

CITY OF ALBANY
CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION
Municipal Court Room
Monday, February 12, 2018
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 and Councilors Rich Kellum, Bill Coburn, Ray Kopczynski, Dick Olsen, Bessie Johnson, and Mike Sykes.

Councilors absent: None.

BUSINESS FROM THE PUBLIC

There was none.

LBCC WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT FUND UPDATE

4:01 p.m.

Konopa left the meeting at 4:05 p.m. for another obligation. She returned at 4:18 p.m.

Deputy City Manager/CIO Jorge Salinas introduced David Becker, Dean of the Business, Applied Technology, & Industry Division at Linn-Benton Community College (LBCC). He handed out a list of invoices to the City of Albany so far (see agenda file). Becker presented PowerPoint slides (see agenda file) to update the Council on the progress of the Workforce Program. He explained how LBCC has used funds to date and what they expect to do during the rest of the agreement term. The program is expanding rapidly and filling “astronomical” workforce needs. He said the program’s graduation rate is high, and most students are hired before they even finish the program. Becker said he can’t thank the City enough for providing funding for this program.

Councilor Rich Kellum said the information on the invoice list is not what he asked to receive. He wants the list to show purchase of the actual equipment that the City authorized. Salinas gave him another list which he said shows the information Kellum is looking for (see agenda file). Kellum, Salinas, and Becker discussed the specifics of the invoicing and purchasing. They agreed to meet soon and discuss in more detail what needs to be on the invoices.

Councilor Bessie Johnson said she is proud to be able to say the City is involved in this program.

Councilor Bill Coburn said he is very impressed with the information Becker presented.

HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION REQUEST

4:31 p.m.

Tina Dodge Vera, Kim Whitley, Alice Brockgreitens, and Chris Equinoa of the Human Relations Commission (HRC) were present in the audience. Dodge Vera presented a proposal for community education events to be funded with a grant from the Linn Benton Health Equity Alliance (LBHEA) (see agenda file). She said the HRC understands that the Council didn’t feel they were adequately updated on HRC activities. The HRC would like the Council to support their wish to do the proposed community events, which they would like to hold at the Albany Public Library.

Konopa said she thinks it’s a great idea. She thinks the LBHEA is a good organization doing good work.

Coburn said this kind of communication is exactly what the Council hoped for.

CONCURRENT ZONE CHANGE AND DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS

4:36 p.m.

Planning Manager Bob Richardson listed the pros and cons of requiring concurrent zone change and development applications. There are two advantages: first, that the decision-makers and all parties get a better idea of what would be proposed if a zone change was granted; and second, that the City would be able to apply conditions of approval to a proposed development if necessary. Richardson listed three disadvantages. First, the concurrent process would increase cost and risk to a developer. Second, there is no way to guarantee that a development proposal would be constructed even if approved, and preventive methods might not be legally defensible. And third, if the City wanted to do a zone change, we would also have to provide a development proposal.

Staff recommends against requiring a development application along with a zone change application.

Kellum asked if there is any other way to solve the problem. If the City knew at the time of application that there would be negative impact on neighbors, we would be more likely to deny the application. Richardson said the easiest way to do that would be to cite the existing review criterion that says a development must implement Comprehensive Plan Goals.

Public Works Engineering and Community Development Director Jeff Blaine said an undefined possible use is more likely to get neighbor complaints. Presenting a specific development proposal along with a zone change might give the applications a better chance of approval. In order to approve a zone change, the Council must be comfortable with any development that is possible in the proposed zone.

Kellum suggested that developers should contact neighbors for their support of a development.

Councilor Ray Kopczynski said he thinks meetings between developers and neighbors would be more effective than the Council trying to create buffer zones.

Councilor Dick Olsen asked if staff could add approval criteria for neighborhood opinion. Blaine said most criteria are supposed to be objective. He doesn't think we can write one like that. Zone change criteria are a little more subjective, though, which allows us to use what we hear in testimony more easily.

Konopa asked if the Development Code can be amended so that the Planning Director can send what would normally be an administrative site plan decision to the Planning Commission or Council. Richardson said he will look at the Code. The provisions he's aware of apply in the case of an appeal.

