

# LEAVENWORTH CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION MINUTES

## January 14, 2020

Mayor Carl Florea called the January 14, 2020 Study Session to order at 8:30 AM.

Council Present: Mayor Carl Florea, Carolyn Wilson, Mia Bretz, Sharon Waters, Clint Strand, Jason Lundgren, and Anne Hessburg.

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

**Oath of Office** – Chantell Steiner Finance Director/City Clerk performed the official oath of office for the newly elected officials Mia Bretz, Jason Lundgren and Anne Hessburg.

### 1. Chamber Report

Chamber Director Nancy Smith and Chamber President Grant Stoebner updated the Council on the success of the Christmas Lighting Ceremonies. Director Smith noted that the Chamber is working on getting bus parking and Chelan County Lodging tax revenues to assist in offsetting the costs associated with traffic management. She then gave a brief update on what's happening at the Chamber and the upcoming festivities for the annual Ice Fest. She spoke about planning efforts for continuing to advertise Leavenworth as a mid-week destination.

Councilmember Hessburg questioned the level of visitor feelings and expectations for the set time of having a Christmas Lighting Ceremony and whether the Chamber receives feedback particular to this. Director Smith stated that she does not have statistics; although, the Chamber is careful not to advertise the lighting ceremonies and they are attempting to provide information to visitors on what should be expected regarding traffic and people. Councilmember Lundgren stated that the community is at a breaking point with the amount of traffic congestion and people and that it only appears to be something that will continue to grow while Leavenworth's capacity cannot; Director Smith responded that she believes this year may actually have been less people for the ceremonies and noted that the busiest time occurs between the last weekend of the lighting through the new year holiday. Lodging and retail revenues will occur in February to assess this further. The Council discussed challenges with public safety and the ability to address an emergency if it occurs as well as how the economy is affected from changes in retail sales and hotel/motel taxes. Director Smith discussed some of the challenges with misinformation that inevitably occurs every year such as timing of the ceremony, when lights are on and consideration for changes to the program. There was a brief discussion on the number of weeks in December and how five weekends can seem more burdensome on the residents.

### 2. Mayor and Mayor Pro Tempore Committee Assignments and Council Policy, Procedures, and Rules of Conduct

Mayor Florea spoke to the Council on changes and objectives that he would like to explore, including affordable housing options. He stated that he looks forward to working with everyone collectively and collaboratively to reach common goals and that he wants everyone to feel comfortable to voice their suggestions or concerns. He addressed some concerns that he has heard regarding the announcement of terminating the contract with City Administrator Joel Walinski in February; he stated that he wants to be open and respectful and that he had discussed the announcement with Administrator Walinski prior to his Oath of Office speech.

Mayor Florea proceeded to review some changes that he would like to consider in regard to how he will conduct the council meetings. He stated that he would like the Council to consider no time limit for public comments and to allow for appropriate answers from the Council or Staff when the answer is well known; through this process he wants to break down barriers and provide proactive responses when feasible. Councilmember Lundgren suggested that the Council also include a set time for public comment during study sessions to open communication and encourage more public participation. Councilmember Hessburg spoke to how the Planning Commission has transitioned to be more open to the public participation and how that has increased attendance and engagement; she is very encouraged by this new concept of being more open and engaging. Mayor Florea announced that he intends to start Monday night meetings starting in April, with the assistance of Mr. Mike Nash as a facilitator, to invite members of the community and local businesses to openly and actively participate in discussion on challenges and opportunities for change. He stated that he intends to publicize the meetings for formality purposes but does not intend for it to be a council action type of business meeting. Mayor Florea reviewed changes to the Council Policy, Procedures and Rules of Conduct, of which he would like to consider consolidation of language within Section 2, and specifically to remove the requirement of an address within "subjects not on the current agenda"; he stated that he will work on incorporating suggested changes for the Council to consider at the next meeting.

Council briefly discussed members attendance for the Committee meetings this afternoon to fill vacancies and noted that the next meeting will have recommendations from the Mayor and Mayor Pro Tempore. The Council discussed procedures for creation of new Ad Hoc Committees and noted that they would like to see the Chumstick Wildfire Coalition included.

