

## **MINUTES**

TOWN HALL MEETING  
OF  
JUNE 21, 2010  
5:30 P.M.  
MID COLUMBIA SENIOR CENTER  
THE DALLES, OREGON

**PRESIDING:** Mayor Jim Wilcox

**COUNCIL PRESENT:** Bill Dick, Carolyn Wood, Dan Spatz,

**COUNCIL ABSENT:** Brian Ahier, Tim McGlothlin

**STAFF PRESENT:** City Manager Nolan Young, City Attorney Gene Parker, City Clerk Julie Krueger, Public Works Director Dave Anderson, Police Chief Jay Waterbury, Engineer Dale McCabe, Administrative Intern Cooper Whitman, Librarian Sheila Dooley, Community Development Director Dan Durow

### **CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Wilcox called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. and asked the audience to join in the Pledge of Allegiance.

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS**

Mayor Wilcox invited the public to raise any questions or make comments.

Steve Lawrence, 222 West 12<sup>th</sup> Street, The Dalles, said he was the Civic Auditorium Board President. He provided a brief update on the activities of the Board, noting they were preparing to meet to prepare a plan for restoration of the theater. Lawrence said when the Plan was completed, they would be seeking grant funds to begin the work. He expressed concern regarding rumors of the City's purchase of the Granada Theater, saying this could compete with the plans of the Civic Auditorium group.

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Mayor Wilcox said the Granada Theater had been purchased by the Urban Renewal Agency and that there was a long term plan to place it into private ownership. City Manager Young said it would be approximately six to nine months before a plan was completed with a private developer, but that it would be complimentary to the Civic and not competitive.

Ken Ramsey, Red Wagon Antiques, PO Box 5, The Dalles, asked for an explanation from the City Council regarding their decision to not allow yard sale signs at intersections in the community. He said he purchased approximately 60% of his items for his antique store at the sales and it was important to be able to find them by reading the signs.

Mayor Wilcox said he was not opposed to yard sales, but the signs were a nuisance problem and were not allowed on City right of way. He said they signs were not regularly picked up after the sales ended. Wilcox said the Council directed staff to develop some alternatives and that the program was in a trial which would be evaluated at the end of July.

Donna Lawrence, 222 West 12<sup>th</sup> Street, The Dalles, said she noticed a large number of abandoned vehicles on the streets and many sidewalks that were overgrown with shrubbery. She asked how best to report these items to the Codes Enforcement Department.

City Manager Young said the sidewalk concerns could be addressed to John Dennee and the abandoned vehicles could be reported to Nikki Lesich. Email addresses were provided to Mrs. Lawrence so she could provide the information to the appropriate staff.

Nicole Ramsey, PO Box 5, The Dalles, said she believed the City's ordinances encouraged neighbors to tattle on one another instead of being helpful toward each other. She said a helpful neighbor program should be developed to help people clean up their properties. Mrs. Ramsey described a letter she had received to clean up her own property, noting it was inaccurate and required her to clean up the children's toys. She said if there was no fire hazard, people should be left alone.

Mayor Wilcox explained that many citizens did find junky yards offensive and that people had a right to live in a clean environment.

Marilyn Clifford, PO Box 269, The Dalles, said the City should do a better job of informing the citizens about issues and invite them to attend the meetings.

Mayor Wilcox said all City Council meeting agendas and minutes were available in advance and placed on the City's website for anyone to access. He encouraged citizens to check the agendas to determine whether there were items of interest to them.

Bob McNary, 1525 East Ninth Street, The Dalles, said he was opposed to the City purchasing private property such as the Granada Theater. He said tax revenues would decrease with property being in public ownership. McNary expressed frustration with continued purchase of property and questioned how the City would receive any revenue with the Flour Mill project.

City Manager Young said the part of the purpose of urban renewal was to acquire blighted property and then work to get a private developer to update and own the property. He said the process can take a long time, but the projects that had been completed, such as the Commodore Building and the Columbia Bank property, had been very successful.

