

CITY OF ALBANY
CITY COUNCIL (WORK SESSION)
Municipal Court Room
Monday, January 9, 2006
4:00 p.m.

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Chuck McLaran called the meeting to order at 4:01 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Councilors present: Mayor Chuck McLaran and Councilors Ralph Reid Jr., Doug Killin, Jeff Christman, Bessie Johnson, and Sharon Konopa.

Others: Dick Olsen.

BUSINESS FROM THE PUBLIC

There was no business from the public.

BUILDING CODE EFFECTIVENESS GRADING

City Manager Wes Hare is very pleased with the outcome of the review of Albany's Building Codes by Insurance Services Office (ISO). The last time the Code was reviewed was in 1997 and resulted in a rating of 4. The ISO rating is on a scale of 10 to 1, with 10 being the lowest. The only shortcoming noted in the report is that Albany is understaffed. Every other category scored well and our new rating is 2. The high ratings will help to reduce property insurance rates for new construction in Albany.

Community Development Director Helen Burns Sharp distributed a news release (see agenda file) regarding the rating.

Building Official Manager Blaine Brassfield explained the Building Division is self-sufficient; it requires a careful balance for staff to get their work done while staying within the constraints of their budget. The ISO recommends more staff, including employees with legal expertise and a professional engineer. Brassfield pointed out that the Council has authorized additional positions which have not yet been filled.

McLaran asked, what are the criteria that ISO measures us against? Brassfield said that they look at ways to mitigate in advance natural disasters, such as earthquakes, ice storms, and floods. They want to look at how meaningful the regulations are and how well we monitor them.

Brassfield said that Albany needs a structural engineer to improve the ISO rating. Currently, the Building Division contracts with a structural firm, but ISO recommends we have one on staff. The Building Division hires the contracted engineer for plan reviews of larger commercial buildings approximately 3-4 times a year. Brassfield does not think it is cost effective to keep a full time engineer on staff.

TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM PLAN DISCUSSION

Civil Engineer III Jeni Richardson asked for questions and comments on the Albany TSP Update Memorandum #3 (see agenda file).

Councilor Konopa asked why Airport Road is listed as sufficient now, but was not when it was evaluated for the Ropp zone change. Richardson explained that the Ropp's proposed a land use change of higher intensity than the land use adopted in the Comprehensive Plan.

Councilor Killin was surprised that all the recent fatalities involved pedestrians or bicyclists. He feels it is imperative to get bike lanes on Geary Street.

Councilor Reid suggested narrowing the lanes by one foot and moving the sidewalks into the street by two feet on Geary Street. This would have less impact on property owners.

The Council was surprised by the amount of traffic on Jackson Street. The Council was pleased that the accident rate is increasing at a slower pace than the population growth, which indicates that we must be doing something right with enforcement and safety improvements.

The Council asked staff to correct the map reference on Page 28 and to soften the language in the second bullet on Page 46 regarding the planned uses for the Albany Station.

MOTION: Killin moved to accept Memorandum #3 with the suggested changes to page 28 and 46. Reid seconded the motion and it passed 5-0.

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Staff will continue to prepare *Memo #4 Future Conditions & Deficiencies*. Staff announced that the Transportation Master Plan webpage is now live and can be accessed by typing www.cityofalbany.net/tmp into a web browser.

TIMBER LINN PARK MASTER PLAN UPDATE

Parks & Recreation Director Ed Hodney explained that in the fall of 2004, there were discussions about the YMCA occupying space at Timber Linn Park. Also in 2004, Parks & Recreation budgeted for the Timber Linn Park Master Plan as well as a Master Parks Plan and an analysis of Parks System Development Charges. Moore, Iacofano & Goltsman, Inc was hired to do the study.

Many in the community have been involved in the process through surveys and focus groups. The Parks Commission formulated a set of recommendations, outlined on the first page of the Council memo. Hodney introduced Parks Commission members Mike Graham and Sharon Edwards.

Councilor Johnson said the amphitheater is facing in the wrong direction. She asked if it can be moved so the sun is not in the eyes of the performers. Hodney agreed the amphitheatre would be better with a southwest orientation.

Reid is concerned about the wetlands being a breeding ground for mosquitoes, because of the West Nile virus. He thinks the wetlands should be scaled back.

