

LEAVENWORTH CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION MINUTES

February 13, 2018

Mayor Cheryl Kelley Farivar called the February 13, 2018 Study Session to order at 9:00 AM.

Council Present: Mayor Cheryl Kelley Farivar, Carolyn Wilson, Elmer Larsen, Mia Bretz, Margaret Neighbors, Sharon Waters, Clint Strand, and Jason Lundgren.

Staff Present: Joel Walinski, Herb Amick, Nathan Pate and Chantell Steiner.

1. Chamber Report

Chamber Director Nancy Smith updated the Council on a donation program for Backpacks for Kids that the Chamber has been doing. She stated that Icefest went well again this year and talked about some of the new entertainment that was added to the event. There was a brief discussion about fireworks. Director Smith updated the Council on some of the topics that were covered at the annual Chamber Banquet and the plans for the events related to “A Taste of Leavenworth”. She noted the campaign efforts that will be going on for Best of the Northwest and Washington’s Playground.

2. Cascadia Foundation

Mr. Mike Cushman of the Cascadia Conservation District reviewed for the Council what a conservation district does and specifically identified some of the projects going on locally within the Leavenworth area. Activities include urban agriculture (gardening, composting, community gardens, etc.), Firewise networking, chipping programs, and landscape restoration. He identified various partners that include the United States Forest Service, Department of Natural Resources, Chumstick Wildfire Stewardship Coalition, Fire District #3, Lake Wenatchee Fire and Rescue and the Greater Lake Wenatchee Fire Adapted Communities. Mr. Cushman talked about a specific project that is working directly with the City of Leavenworth staff on education related to safe drinking water and water conservation in the Icicle Watershed Area. A second phase of the project will look at restoration action and implementation of various programs for area trails and campsites. He reviewed some survey results related to water sources for drinking water noting that about two-thirds of the respondents were aware of the local water sources.

3. PUD Presentation on Power Demands

Mr. Andy Wendell and Mr. Chad Rissman with the Chelan County Public Utilities District (PUD) introduced themselves and stated that they will be discussing power demands within the area and how those demands are met as growth occurs. Mr. Rissman talked about customer growth drivers noting that our locally low rates are very attractive for new businesses that have large power needs. Mr. Wendell reviewed the increase in HDL (High Density Load) requests, such as bitcoin mining, that is expanding the demands exponentially for power. He reviewed how a location or building is leased to setup the computer equipment that draws these large amounts of power to be used as crypto currency mining. Since these new business areas, they are under-regulated at this time. Currently there are concerns of safety and reliability issues if the electrical supply equipment is undersized for the power demand, which in turn could create fire concerns.

Mr. Wendell reviewed the rates across the country noting the lowest rates being here in Chelan and Douglas counties. Mr. Rissman discussed how the PUD is monitoring power demands to isolate when and where higher power demands are occurring; unfortunately, it is typically a month-long process to gather this information without new metering technology. The main concern is not focused on what the power demands are for but rather to ensure that the electrical infrastructure bringing the power to locations is sufficient to handle the loads being put upon them. As the power use data is identified it will lead into identifying factors that need to be considered such as infrastructure improvements, rate setting based on type of use and power demands, and improving technology.

Mr. Wendell provided examples of the amount of energy being consumed by a single bitcoin power unit that is equivalent to that of a clothes dryer versus large server type rooms that can pull as much power as 470 residential homes annually. He shared some physical equipment that had been used at a home that had been burnt from the amount of power that had gone through the electrical cables. This power overload on the infrastructure has the potential to increase fire hazards to not only start the home/building on fire but to also start wildland fires in our area. Another concern is the amount of unregulated small businesses that may be doing these activities and locating in areas without the proper infrastructure in place to support the power demands. Cities and counties can start assisting through business licensing, to consider within the application process a review for electrical activity and demand needs similar to water availability requirements. There was a brief discussion on liability and negligence versus fault in the case of an incident. Mr. Rissman then reviewed the status of the new meter program that will take a few years to move forward and the short and long-term strategies that the PUD is looking at for managing the increasing growth and demands on power. The Council discussed the need to work together in the future with new developments to ensure a process of review for power demands, particularly when the new development will require large power demands.

4. Commercial Cardboard Recycling

Public Works Director Herb Amick provided the Council with a PowerPoint Presentation regarding commercial cardboard procedures, revenues and expenditures. He showed some photos of how cardboard overflows in alley locations and businesses in the downtown creating unsightly and potential health issues. He then reviewed the concern with the revenues versus expenditures noting that the City brings in about \$6,500 a year in revenue while it costs the City nearly \$71,400 a year to remove it; a total loss of approximately \$65,000 a year. Staff has analyzed how best to efficiently charge for cardboard to stabilize this inequity. The recommendation is a monthly flat fee of \$15.00 for all businesses within the Front Street Alley Core (approximately 117 businesses) that would include central locations to collect the cardboard with unlimited access. For businesses outside the Front Street Alley Core a increased fee schedule of \$20.00 per month, per container, for a weekly pickup would be developed for those standalone businesses that would like to opt to have their own cardboard dumpsters and have the available space on their property to do so. Additional pickups would be added at \$10 per scheduled pickup or \$50 for unscheduled pickups. City Administrator Walinski discussed the need to have a period of education prior to amending and adopting the new rate structures to ensure that businesses are aware of the changes prior to implementation.

