

CITY OF ALBANY
CITY COUNCIL (WORK SESSION)
Municipal Court Room
Monday, March 24, 2008
4:00 p.m.

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Dan Bedore called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Councilors present: Councilors Ralph Reid Jr., Floyd Collins, Jeff Christman, Bessie Johnson, Dick Olsen, and Sharon Konopa.

BUSINESS FROM THE PUBLIC

There was no business from the public.

BICYCLE RACE PROPOSAL

Jim Lawrence, Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Commission, introduced Robert Hughes, a member of the Oregon Bicycle Racing Association (OBRA), and Steve Boyd, of Maier Roofing. Lawrence said he was asked by former Mayor Doug Killin a year ago if there was a way to do a bicycle race downtown Albany.

Lawrence is proposing a spectator-friendly type of event mapped in such a way that there would be multiple opportunities for the public to watch. Closed circuit courses are typically run in residential areas. The race would be organized by a committee comprised of the Chair of the Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee, City staff, Albany Downtown Association staff, and Albany Visitors Association staff. It is scheduled for Sunday, May 25, which is the same weekend as Rivers Gone Wild.

Lawrence hopes this will be an annual event. They expect about 1,000 racers, vendors, and their families, in addition to spectators. He passed out a map of the proposed bike route (see agenda file). Lawrence said Transportation Analyst Ron Irish reviewed the one kilometer course and approved it, stating that it was no more disruptive than other downtown events. Fire Chief Kevin Kreitman also approved the course. Lawrence is encouraging downtown restaurants to open for this Sunday event.

Lawrence said they may need help from the City's street crew for barricades and street closures. He has not talked to the Police Chief yet.

Hughes explained that there are several classes of riders, from beginners to professionals. The categories are by skill levels so there is competition. He is thinking of 6-7 different races, maybe more categories, depending on how many sign up. He explained how the event works.

Councilor Sharon Konopa asked, will you be coordinating with downtown churches? Lawrence said he has talked to Saint Mary's and Whitespires. He has not talked to the Presbyterian Church yet, though the event will be a block away from them. Konopa suggested they also talk to Fisher Funeral home.

Bedore asked, will this event involve vendors? Hughes said ultimately it is the City's choice, although he thinks inviting vendors would be a good idea.

Councilor Floyd Collins asked, do we need additional insurance since this is a special event? Hughes will be applying for insurance and will be sure it is reviewed by OBRA and City Attorney Jim Delapoer.

CONSENSUS: The Council supported the event.

Lawrence said that if there are businesses with cash or merchandise that would like to contribute prizes, they can contact him.

TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM PLAN UPDATE: 2030 ROADWAY NEEDS ANALYSIS

Civil Engineer III Jeni Richardson said she is at this work session to recap discussions of roadway projects for the Transportation System Plan (TSP). Over the past two months, Technical Memorandum #6C has been presented to the Council, various agencies, and the public. Staff has received many positive comments.

Richardson has four suggested points of clarification:

1. Change intersection projects 3 and 4 to a roundabout at Salem Road and Third Avenue and realign the intersection at Santiam Road and 4th Avenue. Reference the neighborhood meeting and note that the project designer will need to take a closer look at business access as each situation is unique.

2. Expand roadway project #6 on Waverly Drive to include an option with on-street bike lanes and an option with a parallel bike system. Future memos can present the impacts, benefits, and costs of each alternative for further community and Council discussion.
3. Add text to explain that the functional classification of Airport Road (page 23) would change from principal arterial to minor collector when a southbound on-ramp is built at the Knox Butte Road interchange.
4. Add text to explain that the Looney Lane extension (roadway project #29) has a low priority today and will be development driven. This project is in the current 1997 master plan and is intended to provide internal connectivity between the neighborhood, Linn-Benton Community College, and Highway 34. It is not intended to function as a diversion for outside trips to pass through the neighborhood. Design of this roadway should also carefully consider any crossing of the seasonal creek.

Collins said he went to all three public meetings and the Main Street neighborhood meeting and recalls that all who attended liked the roundabout alternative, with the exception of one or two people.

Konopa asked, will Airport Road be removed from the TSP later? Richardson said it is not our intent to have any traffic reroute through the Southshore Drive neighborhood. Konopa asked, even though it may not be the intent, what will prevent it? Public Works Director Diane Taniguchi-Dennis discussed connectivity and changing traffic behaviors. Staff is sensitive to the neighborhood's concerns. As Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) begins their work, City staff will be on guard for that.

Collins asked, was there an ultimate selection of reentry for rerouted Century Drive traffic to Knox Butte Drive? Richardson said there was a neighborhood meeting with follow up research with an outcome identifying the preferred route for Century Drive traffic to go east on Dunlap Drive and south on Expo Park Way to Knox Butte. Collins is concerned that the traffic lights may be too close together and asked for the Timber Street option to remain under consideration.

