

WALLA WALLA CITY COUNCIL
Regular Meeting Minutes
January 12, 2022

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Scribner called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Present: Councilmembers Brian Casey, Rick Eskil, Ted Koehler, Steve Moss, Susan Nakonieczny, Gustavo Reyna, and Mayor Tom Scribner.

Absent: None.

City staff in attendance: City Manager Nabel Shawa, City Attorney Tim Donaldson, Deputy City Manager Elizabeth Chamberlain, Development Services Director Preston Frederickson, Public Works Director Ki Bealey, Transportation Engineer Monte Puymon, Senior Planner Jon Maland, and City Clerk Kammy Hill.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

3. SELECTION OF MAYOR AND MAYOR PRO TEM

Mayor Scribner announced that nominations were open for the position of Mayor.

Councilmember Moss moved to nominate Tom Scribner to serve as Mayor for another two-year term. Councilmember Koehler seconded the motion.

There were no further nominations.

The motion to elect Tom Scribner as Mayor for another two-year term unanimously carried with 7 yes votes and 0 no votes.

Councilmember Koehler moved to nominate Steve Moss to serve as Mayor Pro Tem for another two-year term. Councilmember Reyna seconded the motion.

There were no further nominations.

The motion to elect Steve Moss as Mayor Pro Tem for another two-year term unanimously carried with 7 yes votes and 0 no votes.

4. PRESENTATIONS

- A. Presentation of the Isaacs Avenue Project Excellence Award to Transportation Engineer Monte Puymon.

Jay Drye and Randy Giles, Washington State Department of Transportation, and Mindy Roberson, Federal Highway Administration, participating virtually, presented a City Project Excellence Award for the Isaacs Avenue project and offered comments on the outstanding community engagement and involvement prior to and during construction, and the improved safety of this transportation corridor. Transportation Engineer Puymon recognized the citizens for approving and reapproving the Transportation Benefit District sales tax and other project partners.

5. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Sharon Schiller suggested the City plow sidewalks along with streets, especially along bus routes.

Jon Campbell expressed objections to the 1st Avenue Plaza design and asked for reconsideration of approval of the conceptual design.

Dr. Rachel Elfenbein expressed concerns with the current shortage of studio and one-bedroom apartments for citizens with housing vouchers. Dr. Elfenbein spoke in support of the conversion of hotels and motels to residential units but wants to ensure they are affordable. The multi-family property tax exemption should also be amended to ensure the exemption is used for affordable housing.

Dorothy Knudson asked the City to establish specific zones for manufactured housing/mobile home parks, so these parks are not purchased and converted to other uses.

6. CONSENT AGENDA

Staff introduced the Consent Agenda, Items A through C, as follows:

- A. Resolution No. 2022-01 authorizing the purchase of portable radios to replace all radios at the Police Department through the National

WALLA WALLA CITY COUNCIL MINUTES
JANUARY 12, 2022
PAGE 3

Association of State Procurement Officials contract for \$105,891.64.

- B. Resolution No. 2022-02 authorizing the purchase of Trimble geospatial equipment for crime scene documentation using the Washington State Master Purchasing Contract in the amount of \$63,733.73.
- C. Resolution No. 2022-03 authorizing a contract amendment with AEI Engineers for additional analysis, design, programming, and system control work for the hydroelectric generator facility upgrade at the water treatment plant for an additional amount not to exceed \$42,200.

Mayor Scribner invited public input. No one chose to address the City Council on any of these items.

Staff provided brief reports on Items A and B.

Councilmember Moss moved to adopt Consent Agenda Items A through C. Councilmember Nakonieczny seconded the motion. The motion unanimously carried with 7 yes votes and 0 no votes.

7. ACTIVE AGENDA

- A. Resolution No. 2022-04 approving the recommendation from the Planning Commission to approve a Shoreline Substantial Development permit for the 614 Francis Avenue Planned Unit Development (PUD) (Closed record, quasi-judicial); and
- B. Resolution No. 2022-05 approving the recommendation from the Planning Commission to approve the preliminary plat for the 614 Francis Avenue Planned Unit Development (PUD), a development of six residential units located at 614 Francis Avenue (Closed record, quasi-judicial).

Staff reviewed the Shoreline Substantial Development permit and proposed Planned Unit Development of six residential units at 614 Francis Avenue.

Council was polled for any conflict of interest, appearance of fairness, or ex-parte contacts.

**WALLA WALLA CITY COUNCIL MINUTES
JANUARY 12, 2022
PAGE 4**

Councilmember Koehler reported his employer operates a home next door to the site for disabled adults but feels he can remain impartial. There were no objections raised to Councilmember Koehler's participation.

There was discussion on the concerns raised regarding off street parking, the forty-foot shoreline buffer creating open space for the development, and on-site parking.

**Councilmember Reyna moved to adopt Resolution No. 2022-04.
Councilmember Moss seconded the motion. The motion unanimously carried with 7 yes votes and 0 no votes.**

**Councilmember Moss moved to adopt Resolution No. 2022-05.
Councilmember Reyna seconded the motion. The motion unanimously carried with 7 yes votes and 0 no votes.**

- C. Ordinance No. 2022-01 adopting a Municipal Code text amendment to Section 20.100.040(F) footnote number 3 to allow for the first-floor conversion of hotels and motels to residential dwelling units within the Central Commercial zoning district.

