

CITY OF ALBANY
CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION
Municipal Court Room
Monday, February 22, 2016
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: Mayor Sharon Konopa, Councilors Bill Coburn, Floyd Collins, Bessie Johnson, Rich Kellum, Ray Kopczynski, and Dick Olsen

Councilors Absent: None

BUSINESS FROM THE PUBLIC

There was no business from the public.

CALAPOOIA WATERSHED COUNCIL UPDATE

Calapooia Watershed Council Executive Director Tara Davis, Education Director Bessie Joyce, and Board Director Heather Medina Saucedo gave a PowerPoint presentation called Albany Watershed Restoration Planning & Partnership Update (see agenda file). Davis said the Watershed Council is a nongovernmental, volunteer, river restoration nonprofit organization with a stakeholder board representative of land users and managers in the service area. They receive funding from Oregon lottery dollars, private foundations, local government, and private donors. Local and regional ecological threats include spring Chinook salmon and winter steelhead, wetland destruction and disturbance, conifer encroachment and oak habitat destruction, and stream temperature. The Willamette Stewardship Team-Albany Reach (WSTAR) has been meeting since 2010, and they have developed a strategy for restoration throughout Albany area tributaries. The Calapooia River-Albany Assessment and Project Implementation Plan will allow them to seek grant funding for restoration in these systems. Joyce reviewed past and future restoration projects as detailed in the presentation.

Councilor Rich Kellum said the Willamette River was historically a mud puddle in the summer months because there were no dams and he asked to what date restoration would be attempted. Davis said they aren't trying to restore to Calapooia Native American ecological processes but rather get it to functioning level benchmarks related to water quality, habitat, and the long-term health of fish species. Kellum said Albany is putting water into the Willamette River, which is now a cooler system than existed prior to the dam, and he is concerned that the benchmarks might lead to a higher level of accountability. Davis said her organization is working with City staff to help address some of those realities.

Joyce reviewed progress on the Oak Creek Open Space Assessment and Management Plan. A 2014 grant from the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB) paid for data collection and assessment processes and the organization is now working on an OWEB grant proposal to address some of the invasive species at the site. She then reviewed Youth Watershed Education programs for 2015, which include Linn Benton Salmon Watch, Timber Ridge Field Days, Albany Spring Field Days, and others. Last year there were 38 events and 144 hours of direct contact with students from 11 schools. Partners in the Youth Watershed education programs include the Nature Conservancy, City of Albany, and other smaller grant funds.

Saucedo provided information related to the Willamette River Relay scheduled for August 13, 2016. She thanked Council for supporting this event, which draws people from throughout the area to explore downtown Albany and see some of the great conservation work being implemented. The purpose is to engage the community and bring awareness of river restoration. She encouraged Councilors to participate or volunteer in the event.

ALBANY PARTNERSHIP FOR HOUSING UPDATE

Konopa gave a presentation on the Albany Partnership for Housing and Community Development (APHCD) (see agenda file). APHCD is a Community Development Corporation (CDC), a nonprofit agency governed by a board of directors with oversight by Oregon Housing and Community Services. Council appointed her as its representative to APHCD in 1997 and she is currently serving as President. Other Board members include Vice President Hector Cordova and Treasurer Anne Catlin, a City of Albany Planner who has been volunteering her time the last several years following the City budget cuts. The APHCD has 136 units of housing in four neighborhoods with approximately 400 residents. Their mission is to develop and maintain affordable housing and foster self-sufficiency in the Albany area. Their vision is Neighbors Creating Neighborhoods, Stability, and Hope. She showed photos and reviewed the APHCD neighborhoods and existing needs:

- Parkside Court is a 40-unit apartment complex acquired in 1996, with a low income affordability restriction through 2046. The property is paid for and they have been replacing and repairing the siding as needed. Interior kitchens and bathrooms are 45 years old and are being upgraded when there are turnovers.
- Periwinkle Place includes 30 factory-built homes, two apartments, a playground, and a community building. It was completed in 1995 and has low income affordability restriction through 2025. A grant was received about 10 years ago to repair construction deficiencies. The units need covered porches and interior upgrades.
- ParkRose is 13 units including two rehabilitated historic homes and five townhouse duplexes. It was completed in 1998 and has low income affordability restriction through 2027. The properties need new roofs and siding due to construction deficiencies. The units need porches over the back doors for weather protection and screened patios for better appearance from the highway. The fence was vandalized and needs to be replaced. This is a low cash flow property with only \$100 per month going to reserves. There is equity in the property but it cannot carry a higher debt or generate greater cash flow due to rent restrictions.
- Songbird Village is a 48-unit multi-family complex completed in 2000 with low income affordability restriction through 2075. After 10 years, it was discovered that there is rot under windows, siding, and stair landings due to the contractor improperly installing flashings and windows. Other CDCs throughout the state have deficiencies from the same contractor. APHCD has received a bid for repairs at \$1.7 million. This property has equity but cannot withstand additional debt due to rent restrictions. There is no other solution but to seek grants for the necessary repairs.

Konopa reviewed the structure and state oversight of CDCs as detailed in the presentation. She reviewed the tenant income structure, noting that today 40 percent of residents are 30 percent or more below the median income, which affects rental income and results in less revenue for operations. She then reviewed the case managed supportive housing projects (Oak Street Duplex and Geary Street House) which were completed using stimulus funds and are intended to help homeless individuals learn new skills and become self-sufficient. The state is making changes in how tax credit pass-throughs are applied to rent reduction, which impacts the cash flow of APHCD properties. The organization has decided to apply the pass-through to seven units, thus providing rent-free units in Albany, and several social service agencies have expressed interest in partnering in this effort. She thinks this is very good for our community, and she has received positive feedback from the state. Brief discussion followed.