MOTION: Councilor Bessie Johnson moved to accept Memo #6C with the changes described and direct staff to develop Technical Memo #7 with planning level costs and an initial prioritization of all transportation system projects. Collins seconded the motion and it passed 6-0.

Taniguchi-Dennis asked for clarification of the motion: does the motion include for Timber Street to remain an option? Collins said yes.

CITY HALL CARPET REPLACEMENT

Parks & Facilities Maintenance Manager Craig Carnagey described the carpet replacement plan for City Hall, as outlined in the staff report. The plan calls for new carpet on the first and second floor main hallway, the Council Chambers, and the Municipal Court Room.

Councilor Dick Olsen said that since carpet life is shorter than tile, he would rather have tile even though it is more expensive. Carnagey noted that maintenance for tile is considerably higher than for carpet.

Collins thinks we should replace carpet in staff areas only if it is frayed, worn, or presents a safety hazard. He thinks the carpet in the Municipal Court Room and Council Chambers is still in good condition.

Johnson asked, isn't it less expensive to replace all of the carpet at the same time as opposed to replacing it piece-meal? Carangey said that we have reasonable estimates for the repairs in the sections described. He agrees that Municipal Court and the Council Chambers' carpet does not show much wear, but there are other areas in the hallways and in the staff areas that are worn through. It is difficult to match this carpet because it is custom.

Konopa thinks the carpet needs to fit in with the design of the building. She suggested buying extra for future repairs.

Johnson thinks that if there are staff areas that are worn, they too should be replaced. It is better to do it all at once and get it over with, so there is less staff disruption.

Carnagey said it would reduce the cost by \$12,500 if the Council Chambers and Municipal Court carpet is not replaced.

The Council directed staff to replace carpet in the upstairs and downstairs main hallways and the staircase; and to replace carpet only as needed in the staff areas.

RESOLUTION SUPPORTING TEN-YEAR PLAN TO END HOMELESSNESS

Captain Ben Atchley said that when the boondoggle was cleared out, we started on a path which in the last two years has been exceptional, by showing that the community can work together to address homelessness. In the last few months, several counties and cities have resolved to end homelessness in ten years. Atchley said that cities and counties across the United States are joining in the effort.

Atchley said the regional goal is that each community will take responsibility that homelessness is everyone's issue, not just Albany's. Both Linn and Benton County are beginning to meet. Konopa and Linn County Commissioner Roger Nyquist will be Co-Chairs for Linn County and Jay Dixon is the Chair for Benton County. This will help us to address long-term issues, such as the mentally ill which comprise 50 percent of the homeless. Atchley said we are making great strides in Albany.

Collins asked, what is the "housing first" model referred to in the resolution? Atchley said it comes from the national council and is used effectively in larger cities by combining federal, state, and local dollars to create and support housing units such as apartment complexes. It brings a person into housing with a very supportive environment including health care and mental health services. Once they are off the street, then they have the opportunity to work on addictions, look for a job, etc. The goal is to get them off the street first, and then the rest will follow. Atchley said the local money comes from Health Maintenance Organization (HMOs) and hospitals.

Johnson asked, what will it cost local governments? Atchley said implementation of the plan will be funded by Community Services Consortium (CSC). They have an AmeriCorps vista volunteer for this year and have been guaranteed a volunteer for one more year. The plan should be finished by the time the second volunteer's time runs out. If there are action items within the plan, they could affect the local government. For example, currently there is no detoxification facility, but we are not far enough into the planning stage yet to see what agency will take that piece. Atchley said this resolution does not commit the City to any specific funding.

Konopa pointed out that we are already paying for the homeless in a variety of ways. If this reduces homelessness and still costs money, at least it is moving people forward in their lives.

Atchley noted that what we pay now, we pay in "crisis mode". For example, there was \$45,000 in emergency room visits from Helping Hands residents in just one month to Good Samaritan Hospital. This impacts our whole community and is absorbed by all of us, in our insurance costs. Atchley said that in an attempt to curtail this cost, there are nurse volunteers who now go to Helping Hands at no cost.

Councilor Ralph Reid will only support this if we have buy-in from other outlying areas. He does not want Albany to become a repository for the homeless. Atchley said he is involved with both the HEART and Love, Inc. steering committees. HEART has 40 people on the committee representing a variety of communities. The Love, Inc committee is smaller, but is already talking about how to reach out to outlying communities and draw them into their plan for Linn County. This is an opportunity to lay out a road map to reach out to the community. We will not eradicate homelessness entirely, but we can impact it by keeping folks from becoming homeless, and helping them to transition out of homelessness.

