

CITY OF ALBANY
CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION
Municipal Court Room
Monday, May 9, 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: Councilors Rich Kellum, Bill Coburn, Ray Kopczynski, Dick Olsen, Bessie Johnson, and Floyd Collins.

Councilors absent: None.

BUSINESS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

REPUBLIC SERVICES CUSTOMER SERVICE DISCUSSION – Julie Jackson and Kevin Hines

Julie Jackson, of Republic Services, informed the Council that Republic Services will be consolidating customer service in three resource centers across the country. Albany's customer service will be relocated to Phoenix, Arizona, sometime in mid-2017. The Albany office has already moved five customer service people within the company, and customers are spending more time on hold and waiting longer for service. Jackson said that she and Kevin Hines consider this unacceptable. They want to let the Council know what they are doing about it. They will be hiring two summer temporaries, one for the Albany office. The company has moved three employees from accounting back into customer service for a few hours a day. Already wait times are decreasing. The new centers are good work environments and will be well-staffed, so if a few employees are out at the same time, service will not be affected. Customer service hours will be extended from 8 to 15 hours per day. The company is very concerned now to keep current employees. They are offering bonuses and extended medical insurance, and trying to relocate people within the company.

Councilor Rich Kellum asked how many employees are affected. Hines said eight in the Albany office. Five of them already have other jobs in the company locally. The new people that are being hired know that it's temporary. They are eligible for the same benefits as long-time employees.

Councilor Ray Kopczynski asked if the end result would be eight fewer positions in Albany. Jackson said no, because they're creating five more positions in operations and accounting. Telephone calls will go to Phoenix. A dedicated supervisor will train people who answer calls for Albany. With the new system, they will have local information on weather, road closures, etc. Hines said there will still be someone in the local office for walk-ins, as well as a dispatcher, operations clerk, and supervisors.

Councilor Bessie Johnson asked, why the move? She said people in Albany don't care about the pretty office in Phoenix. Jackson said the new system will be much easier to use. Also, in Phoenix they will be able to extend service hours, which they can't do here. And with more customer service people available, if a few people are out, service won't suffer.

Councilor Dick Olsen asked how many employees other than drivers Republic has in Albany. Hines said ten. Olsen asked how many after the move? Jackson said ten or eleven office positions will stay here. Olsen said he is disappointed that Albany will be paying more people, and some of them will be out of town. He asked how much rates will go up. Hines said he doesn't anticipate any increases. Kellum said the savings is in being able to hire full positions seasonally in one location.

Konopa reported that she received another complaint about food recycling odors. She asked if Republic has received many complaints. Jackson said no. North Albany residents may be smelling the composting facility. Republic is testing to determine what keeps odors down the best. She said they want to hear from people who are concerned about the odor.

CROCKER LANE/GIBSON HILL ROAD INTERSECTION DISCUSSION

Transportation Systems Analyst Ron Irish reminded the Council that they asked Public Works in March to collect public input on options for the Crocker Lane/Gibson Hill Road intersection. Public Works received 327 responses to a survey posted online. Fifteen to 20 percent of respondents also left written comments. The responses were used to rank five options.

The intersection is a T with through traffic on Gibson Hill Road. A southbound left turn is the worst operation on that intersection. The performance standard is determined by how many people want to make this movement compared to the number of opportunities to make it. If 85 percent of the available opportunities are being used, the intersection meets the standard. At this intersection now, the ratio is 44 percent. However, because of traffic volume, the intersection meets signal warrants.

Irish said the modern roundabout option was most favored by responders to the report, followed by a traffic signal with turn lanes, a mini-roundabout, a signal with single lanes, and an all-way stop. An analysis showed that all of the options continued to work adequately through 2040 except the all-way stop. The 2040 numbers used traffic estimates for near-complete buildout of the area. Public Works is asking for direction on which of the five options to build, and on a schedule for building it. The schedule will be closely related to funding for the project. The intersection is in the Transportation System Plan (TSP) as funded by System Development Charges (SDCs). The Council previously directed that \$300,000 be kept in the SDC fund for emergencies, so about \$450,000 is available. Public Works thinks they can gather another \$100,000 from other funds, making nearly \$550,000 available now for an intersection project. The two most expensive options are the modern roundabout, at \$1.4 million plus the cost of acquiring right-of-way; and the signal with turn lanes, at \$1.8 million plus right-of-way. Pulling SDC funds from other projects would delay those projects. For instance, using SDC money allocated to the Hill Street improvement project in the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) would risk Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) funding for that project by delaying it.

