

LEAVENWORTH CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION MINUTES

June 11, 2019

Mayor Cheryl Kelley Farivar called the June 11, 2019 Study Session to order at 8:30 AM.

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

Staff Present: Joel Walinski, Chantell Steiner, Herb Amick, and Lilith Vespier.

1. Chamber Report

Chamber Director Nancy Smith updated the Council on the ongoing efforts to invite visitors during mid-week and off-season times. She gave a short recap of Maifest and the current planning for the upcoming Leavenworth Drive visitors, International Accordion Celebration, and Kinderfest.

2. Hazard Mitigation Plan – County / City Consultant

Development Services Manager Lilith Vespier provided the Council with an overview of the three phases of the draft Chelan County Hazard Mitigation Plan. She stated that the County has not yet provided the final draft plan and identified the upcoming public comment dates of June 17 through June 28; she has requested additional time from the County for review but is not certain that will occur. She proceeded to review the three phase documents that city staff has reviewed and provided comments to the County on; she noted that these are just a portion of the overall plan document which have been updated from the previously adopted plan. She identified some specific hazards that are relevant to Leavenworth that would include fire, earthquake, and floods. She discussed how financial impacts can affect Leavenworth noting that economic impacts are more likely than physical impacts, mainly due to a potential downturn in visitors in relation to fires and smoke. She reviewed the sections that includes information on contacts and responsibilities, insurance, effectiveness of building code impacts, and capacity impacts for climate change. She explained how to read the document noting that it is important to read the footnotes for the various charts to assist in understanding the rankings included. She reviewed action items, mitigation action priorities, and analysis of mitigation activities. She stated that the plan will be finalized and adopted by the County and each of the cities will have opportunity to also adopt the plan for each of their communities. Council asked questions of the fire department staff regarding their involvement; Fire District #3 has been very involved with the update of the draft plan. Leavenworth Building Inspector Mark Barnes explained some of the elements involved in the insurance and fire ratings and how those are impacted based on the inspections and building codes that he reviews and enforces. Council discussed the need to consider wildland urban interface codes for new construction and that there could be some resistance by developers due to the increased costs to build.

3. Discussion on WUI (Wildland Urban Interface) Codes

Mayor Farivar introduced Fire District 3 Deputy Chief Dave Nalle and Commissioner Ross Frank. Manager Vespier updated the Council on the process that has been underway by city staff and other officials to review WUI code options, including the review of the cities of Wenatchee

and Chelan who have adopted some WUI codes. She provided a joint memo from the Development Services Department and Fire District 3 on fire protections in relation to WUI codes. Inspector Barnes discussed how zones need to be defined within the community to specify the level of fire danger such as primary, secondary, etc. These levels will define the types of requirements of the WUI code that would be necessary for building; some unintended consequences were discussed, such as increased building and insurance costs to residents and businesses. City Administrator Joel Walinski encouraged the Council to review the various codes included in the handouts for those that are critical to our community; he noted not all the codes may be relevant for adoption. Commissioner Frank stated that new construction is only a small portion of the WUI Code implementation; the larger existing area and structures will be the challenge for changes over time. He cautioned the Council on strict changes and to consider taking small steps to allow for community involvement and buy-in.

4. Firewise Area Formation

Director Hoffman of the Chumstick Wildfire Coalition spoke to the Council on the need to consider collaboration with the Coalition and Fire Department to look at becoming a designated Firewise Area. She spoke to the need for assistance on meeting coordination, education outreach to the public and other agencies, and wildland fire planning opportunities that may be specific to different zones or districts within the Upper Valley. Council discussed how smaller districts could be formed and to identify lead members to assist in planning efforts within each district. Commissioner Frank reinforced the need to create a grass roots effort as there are many elements involved in creating a Firewise Area. Director Hoffman stated that she would provide contact information to the City for the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) that will be needed to start the formation. It was noted that it will be critical to involve the business community for pre and post planning efforts. Commissioner Frank added that some resources are already available for citizens from the Coalition website that includes a home assessment program, chipping program, fire planning, and outreach materials.