Killin appreciates the idea of a dog park. Regarding the plaza, he would like it be visible as a symbol, but also be very useable. Given our weather, he does not think it would be wise to build an open air plaza.

Hodney said the concept is to have a roofed structure that would function as a shelter or picnic space.

Johnson noted that even if the plaza is paid for with private funding, it is still on City-owned land. She thinks the structure should be designed for Timber Linn Park, rather than based on an international theme. She appreciates the work the Parks Commission has done and recognized that they have listened to a lot of people.

Johnson asked the status of the soccer fields. Hodney explained that having both softball and soccer fields in the same space is not efficient. Soccer could be relocated to a new soccer complex. Single sport complexes have advantages such as regional competitions, which would be a revenue generator. Single sport complexes also have less annual operating costs.

Johnson asked what the YMCA's contribution would be if they were to locate in Timber Linn Park. Hodney said that until the Council is ready to move forward with site plans, and until the YMCA is ready to move forward with their plans, this conversation is premature.

Hodney said that softball participation is steady in Albany but that folks have come to expect better fields and facilities.

Konopa would like to see the plaza moved closer to the lake. It should be open, and have a generic use rather than a "theme". She feels the décor should be simple enough to use for weddings, receptions, and reunions.

Councilor Christman would support using the plaza for a Veterans Memorial. He is not supportive of giving it an international theme.

Killin said he leans towards making the functionality of the plaza the priority. Having a theme could eliminate many uses; for example, if it were a Veteran's Memorial, then it would not work well for weddings.

The Council concurred that they are comfortable with people raising funds for the plaza, but that it should be a generic design so that it is open to a variety of uses.

Reid would like to consider keeping soccer fields at Timber Linn Park and relocating the baseball fields. Hodney discussed the options.

Reid asked how the Timber Carnival will impact the design. Hodney said the plans do not seem to impact the Timber Carnival but if the Carnival does have particular requirements, then the City make provision for those requirements.

Wolf Dyner spoke from the audience. He has been at every meeting regarding this project. He commended Hodney for the work he has done. At the last two Parks Commission meetings, he was surprised that the YMCA was not part of the discussion. He wonders why the Parks Commission does not demand to know what the YMCA will bring to the table. Hodney said that so far, the Parks Commission has been answering the big questions first. Hodney has talked to Jim Asleson of the YMCA about the plan and if it is acceptable to the YMCA so far. When the plan is finalized and if the YMCA element is still part of it, then the City will aggressively pursue conversations with the YMCA about their plans. So far the concept is that the YMCA will bring capital, build their facility, and the City will be able to use space in that facility. Hodney said the YMCA is comfortable with this approach.

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MOTION: Killin moved to direct staff to prepare a final plan for study and adoption at a future Council meeting, including the plaza as a generic plaza, enhancing the Veteran's Memorial at its present location, and with softball/baseball as the sport of choice. Christman seconded the motion and it passed 5-0.

Johnson thinks that, with decisions of this magnitude, the Council needs more time to read through the material and more time for discussion. She thinks there is too much responsibility on the Parks Commission.

Konopa asked if there will be a public hearing before final adoption. The Council has not been part of the public hearings held so far.

Christman feels that if we hold another public hearing, we should do a very good job of educating the public about what has already been discussed.

Hodney passed out the Park and Recreation Master Plan dated November 2005 (see agenda file).

COUNCILOR COMMENTS

Killin invited the Councilors to the opening of the PIX Theater on January 20, 2006, at 6:15 p.m.

Reid reported on the Rail Commission meeting. A business that dismantles ships is trying to locate in the city of Newport, on the Oregon coast. They are applying for funding to get into the harbor. They are also looking at Coos Bay. Konopa said she heard that there may be some environmental concerns.

McLaran congratulated Administrative Assistant I Mary Dibble for completing the Certified Municipal Clerk program through the International Institute of Municipal Clerks.

CITY MANAGER REPORT

Hare asked the Council if they want to meet on January 16, 2006, Martin Luther King Day, for the Council Retreat. The Council agreed to conduct goal setting and review at a regular Council work session instead.

Hare announced that Police Chief Ed Boyd will be sworn into office on January 17, 2006.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no other business, the work session adjourned at 6:08 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary A. Dibble
Administrative Services

Reviewed by,

Susan Busbice
Assistant City Manager/Chief Financial Officer