

MINUTES

TOWN HALL MEETING
OF
NOVEMBER 15, 2010
5:30 P.M.
MID COLUMBIA SENIOR CENTER
THE DALLES, OREGON

PRESIDING: Mayor Jim Wilcox

COUNCIL PRESENT: Bill Dick, Carolyn Wood, Dan Spatz, Brian Ahier, Tim McGlothlin

COUNCIL ABSENT: None

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, Librarian Sheila Dooley, Community Development Director Dan Durow, Finance Director Kate Mast

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Wilcox called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. He introduced the City Council.

COMMENTS REGARDING OUTDOOR BURNING REQUIREMENTS

Chip Wood, 420 West 11th Street, The Dalles spoke in support of a burn ban. He said with two free yard debris collection dates every year and recycling options, people should not need to burn yard debris and it had negative affects on health. Wood said he also supported a ban on burning barrels, noting that most people who used barrels, burned plastics.

Ed Goodman spoke in opposition of a burn ban, explaining his personal situation in which he would have to haul approximately 50 wheelbarrows of leaves up a big hill and it would cost him approximately \$90 per year for a yard debris can. Goodman said stockpiling yard debris would be unsightly and said burn permits issued by the Fire Department already listed items that were allowed to be burned.

MINUTES (Continued)
Town Hall Meeting
November 15, 2010
Page 2

Chuck Stanek, 2102 East 14th Street, The Dalles, said he had a lot of landscaping on his property and did burn yard debris in the Fall. Stanek said he could not afford to take the yard debris to the transfer station.

Judy Merrill, 400 West 11th Street, The Dalles, spoke in support of a burn ban. She said she had participated on the 2006 committee regarding burning and supported the proposal by Kathy Heitkemper which pointed out many alternatives to burning. Merrill said almost everyone who used burn barrels, burned plastics and it was a health concern.

Mayor Wilcox questioned who was responsible for enforcing the burning of garbage.

Mid Columbia Fire and Rescue District Fire Marshal Dan Hammel said the Fire Department enforced the state law regarding fire safety and the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) enforced rules regarding air quality issues.

Dick Miller, 1660 Meek Street, The Dalles, said he recycled, but he burned papers, such as credit card offers and yard debris. He said he did not support a burn ban.

Phyllis Coats, 1705 Liberty Way, The Dalles, spoke in support of a burn ban, saying it was a health concern for many people, especially those with asthma. She said people could compost yard debris instead of burning it.

Barbara Pashek, 1332 West 10th Street, The Dalles, suggested implementing a program where people could call in and find out if it was a good or bad weather day for burning or create a burning schedule, so people didn't burn every day. She said a burn program needed to be practical and consider that many people in the community could not afford to take yard debris to the transfer station.

Mayor Wilcox asked if the local DEQ office provided stagnation alerts to the community.

Bruce Lumper, DEQ, said The Dalles did have an air quality station and said they had limited local staff so responded to burning issues on a complaint basis. He said they did work on educating people who burned improper materials and if complaints continued, they would use enforcement procedures. Lumper said there was a volunteer for a time who provided air quality information daily to the media, but that person no longer was able to volunteer.

Kathy Heitkemper, 277 Lone Pine Lane, The Dalles, said her presentation to the City Council in July had included a lot of information on the health hazards of burning and said the EPA website contained detailed information why there should not be back yard burning.

MINUTES (Continued)

Town Hall Meeting

November 15, 2010

Page 3

Lenore Clifford, 531 West Third Place, The Dalles, spoke in opposition to a burn ban, explaining that her property, along Mill Creek, had to be managed to avoid it becoming a fire hazard. She said there was no way to carry out the debris, so it had to be burned.

Chris Zukin, 915 West 14th Street, The Dalles, spoke in opposition of a burn ban. He said it was important to keep yard debris under control for fire safety reasons and expressed concern that if back yard burning was banned, fireplaces and wood stoves could be banned in the future, which people needed for heating their homes.

Mayor Wilcox said he believed there was some support for controlled burning, perhaps based on air quality.

Donna Lawrence, 222 West 12th Street, The Dalles, said back yard burning was polluting, especially in the winter months. She said she understood the need for some people to burn, but did not support use of burn barrels and suggested the City could pay for leaf removal.

