

# City of St. Helens City Council

Work Session Minutes

January 17, 2018

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

**Members Absent:** None

**Staff Present:** John Walsh, City Administrator  
Kathy Payne, City Recorder  
Matt Brown, Finance Director  
Sue Nelson, Public Works Engineering Director  
Margaret Jeffries, Library Director  
Crystal Farnsworth, Communications Officer  
Jenny Dimsho, Associate Planner

**Others:** Steve Topaz Julie Thompson  
Al Petersen Nicole Thill  
Kannikar Petersen Tina Curry

1) **Call Work Session to Order** – 1 p.m.

2) **Visitor Comments** - None

3) **Discussion Topics**

3.A Presentation of Plaque to Outgoing Planning Commissioner Al Petersen  
Mayor Scholl thanked Al for his eight years of service and dedication on the Planning Commission. Council members added their sentiments of appreciation to Al and Kannikar for their years of service to the community.

3.B 2nd Quarter Communication Report  
Communications Officer Crystal Farnsworth reviewed her report. A copy is included in the archived meeting packet.

3.C Discuss Parking Situation at End of Strand Street  
City Administrator Walsh reviewed the area map. The need for parking and improved access has increased with the development of businesses and residents at the corner of Strand Street and Cowlitz Street. Council and staff discussed potential improvements:

- Two hour parking on Strand Street.
- Stripe the non-marked parking spaces on Strand Street.
- Parking passes for residents.
- Add parking on the Waterfront property.

- Continue Strand Street further down to turn and connect to S. 1<sup>st</sup> Street just past the attorney's office.
- Open part of the Waterfront property for parking.

Council directed staff to research the ideas and come back with recommendations for improvements.

### 3.D Discuss Strategic Plan for St. Helens Industrial Business Park

City Administrator Walsh distributed handouts. Copies are included in the archive meeting packet. The concept is very similar to the SDAT that was done several years ago. Walsh will continue building the framework with consultants and keep the Council updated.

### 3.E Discuss Creating a Recognition Program

Councilor Carlson would like to reward staff, service organizations, and community members for going above and beyond what is expected. It would involve a photo opportunity and certificate.

Council President talked about the Boards and Commissions appreciation event. He finds it ineffective due to lack of attendance. He suggested recognizing one group/person at each evening meeting.

Mayor Scholl requested staff create a certificate for Spud and Leona Sandberg to show appreciation of their years of community support as owners of Ace Hardware.

Discussion of having an application process for community members to submit nominations. City Recorder Payne will solicit other cities to find out what how they handle recognition programs.

## 4) Department Reports

### 4.A Department Reports

Public Works Engineering Director Nelson reported...

- Have been short-staffed with people out sick.

Library Director Jeffries reported...

- Reviewed upcoming Library events.
- Library Assistant Becky Bean accepted a position at City Hall. Becky is wonderful and they're glad she's continuing to work for the City. Her efforts to grow the writing community in St. Helens have been appreciated. She will be missed.
- They are short-staffed now. She will be posting the job announcement soon.

Finance Director Brown reported...

- Council recently discussed the 297 unbilled stormwater accounts. It will take staff time to review and calculate. He requested confirmation from Council to proceed. Nelson added that the Ordinance will have to be revised as well. Council concurred.
- Some accounts are not being charged water; such as City buildings, Senior Center, Eisenschmidt Pool, and the School District. He would like to do further research and return with a list of accounts not being billed. Council concurred.
- He distributed and reviewed a two-page Court report.
- The auditors will review their report at the next meeting.
- Columbia River Motor Sports owes over \$30,000 due by December 2019 as part of the Kavanagh LID. They have been paying \$200 a month since 2010. They are proposing to

refinance their business and pay the City off in full but are requesting a 15% concession from the City to go to the bank. Council discussed that allowing this would open it up for all the other LID participants to request the same. It was the consensus of the Council to not allow the discount.

City Recorder Payne reported....

- The Employee Recognition Banquet is Friday, February 9 at 5:30 p.m.

City Administrator Walsh reported...

- Becky Bean has accepted the Front Desk Specialist position. Almost 100 applications were received. There were a lot of local, qualified and over-qualified applicants.

Event Manager Tina Curry reported...

- The Spirit of Halloweentown gift shop and museum opens the first weekend in February. It will be open on the weekends, 11 a.m. – 4 p.m. They are allowing groups to come in and hold fundraisers on the weekends.
- Working on the music line-up for 13 Nights on the River. They are going back to the traditional Thursday night concerts.
- Acquiring new tourism props.
- A merchants meeting will be held February 13. Stephanie Patterson has directly contacted business owners.
- Spirit of Halloweentown
  - Planning meeting on February 15.
  - Informational stations and directional signage will be added.
  - Activity packages will be available with one fee.
  - Working with Chief Moss on an improved route into town.

## 5) **Council Reports**

Councilor Locke reported...

- Referring to the Municipal Code:
  - The section for length of time to stay at the docks was amended several years ago. He would like to staff to review it again and work with staff who monitor the docks.
  - There is a section in the Code that says you don't have to cut your grass until June 1. He suggests changing that and asking for input from the community of what they think should be changed in the Code.
- They have two police officer applicants that are moving forward in the hiring process. They hope to have a decision soon.
- Congratulations to Chief Moss on the Officer Claus campaign.

Councilor Carlson reported...

- Thank you to everyone who attended the first corridor plan meeting. There was a lot of good input. She appreciates the work staff put into it.

Councilor Conn reported...

- CIT training just ended. They came from as far away as Clatsop County, Linn County, and Portland.
- Is there a schedule for revising Municipal Codes? Payne responded that it is primarily complaint driven or based on what comes up. Code Publishing can have their legal team review the Code for updates as well. It was the consensus of the Council for Code

Publishing to review the Code for needed updates. They would also like to include input from the community.

Council President Morten reported...

- Thanked citizens for raking leaves and utilizing Hudson Garbage Service's yard debris service.
- Citizens have expressed concerns of high cost utility bills. We have to keep in mind that the water filtration facility constructed several years ago brings us great quality of water. The facility will be paid in full within a few years and may decrease the cost owed.
- Another question he has heard is why the timber harvest funds from the Watershed property was used to fund the Waterfront property instead of subsidizing utility bills. Walsh explained the debt ratio compliance.
- Asked how many radio read meters are remaining to be installed. Nelson responded that only a couple hundred are left.
- The Dalton Lake area is one of the most catastrophic fire zones in the State. He encouraged citizens to trim and clean up around their property.

Mayor Scholl reported...

- Reviewed what has occurred since he's been here:
  - Completed the Riverfront meetings.
  - The Urban Renewal was passed.
  - Branding and Wayfinding
  - Connector Plan
  - Parks and Trails Master Plan continues to be discussed.
- Kudos to Walsh and staff for their vision and work.
- Spring has sprung.
- Don't wait until June 1 to mow your grass.

6) **Other Business**

7) **Adjourn – 3:20 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted by Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder.

ATTEST:

  
Kathy Payne, City Recorder

  
Rick Scholl, Mayor