Staff reviewed this proposed legislative text amendment brought forth by a private request to allow hotels and motels in the Central Commercial zone to convert the first floor into residential units.

Mayor Scribner invited public input.

Robert Jacobs and Abigail Donner, representing the proponent, commented on the robust process to bring this amendment forward and spoke in support of the amendment to help address the housing crisis. The conversion of the two motels will add 106 studio and one-bedroom apartments.

Riley Clubb thanked Council for discussion of the multi-family property tax exemption and suggested that the City require one hundred percent of the units be rented at fair market value for twelve years to receive a property tax exemption. Mr. Clubb also suggested the City enact a moratorium on property tax exemption applications until Code changes can be made.

**WALLA WALLA CITY COUNCIL MINUTES
JANUARY 12, 2022
PAGE 5**

Council clarified that the issue before them is only whether to allow hotels and motels to convert the first floor to residential units. Mr. Jacobs reported they will be looking at tax credits as a part of their financing for the conversion of the units. There was discussion on bringing up the multi-family tax exemption at a future Work Session; this amendment only applies to hotels and motels within the Central Commercial district and would also allow properties in the Central Commercial district that previously operated as hotels and motels to convert the first floor to residential units.

Councilmember Moss moved to adopt Ordinance No. 2022-01. Councilmember Nakonieczny seconded the motion. The motion unanimously carried with 7 yes votes and 0 no votes.

- D. Approval of minutes of the Work Session held December 13, 2021, and the regular meeting held December 15, 2021.

Councilmember Moss moved to approve the minutes. Councilmember Koehler seconded the motion. The motion unanimously carried with 3 yes votes, 0 no votes, and 4 abstentions by Councilmembers Casey, Eskil, Nakonieczny, and Reyna.

- E. Approval of the December 2021 check register containing check numbers 16772 through 16816, 16818 through 16930, 16932 through 17044, 17046 through 17144, and 295 through 316 totaling \$7,010,639.45.

Staff outlined the approval process for payment of claims. This is essentially ratifying approval of already paid claims. If Council denies payment of a claim, staff will work to ensure the money is returned to the City.

Councilmember Moss moved to approve payment of the December 2021 check register containing check numbers 16772 through 16816, 16818 through 16930, 16932 through 17044, 17046 through 17144, and 295 through 316 totaling \$7,010,639.45 except for the checks to the Blue Mountain Action Council. Councilmember Koehler seconded the motion. The motion unanimously carried with 7 yes votes and 0 no votes.

Councilmember Moss moved to approve payment of the checks to the Blue Mountain Action Council. Councilmember Nakonieczny seconded

the motion. The motion unanimously carried with 6 yes votes, 0 no votes, and 1 abstention by Councilmember Koehler.

8. COUNCIL MEMBER MEETING REPORTS

Councilmember Moss reported attendance at the Parks, Recreation and Urban Forestry Advisory Board meeting; the agenda setting meeting; the Solid Waste Advisory Committee meeting; the Work Session; and the ad hoc housing committee meeting.

Councilmember Nakonieczny reported attendance at two Planning Commission meetings; the Committee on Committees meeting; the Work Session; and the ad hoc golf course transition committee meeting.

Councilmember Koehler reported attendance at the Valley Transit Board meeting; the Work Session; and the ad hoc housing committee meeting. Councilmember Koehler also suggested that Council Member Meeting Reports be moved up on the agenda with Council representatives giving an update on committee activities. Staff reported a Council retreat is tentatively scheduled for March 18 for these topics.

Mayor Scribner reported attendance at the Oath of Office ceremonies for Councilmembers Eskil and Reyna; a meeting with Library Director Wells and potential donors for a library expansion; the Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee meeting; the agenda setting meeting; and the Work Session.

9. UNFINISHED AND NEW BUSINESS

There was extensive discussion on the prior Council approval of the conceptual plan for the 1st Avenue Plaza and whether it is too late to reconsider that plan; the current contractual agreement and expenses for design of the plaza; public participation in the design process; and whether design elements can be changed prior to the project going out for public bid.

RL McFarland expressed concerns with the notification and public participation during the design process for the 1st Avenue plaza.

Council recognized the efforts and teamwork of City staff in handling the snow and ice in recent weeks.

**WALLA WALLA CITY COUNCIL MINUTES
JANUARY 12, 2022
PAGE 7**

Council discussed the issue of affordable housing and changing the multi-family property tax exemption to be based on a fair market standard. It was suggested that Council consider a moratorium on multi-family tax exemption applications.

It was the consensus of Council to place this issue on a Work Session agenda.

There was also discussion on protecting mobile home/manufactured home parks from being redeveloped as a different use and putting a moratorium in place to prohibit a change in use.

10. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mayor Scribner announced the City Council would be recessing to Executive Session to consider the minimum price at which real estate will be offered for sale pursuant to RCW 42.30.110(1)(c); and to discuss with legal counsel litigation or potential litigation to which the City is a party or is likely to become a party pursuant to RCW 42.30.110(1)(i). The Executive Session will last no more than one hour, and no further business will come before Council in open session.

The meeting was recessed at 9:16 p.m.

11. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:47 p.m.