Young said there was activity at the Flour Mill property and that it should be in private ownership within five years. It was also noted that the business located there had six or seven employees and that generating employment was positive for the local economy.

**Councilor Spatz retired from the meeting at 6:25 p.m.**

Donna Lawrence asked for additional information regarding the purchase of the Granada. City Manager Young explained it was purchased by the Urban Renewal Agency, so it was in public ownership currently. He said the Agency was working with a private developer to make the building viable for future use. Young said urban renewal funds would help by replacing some basic infrastructure, but the intent was to stop the building from further deterioration and then to help someone else make the building a meaningful part of the downtown economy.

Steve Lawrence questioned why the purchase had been secretive. It was explained that real estate transaction details were frequently worked out in private, but that the decision to make the purchase had been made in an open meeting, as required by law.

Jeff Clifford asked the purchase price, appraised value and assessed value of the Granada property. City Manager Young said the property was purchased for approximately \$374,000 and the original selling price was approximately \$600,000. Young said he did not know the dollar figure for the appraised value.

Mr. Clifford said he was opposed to City ordinances regarding yard sale signs, saying it infringed on citizens rights. He suggested that The Dalles Disposal could pick up signs along their routes on Monday mornings to help keep the intersections cleaned up. Clifford questioned the size limits for signs, saying he believed it was three square feet, and said there were many real estate signs that were not in compliance with that regulation.

Mayor Wilcox and Councilor Wood both offered thanks to Bob McNary for his work in cleaning up the Pioneer Cemetery and Rock Fort sites.

Mr. McNary expressed concern regarding the City's ability to maintain streets. He said many streets were in a deteriorated condition and there did not seem to be funding to keep them repaired. McNary said he believed many people would support a bond measure to bring the streets up to a better standard.

McNary also expressed concern that the Fire District would lose its fire rating due to lack of training. He said there was not enough money for the proper training and manpower because they lost revenue due to the urban renewal district.

City Manager Young explained that from 1997 to the current time, the Fire District had not lost any tax revenue because of the urban renewal district. He said they would have a decrease for the last few years of the Plan.

Mayor Wilcox said the street conditions were a problem that had been acknowledged by the City Council through the budget process and that the City was working on funding options for the future.

City Manager Young said the City did not want to use bonding as a revenue source. He said other public entities in the community may need it more than the City.

Jack Bartell, 2616 West 13<sup>th</sup> Street, The Dalles, asked what the plan was for the former County Public Works facilities on West Tenth Street.

City Manager Young said the property was still owned by Wasco County. He said Mr. Bartell should contact the County, noting they had developed a master plan for the property, but he didn't know the specific uses proposed.

Jeff Clifford said it did not appear that the City was pro-business because they required permits and monthly fees for businesses to have sandwich board signs outside their businesses.

Community Development Director Durow said staff had met with the Downtown Merchants Association when the ordinance was being developed and the merchants requested the language be restrictive. He said a permit was required if the sign would be placed in the right of way area and there were some placement restrictions for safety purposes, but there was no monthly fee charged for the signs.

Mr. Clifford said he saw permit fees as a tax and did not support the fees.

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Mayor Wilcox briefly described a concept to study the feasibility of implementing a business license. He said he hoped to appoint a committee in the Fall to study the issue and make recommendations.

An unidentified member of the audience questioned why people would be charged a fine of over \$100 for a yard sale sign, when people committing crimes of public indecency were barely punished.

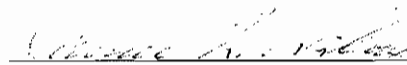
Police Chief Waterbury said the charge of public indecency being referred to carried a penalty of up to one year in jail and a fine of up to \$6,250. He said the laws and penalties were set by the State of Oregon, not the City.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Hearing no further comments, the meeting adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

Submitted by/  
Julie Krueger, MMC  
City Clerk

SIGNED:

  
James L. Wilcox, Mayor

ATTEST:

  
Julie Krueger, MMC, City Clerk