Olsen asked if the City would lose MPO funding on any other projects if we borrowed SDC funds. Irish said no, only on Hill Street.

Olsen asked how long it would take to save enough SDC money to do the most expensive option. Irish said five or six years.

Kopczynski said he likes the roundabout option. He thinks it should be part of the normal process, including putting it into the CIP so it will move up the priority list.

Councilor Floyd Collins said he would like to make the long-term decision now to build the full roundabout, and use some SDC money for design and right-of-way acquisition, and to resolve some current vision issues at the intersection.

Kopczynski said one of the property owners who will lose property to right-of-way is adamantly opposed to the improvements. The City needs to start negotiating now to make it work out for everyone. Collins said under all the options, the City will need to acquire right-of-way; the question is how much.

Kellum said he would like to just fix the problem to 2040, at the least cost, and after that, if neighbors want more improvements, do an LID.

Coburn asked for Irish's best guess when the area would reach full buildout. Irish said if building continues at the same rate as currently, it will take about 15 years to use all the available buildable land. Coburn asked how much time the Council has to do nothing and let the funds grow. Irish said, from an engineering point of view, probably five to ten years. Not many accidents happen yet at that intersection. Coburn asked if a temporary signal was an option. He said other jurisdictions do this for four or five years, when they know growth is coming but not how much or when. He agrees with Collins: the best choice is the modern roundabout, but we can't build it now and it isn't warranted now.

Collins said that area of the city is unique: there are only two ways in and out. There are already congestion problems. If we wait for buildout, they will get much worse. There was a lot of local frustration during the work on Valley View Drive and Crocker Lane last summer. Scenic Drive isn't really a good alternative for getting in and out of North Albany. When we fix this intersection, we need to fix it right. We only want to destroy and rebuild it once.

Johnson said she doesn't like to take property. She asked if there are any mini-roundabouts in town to compare to the modern roundabout option. Irish said Albany has three modern roundabouts in three different sizes. A mini-roundabout would be similar in size to the temporary one at Spring Hill and Quarry Road last summer. A modern roundabout here would be the same size as the one at Gibson Hill and North Albany Road.

City Manager Wes Hare asked if a mini-roundabout would be safe and effective through buildout. He asked what other factors might influence the need for these improvements. Irish said other factors could be increased development in Benton County outside Albany's Urban Growth Boundary (UGB); congestion on Highway 20; and traffic from Salem trying to avoid Highway 20 by using back roads. It would be hard to predict when these might become problems. A mini-roundabout would have the smallest capacity of the options, and might fail in 25 to 30 years.

Johnson asked if fixing visibility issues at the intersection would buy some time. She asked what the Council could do short of a major fix to make it easier to use the intersection. There are a lot of places in Albany that need to be fixed.

Kellum predicted a lot of new housing in the area soon, which will tell us more about what is needed. If the City cuts brush and improves visibility so it's safe, a couple of years isn't too long to wait and see. Would a temporary signal help? The longer we wait, the more SDCs we accumulate.

Kopczynski said he understands waiting a couple of years, but suggests earmarking the intersection now for the full roundabout in five years. It will take time to prepare for construction. If buildout happens as Irish expects, the project will already be in the plans.

Konopa said there are a lot of needs throughout City. We put a lot of SDCs in the Lowe's basket. Now we don't have funding capacity, and when will we? We will have more needs in years to come. She thinks we should start planning for this project now and working on property acquisition.

Motion: Collins moved to select the full-size roundabout as the ultimate plan for the intersection and direct staff to place the project in the CIP, and in the interim, to improve the intersection's vision issues, purchase right-of-way, and plan the design. Kopczynski seconded the motion.