Mayor Wilcox said the City of Corvallis had a leaf pick up program managed through their garbage franchise and their rates were higher to pay for the program.

Bob McCracken, 831 Garden Court, The Dalles, said he did not support a ban on back yard burning, noting many of the leaves he burned were from neighboring properties. He said many people in the community only had wood heat sources and had no choice but to burn. McCracken said he recycled as much as possible, but still wanted the ability to burn. He said he would support a burning schedule for the community.

Barbara Pashek asked if the Dirt Huggers company accepted yard debris from individuals or only from The Dalles Disposal.

Representatives of Dirt Huggers, Tyler and Pierson, said their composting program was coordinated with The Dalles Disposal because they had the staffing levels to collect the materials. He said in the future it may be possible for individual to bring yard debris to them, but there would be a charge for it.

Wayne VonBorstel, 1603 Morton Street, The Dalles, said scheduled burn days may be difficult for people who work full time or if the weather was not appropriate on a scheduled burn day. VonBorstel said he believed his landscaping was a benefit to the community most of the time, but did support the ability to burn yard debris. He said many people in the community could not afford to pay for dumping yard debris and a ban could harm the beauty of the community because people may just cut down their trees all together.

Fire Marshal Hammel said the Fire Department was not in support or opposition of the proposal. He said they did have a burn permit process and if people violated their burn permits in regard to fire safety issues, they were subject to paying for the cost of the Department being called out. Hammel said there were alternatives to burning, but if people did not have ways to dispose of yard debris, it would cause fire safety issues. He suggested the City consider a burning season, noting that had worked well in Klamath Falls.

Written comments submitted outside the meeting are attached.

COMMENTS REGARDING A CITY BUSINESS LICENSE

Mayor Wilcox said a committee who had recently studied systems development charges for the City, had suggested the City consider a flat rate business license in the future, with revenues being used for street improvement projects. He said this was an opportunity for citizens to let the City know their thoughts on the implementation of a business license.

Barbara Pashek, 1332 West 10th Street, The Dalles, said it would be very difficult to regulate all the businesses in The Dalles, including those who had Ebay businesses and home businesses. She said Wasco County had a full time employee who worked on personal property taxes and questioned if the City would have to hire someone to do a similar job to figure out all the City businesses. Pashek said it may cost more to manage a program than revenues would generate.

Chris Zukin, 915 West 14th Street, The Dalles, questioned who would manage a business license program and said he did not think local businesses needed another license for the sake of having a business license. He said most businesses were regulated by other agencies already.

Wayne VonBorstel, 1603 Morton Street, The Dalles, said he hoped if the City implemented a license program, it would not include things like children's lemonade stands.

Dana Schmidling, Chamber of Commerce Executive Director, said she would support a business license program that wasn't too restrictive, but that it would be good information to know the number and types of businesses operating in The Dalles. She said it would give credibility to the business community.

Sandy Peterson, The Dalles, said she did not support a business license, saying it was an additional expense with no real benefit.

Bob Schultens, 2637, East 10th Street, The Dalles, said he did not believe revenues generated from a business license would be adequate to offset the cost to manage the program and having a business license would not help regulate illegitimate businesses.

Wayne VonBorstel said business owners did not need another layer of red tape and costs. He said the City should make it easier, not more difficult, to do business in The Dalles.

Michael Leash, The Dalles, questioned the goal of implementing a City business license. He said he already had licenses from the Health Department, OLCC, lottery, broadcast music, and others. He asked that the City not add another license on businesses.

Mayor Wilcox said he had not heard any support for implementation of a City business license, so this would not be pursued.

OTHER COMMENTS

Bob McNary, 1525 East Ninth Street, The Dalles, asked what had been accomplished on development of a street maintenance program.

City Manager Young said staff was currently working on a five year revenue/needs plan which would be provided for Council review in January.

Mayor Wilcox said information regarding an annexation study would be discussed at the next City Council meeting. He said Council had considered increasing franchise fees earlier in the year but decided it was not a good time in the current economy. Wilcox said with the difficulty in raising revenues, there was no additional funding for street maintenance.

Councilor Ahier said the City, through the budgeted process, had moved funding for street sweeping from the Street Fund to a different public works fund, which helped provide some funding for street repairs. City Manager Young said the City was expecting additional State funding over the next couple of years.