5. Comprehensive Plan Review Continued

Development Services Manager Nathan Pate reviewed the progress over the last several meetings that included reviewing different portions of the Comprehensive Plan that is currently scheduled for adoption at the next Council meeting on February 27, 2018. He noted that some minor grammatical changes have been included over the past several weeks; however, no substantive changes have occurred. He asked if there are any specific questions or concerns with the final draft. Councilmember Bretz spoke to the Transportation Element and how the Plan does not address single situations/issues, such as impacts for a couple days from major festivals/events; how does the City address this? Manager Pate noted that impacts are being reviewed through different mechanisms, for instance, the development department reviews land uses, parking and traffic models when a new project occurs or a special use permit is requested. Councilmember Bretz questioned elements of the Park Plan regarding an Ice Rink and residential parks as well as parking concerns regarding the hospital's parking availability; she will follow-up with Manager Pate with more specific questions to ensure these items are identified within the plan.

6. Housing Committee Formation

Mayor Farivar reminded the Council that this new committee recommendation was suggested by Councilmember Bretz to further discuss the Housing Task Force's recommendations and to look at ways to address housing affordability concerns. Councilmember Neighbors added that affordable housing is a part of sustainability; therefore, she would like to see this Committee explore this further. Administrator Walinski stated that the Planning Commission will be looking at a majority of the recommendations from the task force for code related changes but this Committee could explore effects on regional approaches, perhaps partnering with the housing authorities that have specific goals and projects; he is not certain our community is large enough financially to implement programs or have a sustainable "Housing Authority".. Mayor Farivar added that the Committee, once formed, will need to determine its mission and goals. Councilmember Larsen stated that other areas to explore could include rental housing availability and other local options for new affordable housing in the Peshastin and Dryden area. Councilmember Bretz concurred that a standing committee would be most beneficial, she stated that there are opportunities for financial and regional partnerships and that the Committee could also review the changes from the Planning Commission to see if the changes have implemented the desired outcomes. She would like to see the Committee bringing in guests throughout the process to continue discussions with developers to find successes and challenges of the code related changes as they progress.

7. Enforcement Policy Review

Manager Pate stated that this item has been included to inform the Council of the current policy and practices for enforcement of the City's codes. He stated that the goal is to gain compliance rather than penalize individuals and businesses. He explained how enforcement is done by a complaint process, meaning that the City does not typically seek out violations but rather responds to complaints as they are provided to the City. He discussed the process for how enforcement moves forward and the challenges that can occur when someone does not agree with the City's perspective, such as messy yards or high weeds. He stated that past Councils have chosen to focus on abatement for life and safety specific issues. There is a fine line when it gets to the court level when dealing with a messy yard versus a dangerous yard and the City has to document carefully when going into this realm.

8. 2018 Project Tracker

Administrator Walinski explained that this is a document that the staff puts together for Council to keep them updated on projects and goals and are often times included within the city budget. He stated that this is updated on a quarterly basis and provided to Council with status reports.

9. Quarterly City Newsletter Recommendations – Distribution in March

Mayor Farivar reviewed the topics to be included in the spring newsletter and asked if there are any other topics that should be included. Administrator Walinski stated that a past discussion was to consider a topic on rates and fees; Mayor Farivar suggested that could be the main topic. Councilmember Waters asked that a reminder be included for having dogs on leashes and the apple maggot concerns. Councilmember Lundgren would like to have something in a future newsletter on revenues versus expenditures in any easy to understand way.

10. Council Open Discussion and Committee Reports

a. Confirm Retreat Meeting Date of March 23, 2018 and Location Preferences

Mayor Farivar confirmed the date will be March 23rd and the Council concluded that the Bavarian Lodge is the preferred location if possible.

b. Committee & Meeting Reports

Mayor Farivar explained that this is the new process of reporting on committee reports and asked Councilmembers to share vital information that was discussed at the various committees.

Councilmember Larsen reported that the Residential Advisory Committee (RAC) discussed grant opportunities for safe routes to schools funding programs for sidewalks. He noted that Orchard Street was discussed as a good location to focus on due to the flat topography and closeness to the school.

Councilmember Wilson attended the Chamber Banquet and noted some concerns with the ability for people to hear at the venue.

Councilmember Waters stated that she was invited to speak at a recent Cub Scout troop meeting; she asked how a group might schedule a tour at City Hall for their leadership program. Administrator Walinski confirmed that he and the Mayor have provided tours through City Hall when the various scout and other groups have requested it as well as they have attended council meetings from time to time.

Mayor Farivar updated the Council on recent Chelan Douglas Transportation Council (CDTC) meetings and communications with local legislators regarding transportation funding. She discussed the process for applying for Surface Transportation Program (STP) funding and how applications are scored and prioritized each year for the federal funds. She stated that the CDTC will be using this year's funding (2019 construction work) on a multitude of pavement preservation projects that the Council intends to award to a single recipient. This process, which occurs about every four years, takes all local area projects into consideration to consolidate into one contract which will economize and reduce project costs.

Councilmember Neighbors attended the Solid Waste Advisory Council meeting and discussed the moderate risk waste facility funding being explored to open the building that has been acquired. Waste Management is scheduled to come and talk with them about recycling options in the future. Recent new concerns will also be explored due to the impacts of China no longer accepting recyclables from the United States.

Councilmember Strand stated that he also attended the RAC meeting and added that he has been asked to be the Master of Ceremonies for an upcoming fundraising auction for the Wenatchee Valley Humane Society Animal Shelter.

c. Open Discussion

Councilmember Bretz shared handouts from the Mountain Pact that she wants everyone to review and provide feedback to her.

Councilmember Strand questioned the timing of the public hearing for the annexation request for the Adventure Park as he has comments related to the project but will not be able to attend the planned hearing date. There was a brief discussion on the process of an annexation that requires a hearing prior to the Council approving the annexation. Manager Pate stated that he will check the schedule and see if the hearing can occur sooner.

Study Session adjourned at 12:25 PM.

APPROVED



Cheryl K. Farivar
Mayor

ATTEST



Chantell Steiner
Finance Director/City Clerk