

CITY OF ALBANY
CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION
Municipal Court Room
Monday, March 23, 2015
4:00 p.m.

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Sharon Konopa called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Councilors Present: Councilors Bill Coburn, Bessie Johnson, Rich Kellum, Dick Olsen

Councilors Absent: Councilors Floyd Collins (excused), Ray Kopczynski (excused)

BUSINESS FROM THE PUBLIC

There was none.

WEEKLY YARD DEBRIS SERVICE PROPOSAL

Kevin Hines and Julie Jackson, Republic Services, distributed and reviewed the results of an electronic survey (see agenda file). The company has 14,000 customers in Albany. They sent the survey to 5,400 valid e-mail addresses and received 1,184 responses. The majority of respondents said that they would prefer weekly yard debris services over the current every-other-week service (53%), and that they would support a weekly yard debris program that included food scraps (63%).

Hines said weekly yard debris service allows for the inclusion of food scraps, all of which is then composted. Weekly service has been successful in other communities, and the option is being presented for information and consideration.

In response to inquiries from the Council, Jackson and Hines estimated that weekly service would cost an additional \$3 per month, per customer. The rate is based on community-wide participation, and subscription service would be much more expensive. Most food scraps are compostable and the company has information available about a variety of kitchen composting containers.

Hines said the service is available, and the City is invited to contact Republic Services if and when they want to make the change. Brief discussion followed.

REGIONAL ACCELERATOR INNOVATION NETWORK PRESENTATION

Jackie Mikalonis, Governor's Office Regional Solutions Coordinator for Linn, Benton, Lincoln, and Lane Counties, said her office works with a regional advisory committee on economic development opportunities in our region. She said this region includes the two largest research universities in the state and, in looking at what could be done to enhance the environment for entrepreneurs and starting businesses, the Regional Accelerator Innovation Network (RAIN) was established. She said that RAIN remains a priority project for Regional Solutions.

Jim Coonan, Executive Director for RAIN, said his organization is focused on entrepreneurship and trying to increase the odds that early stage companies survive, stay, and grow in our region. Coonan reviewed the results of the Kauffman Study, a 30-year study looking at job generation in the United States which found that net job generation comes from early stage companies; that startups show consistent job growth even during economic downturns; and that regions with few large employers need a strong entrepreneurial ecosystem. He said RAIN focuses on traded sector companies, defined as scalable companies that bring dollars into the region.

Coonan said the failure rate for early stage companies is quite high. Research has found that these companies need advisory services such as mentors, advisors, networking, accelerator programs, physical space, and access to equipment and labs. With strong advisory services and robust connections to resources and resident capital, the odds of success doubles. RAIN was developed as a strategy to address the innovation economy for the South Willamette Valley. RAIN strategies include launching the accelerators in Eugene and Corvallis; developing an innovation network of regional resources; and developing early stage resident capital.

Mark Lieberman, Co-Director for OSU Advantage Accelerator, said the accelerator program works with companies over a five-month period to define a repeatable sales model. He briefly described the six companies currently in the accelerator program, two of which he predicts will eventually be \$1 billion businesses. He reviewed the outreach, programs, and classes provided by the accelerator program.

Councilor Rich Kellum asked what it is that Albany could do to further the process. Coonan said RAIN is interested not only in the accelerators, but also what happens before and after. They would be interested in teaming with the City on an event that might support Albany's entrepreneurs and educate them about this resource.

City Manager Wes Hare said the City is already working with companies that have come through the RAIN program and want to locate in Albany. He said the City has been involved with RAIN from its beginning, recognizing that OSU is a real resource in terms of translating university research into companies and jobs. Hare is the City's representative on the Regional Solutions advisory board for this region. He said staff would be happy to work with RAIN on an event.

Konopa said Albany has been engaged by Regional Solutions, and she and staff members have attended the organization's events. She expressed appreciation for the update.

SALE OF PARK PROPERTY

Parks & Recreation Director Ed Hodney reviewed the staff memo. The City has been approached by two homeowners on 37th Avenue who would like to purchase an easement or purchase property outright for the purpose of draining their lots and sending water in the direction of Oak Creek. Hodney said he wouldn't generally advocate selling park land or granting an easement across land that could be developed; however, in this case, the development potential is poor and the one-acre tract is not very valuable in terms of preserving open space. The land is locked in by homes and streets, and there is not much that can be done with it outside of mowing the grass.

Konopa asked if there had been discussion about all five homeowners purchasing the tract and extending their lot lines to 39th Avenue. Hodney said only the western two homeowners are interested in the purchase. In discussion and in response to questions, Hodney said there are several options with advantages, disadvantages, and costs associated with each. An easement would encumber property that the City owned and make it difficult to sell at a future date; it may be more advantageous to sell the property. The property owners who made the request were asked to contact the other three property owners whose lots backup to the one-acre tract to ask if they wanted to pursue the same solution, but none of them did.

Kellum said he would be in favor of seeing what the sale would look like.

Councilor Dick Olsen asked what would happen if nothing was done. Hodney said that was an option but there are no storm sewer improvements in that area and he is trying to find a solution that helps neighbors deal with a drainage problem they have had for several years.

Councilor Bill Coburn said he would like to have a better understanding about why the area is having a problem with stormwater and then consider reasonable long-term solutions.

Konopa said she understands that the area does have drainage issues and it may be good to come up with a solution for the area.

Councilor Bessie Johnson said she would like to help in some way but she needs more information about the options, including whether all five property owners would be willing to participate.

Assistant City Manager Mark Shepard said 37th Avenue was most likely built as a county road with ditches. The ditches were filled in at some point and water doesn't have anywhere to go except over land. The solution to the problem is to either reestablish the ditches or improve the streets to City standards. Hare noted that a lot of what is done these days in regard to stormwater treatment is low tech. If the property isn't going to serve any other function, this might be a good solution to cleanse and direct water.

Hodney said he was hearing general consensus that staff can continue to explore a sale, as opposed to an easement, but that more information to Council is needed regarding the nature of the drainage issue and whether this is the best solution. There was general agreement.

LIMITED-ENGLISH PROFICIENCY PLAN

Management Assistant/Public Information Officer Marilyn Smith said the City received requests to create a Limited English Proficiency Plan for residents and visitors who are not fluent in English. She said the proposed plan was drafted using templates from other Oregon communities; it documents what City staff was already doing and expands upon the use of telephone interpreter services.

Information Technology Director Jorge Salinas distributed a flyer (see agenda file) and reviewed information about Language Line Solutions, a company that provides over-the-phone interpretation services. Brief discussion followed. Konopa thanked staff for coming up with the plan.

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COUNCILOR COMMENTS

Kellum asked why there are requirements in certain commercial areas that 25% of the front of the building is windows or glass. From a business perspective, he said, that results in loss of efficiency from heating, loss of display space inside, and easier vandalism or break-ins. Shepard recalled that the standards were created to prevent big flat walls along the road. Konopa said this was part of the Great Neighborhoods discussions because windows are thought to be more welcoming. Hare added that there has also been discussion that windows are a crime deterrent because people can see in and out.

CITY MANAGER REPORT

Hare said the City previously participated in an exchange program through the International City/County Management Association. The City has been selected for the program again, and Planners from Cambodia and Indonesia will visit Albany in April to see how we do our planning. In return, Planning Manager Bob Richardson will go to Cambodia in July. Hare and Richardson will host the visiting Planners in their homes. There is no direct cost to the City.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Reviewed by,

Teresa Nix
Administrative Assistant

Wes Hare
City Manager