HOUSING GRANT FUNDS

Planning Manager Bob Richardson said the City's Housing Fund consists of repaid housing rehabilitation loans made with Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds. The balance of the fund is currently \$282,818 of program income with restricted uses and the state has directed that the money be spent down. The money can be given to eligible recipients for use in a housing rehabilitation program or food bank. Staff identified three potential recipients, two of which were interested in receiving some or all of the funds – the APHCD and the Linn-Benton Housing Authority (LBHA). Staff requested direction on how to disperse the funds.

Donna Holt, Executive Director, Linn-Benton Housing Authority (LBHA), said the organization administers rental assistance through a voucher program. The majority of their vouchers are held in Linn County, and the majority of those are used by Albany families. The LBHA also has 200 housing units with the same affordability restrictions described in the APHCD presentation. Riverview Place and Clayton Meadows are examples of tax credit properties for low income seniors that were developed by LBHA. Cottage Creek, the project presented for consideration in this process, was developed with a variety of funds with strings attached. The reserve account has been exhausted, the rents cannot be raised, and they have had to forgo maintenance. She said all of the affordable housing in Albany is very valuable, and she believes all agencies should collaborate to preserve and increase the number of these properties.

Councilor Ray Kopczynski asked whether any funds given to LBHA could be earmarked for use in Linn County. Holt said yes, the contract could specify where money is to be spent.

Councilor Floyd Collins said that both organizations have needs and it's difficult for Council to know at this point which one should receive the funds. He suggested that Council direct staff to identify critical factors in each of the identified eligible properties, focusing on those improvements that are directly related to failing systems, and bring back a recommendation. There was general agreement.

DESIGNATED "RESIDENT-ONLY" PARKING SPACE

Transportation Systems Specialist Ron Irish said staff has received two requests for the City to post an American with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible handicapped parking sign on a residential street in front of a house for use by the owner. In both cases, there is a handicapped individual in the house and the street is functionally the only place where an ADA-accessible van could load and unload someone in a wheelchair. It is difficult to create a handicapped space in the street that meets all City requirements. A few other cities in the country have created some version of a parking system for residents but that requires a management program. Staff asks that Council weigh in before they respond to these citizen requests.

In response to questions from Council, Irish described the two situations. In one instance, the garage is in the back of the house, and in the other instance the driveway is steep and Call-a-Ride has to pick up on the street. The residents are concerned that if the spot is taken by a neighbor they would be unable to get in and out. It appears that they have been able to make the current situation work and that they are making these requests for convenience.

City Manager Wes Hare said that we all want to accommodate someone's need; however, many people in town have needs and it would be challenging to establish criteria and a monitoring program so it is known when someone moves or spaces are no longer needed. One idea would be to allow people to set up their own signage requesting voluntary compliance, as opposed to a formally designated accessible spot that meets all state requirements.

Following discussion, Council agreed that staff should try to work with individuals and neighborhoods on local solutions. There was not support for a designated "resident-only" parking permit program.

OFFER TO DONATE PRIVATE PROPERTY

Public Information Officer/Management Assistant Marilyn Smith said the City has had problems with junk and trespassing at a large house on a large lot adjacent to Bowman Park for a couple of years. She showed photos taken outside the house in June 2015, noting a significant amount of junk and trash.

Albany Police Department Lieutenant Alan Lynn said that there have been 43 calls for service to this residence since 2014. Four people have been cited for junk and trash and there is currently one court case open, but the situation has actually gotten worse. Nobody currently lives at the house but people trespass in the backyard.

City Attorney Sean Kidd said the current court case involves a woman whose mother owns the house. The house appears to be in a "zombie" foreclosure, where the bank starts the proceeding, realizes the condition, and does not hurry to complete the foreclosure. The property owner's attorney has advised that she is willing to sign title to the property over to the City as part of a plea deal for her daughter. This would allow the City to clean up and secure the property; however, the lender could still foreclose unless a deal could be worked out. In response to questions from Council, Kidd said that negotiations with the bank could take many months, that the original loan in 2002 was \$90,000, and that the property has a market value of \$269,780. The house is in the Central Albany Revitalization Area district and the taxes have been paid. Brief discussion followed.

Council directed staff to work with the property owner's attorney to accept the deed to the property and work with the bank to see what it would take to acquire the title.

CITY MANAGER SEARCH PROCESS

Hare said the City is about 17 months out from needing a new City Manager, and he asked for Council direction as to whether the recruiting process should be done in-house or by an executive search firm. Following brief discussion, Council directed that staff start the process to select an executive search firm.

BUSINESS FROM THE COUNCIL

Collins said a constituent who lives in North Albany contacted him last week because she would like her children, who are Cub Scouts, to be able to raise weaner pigs for 4H. Albany Municipal Code (AMC) states that swine are not permitted in the City. He asked if Council was interested in changing the prohibition.

In discussion, Collins said the citizen has contacted adjacent neighbors and they are supportive. He is also supportive of what she is doing through Cub Scouts and 4-H to teach children responsibility. Discussion followed regarding ways the AMC could be revised to allow pigs with limitations.

Council directed that staff bring back a change to AMC Chapter 6.10 to allow swine within the City limits with provisions including: one-acre minimum; secure the permission of neighbors within 300 feet; 25-foot setback from the property line; limit of two pigs for a four-month period; and used for educational activity.

CITY MANAGER REPORT

None.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Reviewed by,

Teresa Nix
Administrative Assistant

Wes Hare
City Manager