

# City of St. Helens

## Urban Renewal Agency Meeting Minutes

### May 3, 2017

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

**Members Absent:** None

**Staff Present:** Jennifer Dimsho, Associate Planner & Secretary  
John Walsh, City Administrator

**Others Present:** Lorelei Juntunen  
Mark Kreutzer  
Matt Brown  
Margaret Jeffries  
Sue Nelson  
Quinton Carlson  
Brady Preheim  
Danielle & Steve Nelson  
Sherrie Ford

The Urban Renewal Agency Meeting was called to order by Mayor Rick Scholl at 6:00 p.m.



**Juntunen, Lorelei. EcoNorthwest.** Lorelei said the Urban Renewal Agency is convening to consider a motion to take the Urban Renewal Plan and Report through the formal adoption process. She said there are state statutes that outline the formal adoption process. This meeting is the first of those steps. She said from here, the Planning Commission will review the plan and report for conformance with the Comprehensive Plan. Then it will go before the County Commissioners. Lastly, it will go before City Council for formal adoption during a public hearing process. Juntunen said the plan is not being adopted tonight, but this is the next step needed to go through the process of adoption.

Mayor Scholl asked about Old Portland Road. Juntunen said this area is included within the boundary. Mayor Scholl said he would like to see utilities to that area in the future. City Administrator John Walsh said there is a project listed in the plan that includes utility extensions called site readiness.

Council President Morten asked about how the public will have an opportunity to review and participate in Urban Renewal Agency decisions. Juntunen said the statutes do not require the Agency to have bylaws, but the best practice states bylaws should be adopted. The Association of Oregon Redevelopment Agencies (AORA) is the association of Oregon's renewal agencies, and they produce a Best Practices Manual which is a great resource for bylaw templates. Juntunen said usually bylaws include thresholds for administrative decisions versus Agency decisions and a process for public involvement processes. She said these are not decisions that need to be made now, but adopting bylaws is recommended as one of the first action items for the Agency.

Juntunen said regarding public involvement, the Agency is held to the same set of laws that City Council is held to. Many agencies go beyond those steps. For example, agencies often form Citizen Advisory Committees which are consulted regularly as decisions are being made. Council President Morten said if the City Council makes up the Agency, it makes sense to piggyback Agency meetings with City Council meetings to allow for efficiency and for easy, transparent public broadcasting. City Administrator Walsh said the City does a great job with transparency, and he does not see any difference for the operation of the Agency. Juntunen said it is very common for City Council to meet, switch hats, and then the Agency will meet.

Juntunen said the Agency must file an annual report with the State that describes the public involvement and the financial report. She recommended that the financial report be shared either monthly, quarterly, or yearly with the public and to have an independent reviewer. Councilor Locke asked if they should hire a separate finance manager for the Agency. Juntunen said most urban renewal agencies of this size would not hire a financial manager.

Mayor Scholl asked if Public Works staff time could be reimbursed with urban renewal funds. Juntunen said yes, if the project that Public Works staff is working on is listed within the urban renewal project list, it can be reimbursed. Juntunen said often the City Administrator and other City staff is reimbursed for administrative time spent managing the Agency as well.

Juntunen said there should be specific Urban Renewal Agency measurement tools so that results can be measured and tracked. Juntunen described the Agency powers given by state statutes: tax increment financing (to eliminate blight), acquisition of property, demolition and rehabilitation of buildings, sale or lease of property, construction, relocation assistance (not proposed for this agency), rehabilitation, conservation, and development. The Agency funds cannot be used for ongoing maintenance, only capital projects. She reiterated the importance of going through the AORA Best Practices Manual.

Mayor Scholl asked about storefront façade improvements loans. Juntunen said there is a project line item in the plan for a storefront improvements revolving loan fund.

## **MOTION**

Councilor Locke made a motion that the St. Helens Urban Renewal Agency forward the St. Helens Urban Renewal Plan and Report to the Planning Commission for their review of the conformance to the Comprehensive Plan, to the Columbia County Commissioners for briefing, and then to City Council for their vote for adoption. In addition, the Urban Renewal Agency designates City Administrator Walsh to serve as the liaison at the Columbia County Commissioner's briefing. Councilor Conn seconded. All in favor; none opposed; motion carries.

There being no further business before the Urban Renewal Agency, the meeting was adjourned at 6:23 p.m.



## **MOTION**

Council President Morten made motion to re-open the meeting for a visitor comment. Councilor Locke seconded the motion. All in favor; none opposed; motion carries.

**Quinton Carlson. St. Helens Resident.** Carlson attended the Urban Renewal Open House in February and he left with one question. He is wondering if this plan would include funding for some type of mass

transit to Portland. Councilor Locke said if a project like that were to happen, the Urban Renewal Plan would have to be amended to alter the boundary to include the project location and the project would have to be added to the project list.



There being no further business before the Urban Renewal Agency, the meeting was adjourned at 6:34 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Dimsho  
Secretary