

WALLA WALLA CITY COUNCIL
Work Session Minutes
July 9, 2018

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Pro Tem Scribner called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. in the Fulton Room, Walla Walla Police Department, 54 E. Moore Street.

Present: Councilmembers Yazmin Bahena, Riley Clubb, Jerry Cummins, Myron Huie, Steve Moss, Tom Scribner, and Mayor Barbara Clark. (Mayor Clark arrived at 4:04 p.m.)

Absent: None

City staff in attendance: City Manager Nabel Shawa, Deputy City Manager Byron Olson, Development Services Director Elizabeth Chamberlain, Police Chief Scott Bieber, Public Works Director Ki Bealey, Environmental Engineer Leah Fisk, Finance Director Jean Teasdale, Human Resource Director Pam Taylor, City Attorney Tim Donaldson, Technology Services Director Chris Owen, Library Director Beth Hudson, Fire Chief Bob Yancey, Landfill Supervisor David Jensen, and City Clerk Kammy Hill.

2. ACTIVE AGENDA

A. Evergreen Housing Development.

City Manager Shawa reported that Evergreen Housing Development is looking at the site of the existing Elk's Lodge to develop into a multi-family housing development with the use of the multi-family tax exemption.

Development Services Director Chamberlain introduced Fred Hines, Andrew Brand, and Sam Gottlieb of the Evergreen Housing Development Group; and provided an overview of the multi-family housing tax incentives and the changes made to State law since the City had adopted the provisions in 2005. This property tax exemption only applies to the multi-family portion of the development and not to the land or commercial parts. The state statute provides for an eight-year tax exemption if no affordable housing is included as part of the project or a twelve-year exemption if twenty-percent of the units are designated as affordable housing. Currently this incentive is only available for properties in the downtown area. Staff will look at possibly expanding the exemption to a larger area to encourage multi-family development. Any decision will come before the City Council for consideration.

WORK SESSION MINUTES

JULY 9, 2018

PAGE 2

There was discussion on:

- Whether the provisions in the City's Municipal Code could be used in lieu of following the State statutes. This would allow for both ten-percent affordable housing and a ten-year property tax exemption. Staff reported this will have to be reviewed by the City Attorney's office.
- Availability of units for low to moderate income renters and how rental rate will be determined.

Fred Hines and Andrew Brand, Evergreen Housing Development Group, provided an overview of their proposal to develop the Elk's property into a market-rate multi-family housing development utilizing the eight-year multi-family property tax exemption. There will be eleven ground floor extended stay apartments for commercial use and 119 studio, one and two-bedroom higher-end apartments. No affordable housing is being proposed for this development. Mr. Hines and Mr. Brand outlined the benefits to the City including the increased property tax income from what is being assessed on the current property and the addition of work force housing units to meet unmet demands.

There was extensive discussion on:

- The development proposal and demands for housing.
- Need for higher quality rental housing near downtown.
- Financing the project including the use of bonds.
- Evergreen Housing Development Group has no interest in the ten or twelve-year tax exemption in exchange for affordable housing due to their proposed financing.
- Impact on schools within the area. This type of work force housing does not usually have many children living in the apartments so any impacts on schools would be negligible.
- The extended-stay ground floor apartments will be managed like a commercial hotel and will have individual entrances from the sidewalk.
- The project will be oriented to have minimum impact on the surrounding neighborhood.
- Suggestions on more Municipal Code flexibility for multi-family housing to address the housing deficit.
- The cities of Seattle and Bellevue only allow for the twelve-year multi-family tax exemption to address a lack of affordable housing.

B. Sudbury Road Landfill entrance facility improvements.

WORK SESSION MINUTES

JULY 9, 2018

PAGE 3

Environmental Engineer Fisk reviewed and there was discussion on:

- Existing configuration of scales at the entrance and exit to the landfill which creates delays for customers.
- Goals of the project to improve traffic flow, service and efficiencies.
- Proposed reconfiguration to add an additional scale and change traffic flow.
- Utilization of the drop-off recycling facilities.
- Change of scope and proposed cost of project is \$1.6 million.