Atchley noted that by having a plan, we will have the opportunity to receive some federal funding.

Olsen asked, which is more expensive: to keep a person in prison or in a mental hospital? Atchley is not sure. Olsen said that the mental hospitals at Pendleton and Klamath Falls were closed and turned into prisons, so the mentally ill had nowhere to go. Atchley said that in 1980 there were 5,000 beds in Oregon for the mentally ill; now there are less than 500 beds. In 3-5 years two buildings will be built, but even then it won't be enough. At this point, a mentally ill person has to be homicidal or suicidal to get help.

Atchley said the Council will be getting a quarterly report from HEART.

MOTION: Councilor Jeff Christman moved to approve the resolution to develop a Linn County ten-year plan to address homelessness and Reid seconded it.

Johnson is concerned that the resolution calls to "end" homelessness. She said it should say reduce, since it is not possible to end it. Konopa suggested adding the word "chronic" before "homelessness."

Olsen said there is a certain part of our population that cannot take care of themselves. Perhaps the City should include funds in our budget, if the state won't do it.

Collins suggested that the League of Oregon Cities (LOC) and Oregon counties discuss this at the legislative level to see what services can be centralized and what can be decentralized.

Christman said that before we allocate money to this, we need to hear more from HEART and Love, Inc. He has attended a HEART meeting and was very encouraged.

VOTE: A vote was taken on the motion and it passed 6-0 and was designated Resolution No. 5580.

NEW POLICE K-9

Police Chief Ed Boyd said that former police dog Draco has retired due to illness and funds have already been set aside for a replacement. A new dog, Rulon, has been purchased and will be partnered with Police Officer Dan Kloss.

The Council would like to have Rulon brought into a Council meeting.

COUNCILOR COMMENTS

Steve Boyd from Western States spoke about the new library building. He has been doing maintenance on it for 6-7 years. He said he gave input to City employees about what has been done in the past regarding roof upgrading, etc, and has been trying to get a formula put together so there is not a difference in materials. Boyd is concerned that the advice is being ignored because the oversight and expertise involved is not being exercised. For example, for the roofing they have been using PVC binding; but the Library architect is using different material and is asking for a 20 year warranty when the material has only been out for 14 years. Western States is analyzing that product now to see if it can even last that long. Boyd said when he asked to show them routine items, they didn't even want to see them. Usually an architectural firm will make allowances up to a certain amount, but they would not even look at anything else. He asked, who is running the project, the architect or the project manager? Boyd thinks there needs to be oversight. The other issue he has is with the AC/HV, which is a new prototype. The project oversight seems disjointed to him.

City Manager Wes Hare said the City hired a project manager to prevent what Boyd has described. They went through the competitive process, and the successful project manager has a good reputation. Hare thinks the appropriate way to address Boyd's concerns is to talk to the Library Director, the architect, and the project manager. This is the first time Hare has heard about these issues.

Olsen said there was an incident in his neighborhood that required an emergency response from the Fire Department. He was very pleased with the compassion and professionalism shown by the Fire Department staff.

Johnson noted that the Lund radio tower has been removed from the Old City Hall building.

Christman said he has received a copy of the transient room tax audit by Boldt, Carlisle & Smith. He will convene the Audit Committee and then report their findings back to the Council.

Bedore said he had an open house and all the discussion revolved around the Oxford House. They visited a new bed & breakfast. Their concerns about neighbors are mostly behavioral. Bedore will continue looking into the complaints and will ask for Delapoer to review the complaints as well.

Hare said coincidentally, the LOC contacted him today seeking a representative for the state task force to work with the Psychiatric Security Review Board to evaluate how the state locates their facilities. LOC is trying to set some standards for how facilities are sited.

Hare said the packet the Council received regarding the Oxford House is from John Byrne. Hare asked Delapoer to look into his concerns and render a legal opinion. Staff research tends to show that we have very little ability to regulate these facilities. If ten people get together and call themselves a family, there is very little we can do about it. Hare reminded the Council that the city of Milwaukie bought a house out from under a group home, and are now being sued by a mental health advocacy organization. The City could run the same risk for litigation, so it is very important to have the City Attorney involved.

Konopa thinks the Oxford Houses are a great idea, but location is the key. She is meeting with Frank Morse tomorrow to discuss siting locations. She will be suggesting a different approach with them.

CITY MANAGER COMMENTS

Hare said he had a good experience in the country of Lebanon. His group is trying to help communities there come up with economic development strategies.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no other business, the Work Session adjourned at 5:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary A. Dibble, CMC
Deputy City Clerk

Reviewed by,

Stewart Taylor
Finance Director