5. Council Communication – Follow-up with Colin Brine, Be Clearly

Mayor Farivar welcomed back Colin Brine of Be Clearly who spoke to the Council in May regarding putting together a thoughtful plan for creating meaningful community dialogues. Mr. Brine stated that the Firewise topic is a perfect example of good topic for a dialogue to help bring the Community together. He identified the need to discover a design and how strategic engagement works through the process of identifying strengths, weaknesses and opportunities. The first steps include creating questions such as who are we as a community, what do we need to thrive, is our past success a challenge for our future, what kind of future do we want, is the realization of the dream the end or the beginning of a new one? Mayor Farivar spoke to the process that Our Valley Our Future morphed through a grass roots effort that brought members from all of the community together. Mr. Brine added that several small initiatives were already bubbling in the different communities that helped to bring the Our Valley Our Future vision to a reality. Council discussed the Friends of Leavenworth noting that they are one example of a grass roots group of people that have come together to ask the hard questions and find answers through discussion and problem solving. The City is evolving and it is important that the community be proactive in its decision-making processes rather than having reactive responses to changes. It was identified that targeting individual problems only assists in festering the challenges rather than solving them; addressing versus solving challenges will be an ongoing effort of the community over time. For instance, parking has been a challenge to the community

for decades, small changes have assisted in addressing the challenge but will likely never solve the challenge.

Council discussed the idea and options for having a community meeting. There is a relevant need to allow for more open discussion, for people to be heard, and to explore options for resolutions and not just identifying the challenges. Mr. Brine identified steps for perception discovery of a strategic moment. The first step starts with Leader Engagement that identifies characteristics for selection and interviews of the key members who may ask and identify the questions. The next step of discovery includes curating, which will identify a mandate, theme or narrative that puts together the questions and analysis. The next step includes engagement, whether it be digitally or physically (analog or paper format), to acquire data for curating and providing a survey report. Mr. Brine stated that once the Discovery Phase is completed the Council would then go into a Design Phase that identifies the top priorities to assist in what topics would be the discussion points. Councilmembers stated that the first step to consider is geographic area; how far should the reach go, perhaps best to not set an area and to allow anyone who feels they are part of the community to participate. The Council continued to discuss the process for forming the leadership team by setting characteristics wanted of members, rather than identifying specific people to fill a characteristic. Mr. Brine briefly spoke to how the next steps of the Design Phase begin to take shape.

6. City Review: Mission and Vision

Due to time constraints, Mayor Farivar suggested tabling this discussion as this will likely be affected by the future community meeting discussions; Councilmembers concurred holding off on this topic until a later date.

7. GIS (Geographic Information System) Demonstration

Manager Vespier stated that she would send the Council a link to the GIS system so they may review the program and provide any suggestions.

8. Options on Filling Council Open Seat

Administrator Walinski and Mayor Farivar identified the past practice and options for filling the recent vacancy on the City Council by Councilmember Elmer Larsen. Administrator Walinski stated that the Council has 90 days to fill the vacancy which will be near the end of August. If the Council does not fill the seat, by statute, Chelan County would then have an opportunity to fill it; however, due to the close timing of the election cycle it may not be feasible and is not desired by the County Commissioners. Mayor Farivar reviewed some challenges with having a temporary seat filled, which includes additional training that adds more workload to the staff/administration. She stated her concern at choosing a current person running unopposed for Council that might show preference or deter the ability for a write-in candidate to participate. Council members discussed concerns of leaving the vacancy open that may include challenges with voting, vacations, and committee assignment participation. Council discussed the pros and cons of appointment of a prior council member and if choosing not to fill the vacancy who could fill in on the various committee assignments that Councilmember Larsen participated in. Councilmembers reached consensus on leaving the position vacant at this time.

9. Council Open Discussion

Councilmember Bretz stated that she appreciates the process moving forward with Mr. Brine and in addition, she is very interested in doing a community type party/potluck in mid-August possibly at Osborn Elementary. Council discussed the potential date of August 20th and the need to contact the School District for use of the property. Some ideas discussed for the event included having a potluck style BBQ, and possibly allowing booths, music and other activities.

Administrator Walinski provided the Council with a spreadsheet of costs incurred to date by the City in relation to the appeals against the Adventure Park and Leavenworth Haus Apartments. He explained the difference of the types of appeals that includes the appeals against the City for its determination of non-significance and grading permit issuance; these related costs would be borne by the City. The costs for an appeal against an applicant, such as their conditional use permit or variance, would be reimbursable to the City; those may come from either the applicant or the appellant. Council discussed how to provide the information to the public in a clear and understandable manner that should include reaching out to the media outlets with the facts and figures. Administrator Walinski will work on contacting the Leavenworth Echo and putting together a detailed press release for the public's knowledge regarding the costs incurred to date.

Study Session adjourned at 11:40 AM.

APPROVED



Cheryl K. Farivar
Mayor

ATTEST



Chantell Steiner
Finance Director/City Clerk