C. Firearm safety.

City Manager Shawa reported this is a follow-up to questions raised by the City Council at previous meetings.

Police Chief Bieber reviewed the following:

- The City is unable to restrict gun and ammunition shows.
- The City is unable to restrict gun shows unless they occur on City property.
- A local sales tax on guns and ammunition would be very difficult to enforce and collect and will likely drive sales to a different jurisdiction.
- The City could enact a gun buyback program, but staff believes it would have very limited effectiveness.
- The City is unable to restrict guns from its public buildings except in limited situations.
- The City is required by the State to issue concealed carry pistol permits. The State establishes the reasons for disqualification. These permits must be renewed every five years.
- The City is required by the state to process firearm dealer licenses. The State receives all of the fees. It is unknown if the City can charge and retain an additional fee. The State establishes the reasons for disqualification.
- An individual can be denied the transfer or sale of a gun subject to disqualifiers established by the State.
- The City Council may engage with a lobbyist to effect gun legislation at the State and Federal levels.

There was discussion on:

- Collection and use of data on gun violence.
- The transition by Police Departments to semi-automatic weapons so they are not outgunned by criminals.

WORK SESSION MINUTES

JULY 9, 2018

PAGE 4

- Safety in schools. The School District would like the City to continue to support active shooter training and drills.
- Role of leadership in effecting change.
- Availability of free gun locks.
- State and Federal government have preempted any local gun regulations.
- Feasibility of making discounted gun safes available to citizens.

The meeting recessed for a break at 6:05 p.m. and reconvened at 6:20 p.m.

D. Strategic Plan discussion.

City Manager Shawa reviewed the strategic initiative development process and the five proposed strategic initiatives and their objectives:

1. Foster and commit to a program to improve leadership skills and organizational development.
Objectives:
 - i. Develop a process for identifying and prioritizing new and unplanned projects.
 - ii. Continue process improvement skill development and identify opportunities for efficiency and effectiveness.
 - iii. Focus on employees and their engagement; reward for high performance.
 - iv. Emphasize professional development for the leadership team, City Council, and employees.
2. Fix and improve the City's infrastructure.
Objectives:
 - i. Continue work on the City's transportation network (e.g. streets, sidewalks, bridges, etc.)
 - ii. Use technology to provide better service and to improve management of operations.
 - iii. Manage the City's urban forest.
 - iv. Maintain City buildings and facilities.
3. Develop a strategic communications plan.
Objectives:
 - i. Build relationships.
 - ii. Create two-way engagement.
 - iii. Tell our story.

WORK SESSION MINUTES

JULY 9, 2018

PAGE 5

- iv. Prioritize communication needs.
4. Encourage economic development to strengthen the community.
Objectives:
 - i. Attract and support small businesses.
 - ii. Recruit retail shopping to Walla Walla.
 - iii. Encourage affordable housing and reduce homelessness.
5. Achieve fiscal resiliency to live within our means.
Objectives:
 - i. Long-term financial planning.

There was discussion on the strategic initiatives including:

- Inclusion of one to two Councilmembers in the planning process.
- Modifying initiative #5 to include resiliency planning for both the workforce and community to look at outside variables, such as climate change and migration, that may impact the City.
- Identifying objectives as short-term or long-term.
- Importance and inclusion of neighborhood engagement in building relationships and communication.
- Changing the City's website to make it more usable for citizen access.
- Building skillsets in employees, such as mediation skills for police officers.
- Having a booth at the Farmer's Market for residents to communicate with Councilmembers.
- Using neighborhood block watches as a communication tool.
- Develop an action plan for building engaged neighborhoods.
- Long term vision for the Mill Creek channel.

3. OTHER BUSINESS

No other business was discussed.

4. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:42 p.m.