

CITY OF ALBANY
CITY COUNCIL
Council Chambers
Wednesday, September 23, 2009
7:15 p.m.

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Konopa called the meeting to order at 7:15 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG

Mayor Konopa led the pledge of allegiance to the flag.

ROLL CALL

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

SCHEDULED BUSINESS

Business from the Public

Dick Owen, 810 Cox Street, complained of corruption in the City. Mr. Owen revisited his complaints against the City Police Department. Konopa explained that there was nothing that the Council could do for him. He should talk to staff and the Police Chief. The Council does not feel the Police Department is corrupt.

Adoption of Resolution

Adopting an Affirmative Action Plan.

This item was postponed to a future meeting.

Adoption of Consent Calendar

- 1) Approval of Minutes:
 - a) July 20, 2009, Work Session.
 - b) August 24, 2009, Work Session.
 - c) August 26, 2009, Regular Session.
- 2) Renewing the Automatic Aid agreement with Adair Rural Fire Protection District.
- 3) Applying for the Oregon Association Chiefs of Police Safety Belt/Three Flags Traffic Safety grant. RES. NO. 5843
- 4) Accepting an Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block grant from the U.S. Department of Energy. RES. NO. 5844
- 5) Accepting a water easement from Linn-Benton Community College. RES. NO. 5845

MOTION: Councilor Collins moved to adopt the Consent Calendar with item 3) removed for discussion. Councilor Johnson seconded the motion and it passed 6-0.

Councilor Olsen was concerned that the grant being applied for in item 3) was too narrowly targeting motorists. Police Captain Ben Atchley explained that the grant pays for overtime on special days in which seatbelts are specifically targeted. This grant is not for other violations.

MOTION: Olsen moved to adopt item 3) of the Consent Calendar. Councilor Reid seconded the motion and it passed 6-0.

Report

Authorizing the City Manager to sign an intergovernmental agreement (IGA) with Oregon Department of Transportation for safety improvements along Highway 99E.

Jerry Wolcott, Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT), 3700 Philomath Boulevard, Corvallis, provided a Power Point presentation (in agenda file) regarding the safety project on Pacific Boulevard (Oregon 99E). He said the compromise solution is the "right-in-only" at Main Street.

Councilor Coburn asked Wolcott to describe the plan for the street striping at Pacific Boulevard from the intersection at Geary Street. Wolcott said that there are a number of side-swipe-accidents there as cars merge into the left lanes. It will be restriped.

Angela Kargel, Regional Traffic Engineer for ODOT, explained that by redoing the Geary Street striping a vehicle heading west on Pacific Boulevard can easily get into the lane that will continue on 99E. Currently, it would require two lane merges, which contribute to the accidents.

Collins said when reading the Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA), pages 44-45, of the agenda, he noticed there were no terms of agreement or recitals for improvements at Sherman Street. Wolcott said there should be and it will be changed to include Sherman Street.

Collins said the area is a dangerous stretch of road and he is of the opinion that ODOT is dealing with a retro-fit. It isn't perfect, but he thinks it will improve safety. The Council won't know if they are successful until they can get a study for the entire stretch of Highway 20 to Corvallis. This plan is better than the configuration of the intersection as it is today. He supports the IGA.

Councilor Christman said it is not ideal, but the change will help improve the area. He would not support ODOT redoing Sherman Street again because he believes the entire corridor needs to be looked at.

Ralph Reid said it seems to him that the Council has no alternative; they must accept this plan.

Johnson asked, what kind of signage will there be to instruct vehicles to go to Hill Street and not Main Street? Wolcott said there will be a "Dead End" sign and on the ramp, an "Emergency Vehicles Only" sign. Johnson asked, will there be a light at Oak Street? Wolcott doesn't know. Johnson said she feels that agencies can't regulate stupidity and it is impatience and stupidity that are causing the accidents. She asked how the business owners felt about the "right-in-only" on Main Street.

Brian Orr, owner of Izzy's Limousine Pizza, the business at Main Street, doesn't feel it is a fair compromise. He said the problem is impatient people. He feels by closing Main Street, they are just shifting the problem to another street. He believes ODOT should regulate the intersection lights at Hill Street better to allow the crossing of Pacific Boulevard.

Roger Reid, 135 West 5th Street, an attorney representing Randy Tripp, the landowner at Main Street and Pacific Boulevard, said the Council needs to decide if they want to continue to let ODOT shut off access to businesses. They realize there is a safety issue but their property will not be a viable business lot unless they have access to Pacific Boulevard. He said ODOT is putting a raised curb in on Sherman Street. He suggested a right turn onto Sherman Street from Pacific Boulevard and a right turn on to Pacific Boulevard from Sherman Street, with no possibility of crossing Pacific Boulevard. He also suggested signage to be put on 7th Avenue directing traffic to cross Pacific Boulevard at Hill Street. Reid said his client is willing to sacrifice land (for a fair price) on Sherman Street so that ODOT could put in the compromise they are suggesting. He asked the Council to protect Albany businesses.