Public Works Director Dave Anderson said the City also created a transportation systems development charge on new development a couple years ago. He said funds collected from the program were banked and used for new streets or expansion of the street system.

Donna Lawrence, 222 West 12th Street, The Dalles, complimented the City for working to clean up the yard sale signs, she said it made the community look much nicer.

Councilor Ahier said he appreciated the citizens who attended the meeting and thanked them for their participation. He asked citizens to continue attending the meetings.

MINUTES (Continued)
Town Hall Meeting
November 15, 2010
Page 6

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

Submitted by/
Julie Krueger, MMC
City Clerk

SIGNED:


James L. Wilcox, Mayor

ATTEST:


Julie Krueger, MMC, City Clerk

My position on Open burn----To be presented at the Town Hall meeting on Monday (Nov15th)
Our family lives on the outskirts of town. We live on a ½ acre, with a lot of trees, and summertime sunflowers. When fall time comes around, we accumulate a lot of fallen sticks, pruned branches, dry sunflowers and other, burnable yard debris. Each fall our family burns (in an open pit, 5x5 wide) this collection, as well as some of our neighbors who add to our elimination of yard debris.

I'm sure the local hospital personnel can produce an assumed correlation on burning in fall to breathing challenges for some folks in this town. I would counter their findings, (even, I would like to see their research if it's made available) and their self directed summary to not be solely connected to open burns. National (local obesity numbers are higher than the national average (MCMC 2002) research will support that increased obesity is directly associated to a spiked increase in asthma and its related problems to name another causal factor to breathing. Those patients that are used in the hospitals' reports in an effort to ban burning: were they former smokers, in an occupation of polluted air environment? The ban to eliminate the open burn can be an easy target. When opponents of "OPEN BURN" speak against it, I would question who they are targeting.

I understand that there are folks in town that do not abide by the city ordinances of;
1. Buying a burn permit 2. Burn items that are not legal 3. Have no regard for personal burning responsibility.

I and my neighbors follow the city ordinances for open burn, and strongly suggest that I/we be able to continue burning our summer debris, as long as we continue to follow the established S.O.P. of burning.

Potential solution: If a person has an open burn and does not have a permit, they should be fined, \$100-\$300 dollars. If a person burns illegal items (plastic, diapers, et. el.) they should be fined, \$100-\$300.

Summary: To ban open burns altogether would be unjust to those of us that are careful to follow the rules set in place. **Caution:** We heat our house during the winter approx. 80% in our wood burning stove. The cost is clearly measurable. Once THE DALLES begins limiting open burns, then our own heating source will naturally become the next focus for those that wish to eliminate burning of any type.

Living on this planet comes with risks and benefits. When a group attempts to limit another group from normal operation then that group needs to consider, the costs of living on this earth and if normal yard debris burning is made illegal, then what will be focused on to serve that particular group. Thank you for your time, Tom Conklin 903 W 23rd street

Julie Krueger

From: Jim Wilcox <jim@fadnessrealty.com>
Sent: Monday, November 15, 2010 8:44 PM
To: Rep Huffman
Cc: Julie Krueger
Subject: Re: tonight's visit on community burning

Thank you for your comments John. You would have been in good company had you had the energy to endure another meeting. The bulk of the comments were very similar to yours. I'm forwarding a copy of this to Julie so she can make it part of the record.

-Jim

On Mon, Nov 15, 2010 at 5:15 PM, Rep Huffman <huffman.rep@state.or.us> wrote:

Jim,

I would love to participate in the town hall tonight and "weigh in" but I have been in meetings ALL DAY and frankly am tired...sorry. But I wanted to share my thoughts anyway, then you can throw them away. Is it possible to have a balanced approach to the question of burning inside The Dalles? I think so. After reading Brian Tuck's article in the Chronicle over the weekend in which Brian talks about local inversions and burning he talks about not burning on certain days. What would be wrong with controlling burning by not allowing burning on the days that are overcast, where an inversion exists but then allow burning as conditions improve? I could rant on but I'll be brief. I would just hate to see the city over-control something that has been a common practice for many years.

Thanks for listening,

John

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James L. Wilcox, CRS, GRI
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