

WALLA WALLA CITY COUNCIL
Town Hall Meeting Minutes
September 12, 2017
Courtyard by Marriott, 550 W. Rose, Walla Walla

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Pomraning called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Present: Councilmembers Jim Barrow, Barbara Clark, Jerry Cummins, Dick Morgan, Steve Moss, Tom Scribner, and Mayor Allen Pomraning.

Absent: None

City staff in attendance: City Manager Nabel Shawa, City Attorney Tim Donaldson, Deputy City Manager Byron Olson, Communications Manager David Brauhn, and City Clerk Kammy Hill.

2. ACTIVE AGENDA

A. Discussion of City Council elections by wards.

City Manager Shawa and Deputy City Manager Olson reviewed:

- Importance of how citizens determine their leadership on the City Council.
- Any change will not affect the November 2017 election.
- Optional Municipal Code cities with wards or districts.
- A ward or district is where some or all of the Councilmembers are elected by and represent specific geographic areas of the City.
- Election procedures.
- Process for dividing a city into districts or wards and boundaries. The districts are based on total population within census tracts, not registered voters.
- Redistricting to adjust boundaries after a Federal census.
- Cities can also decide to abandon the district or ward system.
- Hypothetical boundaries of wards or districts within the City of Walla Walla.

Mayor Pomraning invited public input.

David Valiant, Walla Walla County Elections Supervisor, reported that census block data would be used to determine wards or districts within the City's core. Any changes would have to be implemented by April

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2019. A census block is typically the same as a City block. There was only a twenty-eight percent turnout for the City's primary election in August.

The following spoke in favor of election by wards or districts:

- Penny Hawkins, 624 Hobson Street, Walla Walla.
- Dave Cortinas, Pasco.
- Bonnie Szuch, 1685 Ruth Street, Walla Walla.
- Jean Tobin, 1014 Alvarado Terrace, Walla Walla.
- Brian Gabbard, 1014 Alvarado Terrace, Walla Walla.
- Joshua Slepkin, 504 N. Bellevue, Walla Walla.
- Debra Toews, 7 E. Tietan, Walla Walla.
- Natalie Sullivan, 1227 Sherrod Lane, Walla Walla.
- Laura Williamson, 1227 Sherrod Lane, Walla Walla.
- Yazmin Bahena, City Council candidate.
- Lily Seaman, 1235 Alvarado Terrace, Walla Walla.

The following had general questions or comments:

- Noah Leavitt, 625 Whitman Street, Walla Walla, would not like taxpayer funds spent on litigation against Walla Walla in a voting rights lawsuit.
- Diana Broze, 104 N. Division, Walla Walla, can see both sides of the arguments for and against.
- Karen Fields, 834 E. Alder, Walla Walla, clarified that Pasco has six positions elected by districts and one at-large position.

The following spoke in opposition of changing the current at-large election system:

- Myrna Nepp on behalf of Charles Nelson, Scenic View Drive, College Place.
- Jean Dolling, 208 Detour Road, Walla Walla.
- Myron Huie, 621 E. Tietan, Walla Walla, Council candidate.
- Carol McCormack, 218 Bandra Drive, Walla Walla.

Mayor Pomraning declared the public input closed.

Councilmembers expressed their individual opinions on whether they were for or against changing to a ward/district election process.

It was the consensus of a majority of Council to have this issue placed on the November 1, 2017 City Council agenda for consideration.

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3. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:40 p.m.