Mayor Florea announced that the City received resignation from Councilmember Craig Hess for Council Position #2 who has been offered a job in Germany. He stated that the process for replacement of the position is for the Council to determine. City Administrator Joel Walinski briefed the Council on past practices for replacement that can be formal or informal. Councilmembers stated that they want to proceed with the formal process in the past that includes calling for the vacancy, conducting interviews of applicants and then making appointment. Staff will work on announcing the vacancy and preparing the interview documents.

Mayor Florea discussed the process for replacement of the City Administrator position and suggested moving forward with the past practice that included hiring the consulting firm Prothman. Councilmembers concurred and voiced expectation to seek an experienced, educated and professional individual due to the demands and expertise needed for the position. They discussed the process that occurs with a company, such as Prothman, how far the process proceeded last year, and the expectation that some costs may be saved by picking up the contract again with Prothman. Mayor Florea spoke to his vision for changes that he talked about during the election; however, at this time there is not any one specific idea, with exception to looking at ways to fund affordable housing opportunities. He stated that in looking for a new Administrator, there is not a defined set of skills or ideals that he is seeking at this time; going through the interview process will be crucial to finding the right person to take the position and move changes forward.

Administrator Walinski updated the Council on the process for appointment of the Mayor Pro Tempore that will occur this evening. Councilmembers discussed the role of the position to create continuity and connection among council members as well as filling in when the Mayor is

unavailable at meetings and public events. Councilmember Wilson spoke to the duties of engaging with councilmembers outside of meetings with less than a quorum and including community members to participate in those discussions. Council discussed their individual availabilities to performing the duties of Mayor Pro Tempore for consideration of appointment this evening.

Councilmembers discussed the timing of study sessions in the mornings and consideration of conducting them in the evenings; some concerns were voiced at the additional commitment away from family and challenges put upon Council and staff for more evening meetings. Mayor Florea reminded the Council of the new Monday evening meetings that he will be starting in April that will create more time for engagement with citizens.

### **3. Overview of the Process and Priority Review of the Docket for the Joint Meeting with the Planning Commission**

Development Services Manager Lilith Vespier proceeded to review the draft Docket identifying the deadlines for the Shoreline Master Program Update and Housing Action Plan. She spoke about the grant dollars that the City has received for both projects, the advertising process for public announcements and general procedures for Council review regarding updates to the Shoreline Master Program and development of the Housing Action Plan. She proceeded to identify the docket items contained within the Comprehensive Plan Updates, which includes a multitude of topics. She noted that the Planning Commission has suggested merging topics of similarity, such as transportation related topics, as a single topic. Councilmember Bretz questioned where alleys would be addressed; Manager Vespier stated that it is being included in the rating chart as part of the Code Amendments and that this item was inadvertently excluded from the Docket but will be added in the next draft of the Docket. She stated that the Planning Commission prioritized the Docket with transportation being identified as the number one priority and housing as the number two priority. Manager Vespier continued review of the Projects/ Discussion and Code Amendment topics within the Docket. She identified the separation of the two voting charts provided that includes the separate voting for the ten Code Inconsistencies that have been included as a subset of priorities.

Manager Vespier reviewed the Docket workshop procedures that have been used in previous years. She noted the process of engagement between the Council and the Planning Commission that will occur to discuss, score and prioritize the Docket; the Council will have the final decision on setting the priorities. She identified criteria to consider when scoring the topics that includes consideration of inconsistencies, public interest and meeting Council Goals. She asked that Councilmembers provide individual priorities to her by the morning of January 28 to allow some time to consolidate all of the individual votes for discussion at the evening joint meeting. Councilmember Hessburg provided some insight to what the Planning Commission has discussed in regard to consolidation of transportation related topics, such as peak traffic, and the need to consider consolidation but not at the risk of stretching out key discussions. There was a brief discussion of the vacancies on the Planning Commission and that those will be advertised soon. Council discussed how to consider priority of topics based on how much time is needed to address them; some items may be incorporated in groups when appropriate.

