

**WALLA WALLA CITY COUNCIL**  
**Work Session Minutes**  
**April 10, 2017**

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Pomraning called the meeting to order at 4:00 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, Deputy City Manager Byron Olson, Development Services Director Elizabeth Chamberlain, and City Clerk Kammy Hill.

**2. ACTIVE AGENDA**

A. Power House Theatre.

City Manager Shawa introduced Lawson Knight and Dennis Ledford.

Mr. Knight and Mr. Ledford described the process and fundraising campaign to transfer the Powerhouse Theatre from a limited liability corporation to a non-profit organization to be eligible for public funding and other forms of investment. The City is being asked to contribute \$150,000 to the funding campaign.

There was discussion on the benefits of the Powerhouse Theatre to the community and the potential for using lodging tax revenues for the capital campaign.

B. Proposed short term rental regulations.

City Manager Shawa reported these proposed regulations were discussed with the City Council last month. If Council is comfortable with the proposed regulations, they can be placed on a regular agenda for consideration.

Development Services Director Chamberlain summarized the deliberations and recommendations from the Planning Commission. If the City Council is interested in proceeding with a density requirement, staff

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suggests the issue be remanded back to the Planning Commission. A moratorium is not advised since regulations have been developed. Moratoriums are used while regulations are developed. Staff has been unable to find a Washington city that has put a limit on the number of short term rentals allowed.

There was discussion on:

- Existing short term rentals and impact of new regulations.
- Time frame for Council consideration if the density issue is remanded back to the Planning Commission would likely be three to four months.
- Proposed fee structure does not cover City's costs for permitting and inspections. Support was indicated for a structure that captures the City's cost to regulate.
- Role of the Planning Commission and lack of public input to the City Council at this point on a policy decision.
- Use of a "residential parking zone permit" as a possible way to deal with parking impacts in neighborhoods.
- Proximity of a manager to the property and distinguishing between local versus out of town property owners.
- Potential for prohibiting or banning short term rentals. If short term rentals are banned, it would likely lead to greater enforcement issues.
- The recommended additional parking space for residences would increase required onsite parking from two to three spaces.
- Enacting a moratorium or ban until regulations are in place and a determination is made on whether additional short term rentals are necessary.
- Use of density provisions to protect historic neighborhoods from having too many vacation rentals.
- What constitutes a violation and how the violation provisions would be enforced. Difficulty in enforcement should not be a reason not to enact provisions.
- Bringing this policy issue forward to the City Council to hear public input.

Mayor Pomraning invited Alexa Palmer to address the City Council on the difference between Vacation Rentals by Owner, AirBnB, and bed and breakfast establishments. Ms. Palmer explained the original differences between Vacation Rentals by Owner and AirBnB. Currently both sites operate as an online reservation system for private housing. Bed and breakfast establishments provide a room and breakfast.

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C. Report by Council ad hoc committee on ways to increase Council diversity.

Councilmember Scribner reported a three member Council committee, consisting of himself, Councilmember Clark and Councilmember Cummins, had been appointed to look at ways to increase the diversity of members serving on the City Council. The ad hoc committee met and discussed the creation of wards or districts but was unable to come to a unanimous decision. There were a number of concerns and benefits to electing Council by wards/districts identified. Another area looked at was increasing Council compensation to encourage more people to run for office.

There was discussion on:

- The benefits of diversity on the City Council.
- Whether election by wards will increase diversity.
- There is no evidence that voters are discriminatory towards any segment of the population.
- Women are a segment of the population that are historically underrepresented and election by wards is unlikely to have an impact on the election of more women to Council.
- Majority of cities throughout Washington do not elect through wards or districts.
- Establishing an independent salary commission to determine whether there is a need to change Council compensation so it doesn't become self serving.

Council expressed their individual opinions on whether this subject should be studied further.

### **3. OTHER BUSINESS**

No other business was discussed.

### **4. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:19 p.m.