Coburn said one of the respondents commented that the utility pole on the northwest corner of the intersection blocks visibility for westbound traffic. That pole will have to be moved regardless. He would like to hear from staff what other steps could be taken to improve visibility. Irish said it's complicated because both road rights-of-way are under Benton County jurisdiction. In the right-of-way, the City can only do what the County will allow. On private property we can't do anything outside of the vision clearance triangle as defined in the Albany Development Code.

Kellum said it's strange that we are proposing to move funds from City streets we own to a street we don't own. Public Works Engineering and Community Development Director Jeff Blaine said there are two ways to look at it. Development in the area is regulated through Albany's Development Code and is within the City limits. The intersection issue is capacity, not structural, and driven by development that Albany has approved.

Collins said he would like to look at the temporary signal option. It might buy some time. Blaine said that option would not be SDC-eligible. It would have to be funded with cash. Collins said he doesn't want to interrupt the commitment to Hill Street or the MPO funding.

Olsen asked, if the temporary signal works well, can we change the CIP and not do the roundabout? Collins said yes.

VOTE: The motion to select the full-size roundabout option and begin planning passed 4-3, with Olsen, Johnson, and Kellum voting no.

VC-01-15, FIRST AVENUE STREET VACATION FOR THE ALBANY HISTORIC CAROUSEL AND MUSEUM

Blaine explained that this Ordinance was passed by the Council on April 27, 2016. Before it was recorded, it was noticed that the legal description was incorrect. The second line of the description should read "west of the right-of-way." Blaine presented a corrected legal description for the Ordinance (see agenda file).

MOTION: Kopczynski moved to replace the existing legal description for Ordinance No. 5870 with the corrected legal description. Collins seconded the motion, which passed 6-0.

COUNCILOR COMMENTS

Kopczynski said he hopes the Council will have a progress report soon on the time, place, and manner discussion and ballot measure titles. City Attorney Sean Kidd said staff hasn't finished the maps yet. When they are finished, staff will come before the City Council. He won't be able to put together an ordinance until he receives guidance from the Council. He wants to be sure the Council is interested in the three-percent tax if the ban on recreational marijuana fails. The Council expressed interest in the tax. Kidd said he thinks staff will have the maps ready by the next Work Session (May 23, 2016), but he's scheduled to be in depositions and might not be finished by 4:00 p.m. Planning Manager Bob Richardson could attend and answer questions.

Kopczynski asked if there will there be a hearing on Tom Cordier's ballot title challenge. Kidd said yes. Cordier has filed a challenge to the stormwater utility ballot title. The City Attorney's office has sent a response to Cordier's lawyer, and Kidd will inform the City Council when a hearing is scheduled.

Collins said he will be out of town for the meetings on May 23 and 25. He would like updates on the City Manager hiring process. The Council discussed the extent of their involvement in the Finance Manager hiring process. Collins also requested that staff talk to the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) and Benton County about truck safety at Highway 20 and Spring Hill Drive.

Irish said based on conversations he's had with ODOT, they feel they would not have a role in creating a detour route not on the highway system. Because of the safety issue, the people he talked to think the City and Benton County should take action. City engineers are evaluating the pavement on Hickory Street to see if it's strong enough for trucks. Additional truck traffic would mean the street would need to be replaced sooner than expected. Another option would be to install signs warning of the tipping hazard at the intersection of Spring Hill and Highway 20. Both options would require coordinating with Benton County, and there have been no official discussions with the County yet.

Collins suggested that staff proceed with discussions, and also install warning signs immediately.

Konopa also recommends discussions with Benton County. Blaine said Benton County has always been a good partner.

CITY MANAGER REPORT

There was no City Manager Report.

Blaine asked, if the Council will be discussing the marijuana measure on May 23, can the food carts discussion be taken off that agenda? The Council agreed to the change.

Albany City Council Work Session
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ADJOURNMENT

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Allison Liesse
Accounting Specialist

Reviewed by,

Stewart Taylor
Finance Director