from funds received through license plate sales. It's distributed based on population. Each year Columbia County receives between \$9,000 – 13,000. She explained the reimbursement grant program. The maximum amount for this project is \$2,000, which will be used to purchase equipment to hang the quilts, advertising, etc. She explained to the Guild that they will be responsible to front the money and submit receipts to CCCC. The only responsibility of the City would be to receive and cash the check from CCCC.

Councilor Carlson stated that it's perfect for the ACC. Mayor Scholl agreed quilts are an art.

Councilor Conn pointed out that the ACC can't be the fiscal agency. It has to be the City. Brown agreed that he, as the Finance Director, would be the fiscal agent. He's concerned that it opens to the door for other organizations to ask for the same. Since they're not a 501(c)(3), it would leave the City responsible for reporting the funds and potential audits. Discussion ensued.

Council President Morten would like time to research this further. Kannikar pointed out that the grant deadline is November 18. She understands Brown's concerns when money is given up front. In this case, money is not given until receipts are submitted. In the past, St. Helens Community Foundation (SHCF) has acted as a fiscal agent for the ACC. Good things for the community need to be encouraged.

Councilor Carlson voiced her approval to support the grant. It's good for the community and enriching for the citizens.

Councilor Conn said this is why the SHCF was formed, unfortunately they are discontinuing operation. SHEDCO has served as an umbrella for a number of other organizations. Kannikar talked about SHEDCO not being a good fit because this does not serve the main street businesses. She would really like to see SHCF be reformed.

City Administrator Walsh agreed that the purpose of the SHCF was to support these type of programs. Even though it doesn't fit within the City's purview, he recommends the City support it. The reward outweighs the risk. He does not want it to set a precedent.

Kannikar talked about the need to support each other as a community.

Councilor Locke agreed that the SHCF was formed for this type of assistance. He would like to see the foundation active again. He's okay with the City supporting this proposal. Councilor Carlson concurred.

Councilor Conn said it's not in the City's wheelhouse.

Council President Morten thinks it's unfair for the City and Kannikar to be asked for a decision so quickly. It's created a division of staff and Council. At this point, he does concur with Walsh.

Brown said it is a Council decision. His recommendation to not do it was based on advice from other finance directors. He confirmed it is a small amount and is for the greater good. Councilor Locke repeated that is why SHCF was formed.

Mayor Scholl listened to both sides. He is in favor of supporting the request.

- She was a chaperone at the Youth Council's Halloween dance. It was a great event. Kudos to the organizers.
- Library Board members who attended the event at the Police Department last night had a really good experience. It was very well done and they were pleased to be part of it.
- Reviewed upcoming library events.

Finance Director Brown reported...

- Nothing to report.

City Recorder Payne reported...

- Congratulations from the Council for receiving her Master Municipal Clerk (MMC) designation.
- The Council retreat is a week away. She asked what they would like for their dinner. After discussion, it was decided that Payne would email a menu and Council would respond with their dinner choices.

City Administrator Walsh reported...

- Have a long-standing agreement to service the City of Columbia City's sewer. Modifications are being made and should be done within the next few months.
- Attended the Transient Boaters Task Force in Portland. Enforcement has been switched from the individual to the vessel. Vessels are required to have a home base, which makes them authorized. They are requiring boats to be authorized to dock there.
- Moving forward on Brownfields grants.
- Received two applications for the building inspector position. Looking for direction on how to proceed.

Council Reports

Reports were postponed to the evening meeting.

Executive Session

ORS 192.660(2)(e) Real Property Transactions

Executive Session will be held at tonight's meeting.

Other Business

No other business.



There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder.

ATTEST:


Kathy Payne, City Recorder


Rick Scholl, Mayor