The Council asked Richardson to check whether such a change could be made and communicate back to the Council.

STORMWATER PERMIT UPDATE

5:02 p.m.

Utilities Services Manager Mark Yeager gave a PowerPoint presentation on the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) permit process (see agenda file). The latest permit was proposed in November 2017 and is now in the public comment period. He and Public Works Operations Director Chris Bailey attended a public hearing in January, at which Bailey spoke. The formal comment period closes February 20, 2018, and staff is preparing comments to be submitted.

Staff estimates the cost of compliance with the proposed permit at \$8 million over the five years of the permit, well over our current funding levels. We don't know what the DEQ will do. They went through the same process in 2016 and nothing happened.

Kellum asked about the difference in cost between implementing by the DEQ or by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Yeager said the difference is unknown. Kellum and Yeager discussed costs and whether the permit requirement is an unfunded mandate.

Johnson asked if the City's input would make any difference. Yeager said the January public hearing was statutory, but the substantive comments will be made in writing during the comment period. Staff is preparing those comments now. Johnson thanked staff for their work. Yeager said since November, staff has spent more than 400 hours on this permit.

STORMWATER SERVICE CHARGES

5:39 p.m.

Blaine presented PowerPoint slides (see agenda file). He said there is a direct correlation between revenue received and service provided. Starting from the level of service desired, we can back-calculate to the rate needed. So far, stormwater rate money goes only to operations and maintenance. Blaine said the system has been neglected for many years and has some big problems. Staff is building the program and doing a good job with the money they have.

Public Works is considering a rate adjustment for several reasons: inflation, the cost of regulatory compliance, and the need to replace pipes. Public Works has inspected about half of the pipe system so far and has determined that eight miles of pipe has already failed or will fail in the next ten years. Projects that have to be done in the process of street projects are funded by the streets fund, which limits the amount of street work we can do.

Staff recommends a rate increase that would at least relieve the street fund and generate \$2 million per year for capital projects. Regulatory costs are still unknown. The proposed funding would require a rate increase of 13 percent per year. This is less than the 15 percent per year estimated during the public outreach process in 2016.

Coburn said he thinks we need to do community outreach and education. The need is huge, and citizens don't see it yet. Blaine said Public Works will hold a public hearing later in February. This is different from water and sewer because we don't have a level of service identified yet. Tonight he is looking for direction from the Council: what level of service does the Council think is appropriate, and on what schedule?

Johnson asked, if you fix the failing or failed pipes, what is their lifespan then? Bailey said it would be 50 to 100 years.

Kellum asked how much information would be available for outreach now, since it's too soon to know anything about the stormwater permit. We need to provide enough information to make people understand that we will need \$20 million over several years.

Coburn said he would like to buy some time by doing a 1- or 2-percent increase now and then reconsider in July or August. The issue isn't what the needs are, but how will the taxpayers choose to pay for them? The outreach should include businesses, too.

Albany City Council Work Session
February 12, 2018

The Council directed Public Works to bring a resolution for a 3-percent rate increase to the February 14, 2018, Regular Session.

BUSINESS FROM THE COUNCIL

6:27 p.m.

City Manager Peter Troedsson said he would submit an ordinance to the Council at the February 14, 2018, meeting to put a gas tax on the ballot for the May 15, 2018, election. He showed the proposed ordinance (see agenda file). The Council discussed whether there would be time to get the issue on the ballot.

MOTION: Olsen moved to direct staff to bring a resolution to put a 5 cent per gallon gasoline tax on the May 15, 2018, ballot to the February 14, 2018, Regular Session. Johnson seconded the motion, which passed 5-1, with Kellum voting no.

City Attorney Sean Kidd said he would bring the resolution, a proposed implementing ordinance and a proposed ballot title.

Kopczynski said he promised some of his constituents to bring their concerns about rats in the community to the Council's attention.

CITY MANAGER REPORT

Troedsson noted that he has received an email saying that the Local Government Personnel Institute will close by June 30, 2018.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Reviewed by,

Allison Liesse
Deputy City Clerk

Peter Troedsson
City Manager