



MINUTES

Monday, April 8, 2024

Work Session

Council Chambers, City Hall

Approved: May 8, 2024

Call to Order

4:00 p.m.

Mayor Alex Johnson II called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

Roll Call

Councilors present: Mayor Alex Johnson II and Councilors Steph Newton (virtual), Matilda Novak, Jackie Montague, Ray Kopczynski, Ramycia McGhee (virtual), and Marilyn Smith

Councilors absent: None

Airport Historic Hangar Museum update

4:00 p.m.

Operations Manager Kristen Presten shared slides* about the status of the Albany historic hangar and plans for its future. Keith Lohse, Executive Director of the Albany Regional Museum, spoke about his organization's vision for the historic hangar and their goal of entering into a contract to help the Aviation Museum manage finances.

Mark Baxter gave an overview of Albany's aviation history and Debbie Origer spoke about the makeup and next steps of the Aviation Museum Steering Committee, which will be developing the museum's vision, mission, and goals.

Councilors and the Mayor expressed support and excitement about the project.

Johnson II recessed the meeting from 4:25 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Business from the Public

4:30 p.m.

Wanda Scheler said there was a need for a crosswalk at the intersection of Expo Parkway NE and Knox Butte Road E.

Kate Porsche, former Albany Economic Development Manager, and Matt Bennett were informed that they would have three minutes to speak. Porsche and Bennett said they thought they were allotted ten minutes. Porsche and Bennett spoke about Sybaris Bistro and the contributions of Sybaris and the Bennett family to Albany. They relayed a request for financial support from the City to help renovate the old train station. They referenced a packet of letters of support* submitted to councilors via email and provided printed copies of building plans* for the renovation.

Bob Moore asked the council to consider the Bennetts' request for financial support.

Janet Steele, President and CEO of the Albany Area Chamber of Commerce, spoke positively about Sybaris Bistro and its contributions to Albany.

Utility rate adjustments for FY 2024-2025

4:40 p.m.

Public Works Director/Interim Deputy City Manager Chris Bailey presented slides* about the proposed 2024-2025 utility rate adjustment.

Councilor Matilda Novak expressed concerns about the increasing cost of labor and new regulations.

Bailey gave the following responses to questions from councilors:

- Taking on debt is not the city's first choice. However, there are some projects that the city cannot fund up front. Bailey also said there is not a way to reduce the debt the city currently has, other than paying it off. *(Novak)*
- There may be technology that would allow for the trenchless installation of stormwater pipes, like the technology for sewer pipes, though the City has not investigated that possibility. *(Montague)*
- The City of Albany does not currently charge the maximum allowable System Development charges. Bailey said she can bring information back to the council about the difference between what the City currently charges and the maximum allowable charge. *(Newton)*
- Bailey said she can bring back a report about the utilization of the utility fee low-income assistance program. *(Johnson II)*
- The utility fee low-income assistance program currently has adequate funding to cover those who are enrolled. Bailey said that, if the funding is ever inadequate to cover the program's subscribers, staff will inform the council. *(Newton)*
- The City recently changed the qualification requirements so that applicants only need to meet an income threshold. *(McGhee)*

Economic Development overview

5:34 p.m.

Economic Development Manager Sophie Adams, and Economic Development Program Coordinator Jennifer Wehr shared slides* detailing some of the current work of the Economic Development Department. Councilor Steph Newton expressed interest in an Albany business registry, saying she would like to discuss the item at a future council meeting.

Transportation Advisory Commission recommendation: potential rectangular rapid flashing beacon locations

5:57 p.m.

Transportation Systems Analyst Ron Irish gave an overview of rectangular rapid flashing beacons (RRFBs) and the council-requested recommendations from the Transportation Advisory Commission (TrAC) about where to put RRFBs. Irish said the council has not directed any funding towards crossing improvements, and the only crossing improvements that have been built in recent years have been funded by grants or through other similar opportunities.

Responding to a question from Councilor Ray Kopczynski, Irish said that the location on Knox Butte Road E that Scheler mentioned is identified as a place for a traffic signal, not a RRFB crossing.

Councilor Marilyn Smith said she would like the pedestrian crossing at Waverly and Del Rio to be prioritized since Deerfield Park is being redeveloped.

Irish responded to questions from Councilor Jackie Montague, saying the City's new Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) plan did not examine where new pedestrian crossings should be. He said it is possible for RRFBs to be relocated if they are no longer needed at their first location.

Business from the council

6:13 p.m.

Montague said it looks as though the City had promised to give Bennett ten minutes to talk about his project but changed that arrangement without informing him. Montague requested that, if Bennett wished, he be granted ten minutes at a future meeting. Montague said there needs to be a long-term city program to keep Albany's historic downtown buildings in good order.

Montague expressed concerns about language in Ordinance No. 6039, passed at the March 27, 2024, meeting. That ordinance listed as a permit requirement that "the proposed activity or use does not include elements that are unlawful in federal court". Montague sent the City Clerks a constituent's email* about this concern for the record. City Manager Peter Troedsson said he would return with information on how the council could remove that language.

Novak said the City needs to find a way to help Bennett's project and support Sybaris. Novak said she expected Bennett to be allotted ten minutes.

Newton requested a detailed listing of the estimated costs and revenues associated with the new red light camera program. Responding to a question from Newton, Deputy City Clerk Gabe Shepherd gave an overview of how council-related documents enter the record.

Johnson II said he had offered Bennett ten minutes at a previous council meeting, but Bennett chose to use only three. Johnson II said he had not offered Bennett ten minutes at this meeting.

City Manager report

6:27 p.m.

Troedsson apologized for the confusion about the length of time allotted to Bennett. Troedsson said that the City Attorney will speak at Wednesday's regular meeting about the liability of gifting public funds and how a grant program could be created.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:31 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Reviewed by,

Gabe Shepherd
Deputy City Clerk

Peter Troedsson
City Manager

**Documents discussed at the meeting that are not in the agenda packet are archived in the record. Documents from staff are posted to the website after the meeting. Documents submitted by the public are available by emailing cityclerk@albanyoregon.gov.*