### **4. Public Community Workshop on Housing with Planning Commission**

Manager Vespier stated that the Planning Commission is looking at March 18 or March 19 for a public workshop on housing. She reviewed the draft presentation that will include a slideshow of where we have been, where we are at and where we are heading. Council discussed the history of the City's platted areas that were nearly double in density of what the City is made up of today. Some areas, such as the orchard lands, were the opposite with less density anticipated than what is occurring today. Looking at the history of what was intended versus what has occurred will assist in generating discussions on where the community wants to go in the future.

## **5. Lodging Tax Grant Applications Review Process**

Administrator Walinski stated that staff will need direction on the process anticipated for review and recommendation of making the Lodging Tax Grant awards. Finance Director/City Clerk Chantell Steiner identified the need for the Council to determine the members that will review the applications and to set dates for review and interviews with the applicants if necessary. Councilmembers suggested starting the review with the Economic Development Committee today to identify the process, set the dates and consider the members involved in the scoring. Council will be provided an update at the evening meeting.

## **6. Review of Link Dedication Process**

Manager Vespier updated the Council on the process underway for accepting the dedication of right of ways and improvements along Fitz Strasse and the Ward Strasse turn-around in conjunction with the development of the new Link Transit Park & Ride. Council discussed future uses of city streets and how these dedications have to be completed before the City can consider changes to current uses of the streets.

## **7. Parking Advisory Committee Recommendation**

Administrator Walinski gave a brief review of the information previously provided to the public on planned parking objectives within the current parking available. He provided a map handout that depicts the various areas for timed, hourly and employee/residential parking and some of the objectives that have been discussed thus far by the Parking Advisory Committee.

Councilmember Strand voiced his concerns at employee parking moving into the residential streets nearest the commercial core. Councilmember Hessburg spoke to the work that the Advisory Committee has been doing over the past six months to consider code language, in addition to the parking regulations, to allow for residential blocks to create zoned parking area requirements. She noted that this concept is not a requirement but can be looked at individually by residents that reside on individually affected blocks.

Councilmember Bretz voiced concern that the public has not been involved with the Advisory Committee's work thus far and she would like to see the public have time to consider the recommendations and provide additional feedback. Councilmembers concurred on the need to start the public involvement process and to have various opportunities to hear the recommendations. Council discussed the background of CivicSmart's response to the City's Request for Proposal and the potential of looking at how to manage the City's overall parking implementation that may include multiple subcontractors for meters, kiosks, signage, enforcement, etc. There are many discussions that need to occur with the public such as code changes, locations of types of parking, and when timed parking will be enforced. Council discussed the option of committing to a contract with CivicSmart, who was the only respondent that could conclusively address all the various needs the

City has requested, versus having public meetings before approving a contract. There is a desire of the Advisory Committee to move quickly in some respects; however, this is a major project that will affect all residents, businesses and employees and having their input is critical. Several members prefer having at least one public meeting to bring the community up to speed on what the Advisory Committee has done; there are still many decisions to be discussed and receiving the public's input is critical in avoiding as many pitfalls as possible. Mayor Florea suggested having the Advisory Committee be charged with coordinating a public meeting as soon as possible; Councilmembers concurred.

### 8. Council Open Discussion

a) Confirm a Council Retreat Date and Location Preferences

Mayor Florea discussed having a retreat that is more along the lines of a strategic planning style meeting this year with discussions on a high level of priorities rather than specific budget priorities. He stated that he sees a need to consider having it later in the year if the Council wants to involve the new Administrator. Councilmembers concurred that it would be best to postpone this until after a new Administrator is on board.

b) Chelan County Emergency Management, Open Public Meetings, and Open Public Records Act Training Reminders

c) Open Discussion

Councilmember Lundgren stated that he wants to have a meeting with Emergency Management to discuss the emergency evacuation plans and to consider a meeting with Administrator Walinski regarding current priorities and projects prior to his departure.

Study Session adjourned at 12:05 PM.

**APPROVED**



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**Carl Florea**  
Mayor

**ATTEST**



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**Chantell Steiner**  
Finance Director/City Clerk