

City of St. Helens

CITY COUNCIL

Work Session Minutes

March 2, 2016

Members Present: Randy Peterson, Mayor
Doug Morten, Council President
Keith Locke, Councilor
Susan Conn, Councilor

Members Absent: Ginny Carlson, Councilor

Staff Present: John Walsh, City Administrator
Jon Ellis, Finance Director
Kathy Payne, City Recorder
Margaret Jeffries, Library Director
Neal Sheppard, Public Works Operations Director
Sue Nelson, Public Works Engineering Director
Nicole Woodruff, Library Assistant

Others: Jim Tierney Casey Mitchell Nicole Thill
Amanda Renner Alex Tardif

Mayor Randy Peterson called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.



Visitor Comments

♦**Alex Tardif.** He is running for County Commissioner Position 3. He decided to run for that position because he has watched our quality of life decline over the last few years. We need to become innovative and look at different options and resources to move us forward. He has continued to see countless wasteful use of taxpayers' dollars that do not seem to be substantiated. With his accounting and tax background, he sees a lot of areas for improvement. He graduated from the University of Portland with a Bachelors in Administration and a degree in Accounting. He began his career as an Income Tax Auditor for the State of Oregon. He witnessed blatant disregard for taxpayer dollars. He has since moved into the private sector helping businesses come into compliance with taxes, helping them get organized and move forward. He believes those skills will help the leadership in Columbia County to analyze their budget and see where we're spending money and should not be spending money. We need to give people the programs and resources they need but not waste their money.

Employee Length of Service Award

We have an employee who has reached a big milestone in their employment with the City of St. Helens. The following individual will receive a certificate and pin.

5+ Years

Nicole Woodruff is an avid reader who began working for the City in August of 2008 as a part-time Library Assistant. In addition to her primary duty of serving Library patrons at the front desk, Nicole plans the annual observation of Banned Books Week and serves as the Library Board secretary. She is also the Library employee that manages all aspects of the Oregon Humanities Conversation Projects that the Library has hosted in recent years. Nicole

has been a valuable asset to the St. Helens Public Library.

Congratulations, Nicole, and thank you for your service!

Discussion on Affordable Housing

Jim Tierney, Executive Director for Community Action Team (CAT), was in attendance to share concerns on affordable housing in our community. *He handed out a packet to each of the Council members, a copy of which is included in the archive meeting packet.* Since he started at CAT in 1984, there have been approximately \$140 million worth of projects. Columbia County is one of the hardest hit foreclosure counties in Oregon. The people living in those homes didn't leave the community, they went out and rented, so now there is a housing crisis there. He wants the Council to really think about the market. We are going to have to see some shrinking of our expectations. He was a realtor in Minneapolis when he was 21. At that time, the typical home was between 800 and 1,200 sq. ft. If you build a housing project for the State of Oregon Community Service Department, your three-bedrooms have to have 1,300 sq. ft. and two bathrooms. CAT is turning away a significant amount of money for the homeless because we cannot find rentals to place them. By not spending those funds, it makes it difficult for us to ask for funds in the future. It's a crisis. They are conducting a study in Tillamook County. One of the participants is living with her family in her car while she tries to find a house. He would like to partner with the City to conduct a market study. He believes the study would cost approximately \$10,000. Looking at inventory, they could help with low interest loans. He suggests the City form partnerships with CAT or the housing authority.

Mayor Peterson likes the idea of conducting an inventory study. They have talked in the past about using some of the City-owned vacant lots to build self-help homes. Jim wants to help with that. Magic happens when people have to build their own wealth. The cost of rent doesn't equal the cost to develop.

Councilor Conn agrees with conducting a market study. There is obviously a shortage of housing. Jim talked about a similar study being done in Tillamook.

Council President Morten thanked Jim for the insightful presentation. It made him more aware of the possibilities. What is the typical profile of people who are homeless compared to the profile of people who apply for affordable housing? Jim explained that there isn't just one. Martha at CAT knows the most about homelessness. There are a variety of causes; such as, an illness in the family, drug and/or alcohol abuse in the family, loss of a job, etc. We have to understand the barriers and how people got there. We have an increasingly difficult economy in which to get by. They say 75% of Americans are one paycheck away from not paying their bills. We are seeing more and more that it's about families. When Rocky was here, we set a priority to help families with children first. One of their clients graduated and bought a house. They are working on an agreement with the State to use some of their resources to acquire property for additional Housing First models.

Councilor Locke appreciates Jim coming in and addressing their programs. Locke has been on the board for seven or eight years. He is amazed at how much CAT has done to help.

Councilor Conn expressed her appreciation for Jim coming in as well.

Review Proposed 2016 Council Goals

City Administrator John Walsh presented the proposed goals that were discussed at the Council retreat last month. A copy is included in the archive meeting packet.

The Council concurred with the goals. Walsh will give the department heads an opportunity to review the draft and then bring it back to the next Council meeting.

Discuss Appointment to CCET Board of Directors

Currently, the appointments are Councilor Morten with Councilor Locke as the alternate.

Council President Morten has been very involved since the formation. He would like to continue serving on the board. Councilor Locke is happy to continue as an alternate.

A formal appointment will be made at tonight's meeting.