Randy Tripp, 2601 Umatilla SW, was concerned that ODOT hadn't contacted him or his tenant for suggestions. He asked if signs work where they want to put them, why won't they work on 7th Avenue? He asked, why don't they block all traffic trying to get off Pacific Boulevard onto Main Street?

Kargel responded to Reid and Tripp's suggestion by explaining that because of the volume of traffic at Main Street, it was decided to leave some access. The Sherman Street discussion was a preventative measure. Main Street has more pass-through traffic.

Johnson said that she likes the right-turn-in, right-turn-out idea, and she doesn't like closing Main Street.

Kargel said ODOT is recommending closing Main Street because it is only a block away from Hill Street. It makes it more convenient to take Hill Street, which has a signal. It is the best balance for safety and connection.

Konopa asked if Hill Street would be able to handle the new capacity that will be filtered onto that street. Transportation Systems Analyst Ron Irish said the block of Hill Street between 7th Avenue and Pacific Boulevard is currently just a single lane. With this project it will be striped with two lanes as it approaches Pacific Boulevard to handle the extra traffic. The block on Hill Street between Pacific Boulevard and 9th Avenue stacks up when vehicles wait to make a left onto 9th Avenue. He isn't sure how that will be handled. It could be a designated left lane with free flow traffic to the right or a protected left lane.

Ralph Reid asked if signal timing would be adjusted, as currently they are not coordinated. Irish said signal timing will be adjusted to compensate for the increased capacity as well.

Olsen agrees with the suggestion from Attorney Reid and Mr. Tripp regarding the right-in, right-out configuration.

Coburn asked, who will be paying for the striping on the City streets? Irish said that is part of the ODOT project.

Collins asked Irish for an opinion on the right-in and right-out suggestion. Irish said, this project has a one-time funding. The balance is in how much can be accomplished with the one project. There is probably an increased safety problem with that concept because of reduced visibility.

Tripp said that all he wants is a driveway onto Pacific Boulevard from his property.

City Manager Wes Hare thanked ODOT staff for their willingness to compromise. He said there is a real safety problem with accidents at the intersection. When ODOT originally proposed cutting off Main Street, he was sympathetic towards the business on the corner. ODOT was willing to reconsider and changed the entrance. He thinks it is a reasonable compromise. They had public input and made changes at Sherman Street and Main Street. He doesn't believe there is any reason to question their motives or the professionalism of ODOT staff. They have been a good partner on the project.

MOTION: Collins moved to adopt the IGA with modifications to item "G" that includes proposed improvements at Sherman Street. Christman seconded the motion.

Coburn thinks traffic will be worse and traffic will back up on Hill Street with the suggested changes. He said there will be an increase in traffic in the turn lane, and there is no additional lane on 7th Avenue. He doesn't think trucks can make the turn. He doesn't see anything in the plan to change the radius. He doesn't like the concrete curbs at Sherman Street. He doesn't like the ramp closure and that there is no right-out at Main Street. He doesn't like losing parking on Hill Street and there is no provision for signage on Main and Hill Streets. He doesn't like the speed bump on the ramp. He said, the Council asked for signs to be installed and they haven't been.

Councilor Reid said currently there is a trucking company using the ramp with a set of double trailers and they would have to go to Hill Street to turn. The intersection would need to be wide enough for a set of doubles.

Johnson asked, what is the time line? Wolcott said construction would probably start in the spring.

VOTE: A vote was taken on the motion and it failed 2-4, with Reid, Olsen, Coburn, and Johnson voting no.

BUSINESS FROM THE COUNCIL

Councilor Reid said he represents the City at the National League of Cities (NLC) and the League of Oregon Cities (LOC), specifically on the Transportation Committees, and would like to know if the Council wants him to continue in those roles. It was the consensus of the Council that he continue to represent the City.

Councilor Reid will miss the October 12 and 14 Council meetings.

Konopa said she had received letters (in agenda file) about Albany from Mr. Stanfield's second grade class, at Sunrise School. She read some of the letters to the Council.

NEXT MEETING DATE

The next Council Work Session is scheduled for Monday, October 12, 2009, at 4:00 p.m., in the Municipal Court of City Hall. The next Council Regular Session is scheduled for Wednesday, October 14, 2009, at 7:15 p.m., in the Council Chambers, at City Hall.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:51 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Reviewed by,

Betty Langwell, MMC
City Clerk

Stewart Taylor
Finance Director