Discuss Proposal for New Website

City Administrator Walsh has had the existing website on his radar since he began working here. Our website was only the second municipal website they ever designed. He has taken the time to look at other web developers. The one that stands out the most is Aha! Consulting. They offer better search features, ease of use on mobile devices and much easier to update for staff. He recommends using Aha! Consulting for our new website.

Councilor Locke recommends we incorporate the Tourism website into our website and have an online store for reflector sales.

It was the consensus of the Council for staff to move forward on the new website and return with a proposal for approval.

Department Reports

Public Works Engineering Director Nelson reported...

- She is working on budget preparation for next year. Looking at where we are now and where we want to be next year with water meter replacement, she is requesting to re-appropriate money within the water capital projects to purchase an additional 500 meters. Council concurred.

Public Works Operations Director Sheppard reported...

- The new Building Maintenance Utility Worker begins on March 14. His name is Roger Stauffer. He is a local contractor and came with a lot of good references.

Library Director Jeffries reported...

- The two open positions have been filled. Michele Karmartsang was hired as the part-time Library Assistant. She has experience working at the Beaverton Library and Multnomah County Library. Gretchen Kolderup was hired as the Youth Librarian. She is coming to us from the New York Public Library. She is also a national director of the YALSA (Young Adult Library Services Association) Board, which is an arm of the American Library Association. She will begin in mid-April.
- Library Assistant Becky Bean gave birth to twins on February 29. She had a boy named Finn and a girl named Maggie. Becky plans to return to work in mid-April.

Finance Director Ellis reported...

- April Messenger was hired as the new part-time Office Assistant. She began working yesterday. She worked here several years ago as a part-time Deputy Court Clerk.
- He talked about the recruitment for the Finance Director. Flyers are being created now. The first review of applications will be April 13. The best day for interviews is Thursday, April 28. There will be three interview panels and a tour of the City. One panel will be technical, one department heads and managers and one will be staff. After that, two or

three candidates would be invited back to give a presentation to the Council. Councilors could separate and sit in on the panels as well.

City Recorder Payne reported...

- The next CityCounty Quarterly meeting will be held in Clatskanie. They have offered two dates to look at, March 29 and April 19. The Council agreed that April 19 works the best.

City Administrator Walsh reported...

- Tonight's agenda includes a resolution to amend the governing policy, which is related to some personnel changes.
- Tonight's agenda also includes an agreement with Tina Curry of E2C. She is basically on an hourly basis now. This would put her back to a contract position. It also includes website maintenance for the Discover Columbia County page. The Council would like to see that website incorporated with ours. Staff will investigate to see if that can be done. The Council would also like the contract to expire at the end of the calendar. They would like to discuss going out for an RFP for event services in January.
- There is a public forum for the stage in Columbia View Park on March 16. He asked Walker Macy, who is on retainer for the Area-Wide Planning Grant, to look at the project and come back with comments that he can share at the forum.

Council Reports

Mayor Peterson reported...

- He will not be at the March 16 Council meetings.

Councilor Conn reported...

- There is an Arts & Cultural Commission subcommittee discussing a kick-starter program to fund the Gateway project.
- The Library Board is in the process of obtaining a consultant to work with them on strategic planning.
- She has been invited to participate in the Governor's Transportation Vision Panel Regional Forum for Northwest Oregon. She and Walsh will be attending that on March 10.
- She is also participating in the Keep it Local Campaign. It is moving forward.
- The Ford Family Foundation River Communities is working on a preparedness event. It will be county-wide.
- The third CIT training will be held April 3-8. She requested \$300 from Council discretionary funds to purchase snacks for the event. It is a training for local law enforcement and first responders to aid in helping citizens with mental illness and drug addiction. Council concurred.

Council President Morten reported...

- An issue with the dog park was brought up during the last Parks Commission meeting. There were concerns expressed that you could not bring dog toys. The Commission recommends that be changed to allow the toys and leave it to the owner's discretion. The dog park has been well self-controlled.
- The Parks Commission also discussed the need for another dog park that is completely fenced. A few suggestions were made. One was to use the tennis courts at Campbell Park. Those tennis courts are in serious disrepair. He would like to staff to look into having two of the four courts re-asphalted to use for tennis again.
- Thanked staff for how they handled the theft of the cannon. Getting him to come into the Council Chambers was key to the return of the cannon.

Councilor Locke reported...

- Kevin Miller will be retiring in two weeks. We will be recruiting to fill the vacant position.

Executive Session

ORS 192.660(2)(h) Potential Litigation

Motion: At 2:21 p.m., upon Morten's motion and Conn's second, the Council unanimously voted to move into executive session under ORS 192.660(2)(h) Potential Litigation.

Motion: At 2:35 p.m., upon completion of the executive session, Morten moved to go back into work session, seconded by Conn, and unanimously approved.

Other Business

No other business.



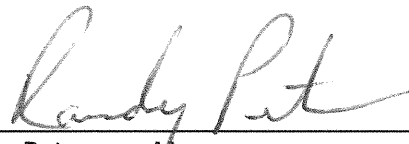
There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder.

ATTEST:



Kathy Payne, City Recorder



Randy Peterson, Mayor