

LEAVENWORTH CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION MINUTES

September 11, 2018

Mayor Cheryl Kelley Farivar called the September 11, 2018 Study Session to order at 8:00 AM.

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

Staff Present: Joel Walinski, Herb Amick, Charity Duffy and Chantell Steiner.

Mayor Pro Tempore announced that Mayor Cheryl Kelley Farivar will not be in attendance, excused absence.

1. Chamber Report

Chamber President Paula Helsel updated the Council on the conference tour that Chamber Director Nancy Smith is currently attending with travel bloggers. She noted that she will be retiring from the Chamber as President at the end of this year and asked the Council to consider encouraging others to get involved with the Board.

2. Discussion with Fish & Wildlife

Council members introduced themselves to Fish & Wildlife representatives Bear and Cougar Specialist Rich Beausoleil and Sergeant Dan Klump. Mr. Beausoleil explained that he is here to see if there is an opportunity for the City to negotiate bear proof garbage cans with the new Waste Management Contract that the City is working on. Mr. Beausoleil described the intensity of bears that are collared and tracked from outside of the city limits noting that they are coming from nearly forty miles away for the food resources that are abundantly available in town. He identified the City of Snoqualmie already utilizing the bear proof containers in their community in conjunction with Waste Management. He explained how the new cans work without requiring the garbage driver to have to physically handle the cans. He strongly urges the Council to consider and request the bear proof cans versus the bear resistant cans as the bears have figured out how to open the bear resistant cans. He further described some of the issues in Leavenworth that entices the bears such as garbage cans, bird and humming bird feeders and other outdoor animal food sources. He stated that Fish & Wildlife may also be able to assist in the potential costs for purchase and storage to get it on site. He added that Leavenworth will be the first community on the east side of the Cascades to implement these newly designed cans which Fish & Wildlife will showcase in the future to encourage other communities to transition. He said this is a valuable opportunity for the Council to consider with minor additional cost implications that will result in long-term safety for our residents and visitors. Sergeant Klump and Mr. Beausoleil answered questions on the tracking of black bears in our area, the history of growth and movements of the bears and how best to approach the concerns of increasing bear populations.

3. Parking Study Review

Administrator Walinski stated that the final open house on the Downtown Strategic Parking Management Plan (hereafter referred to as The Plan) has been completed and that the final draft plan is available on the City's website. He stated that the next step is for the Council to officially

adopt The Plan and Guiding Principles that will assist the Council and Staff in moving forward with implementing key areas for policy development, future code changes and the formal establishment of a Parking Stakeholder's Group. Councilmembers discussed some key areas of The Plan that could be explored by the Stakeholder Group immediately, such as identifying employee parking areas, consideration of timed parking in the downtown, bike parking, and consideration for residential parking opportunities. Administrator Walinski stated that the Stakeholder Group will be critical to look at each of the elements within the Guiding Principles to discuss and consider what areas of The Plan could be implemented; he noted some of the options are very low to no cost initiatives that could immediately show positive relief on parking constraints.

The Council discussed how the Stakeholder Group is formed that would be similar to an Ad Hoc Committee with appointment by the Mayor and approval by the Council. Council made suggestions on the type of members that should be considered that should include city officials, two to three City Council members, and representatives from the Chamber, Cascade Medical Center, business owners (including those in the core and outside the core as well as owners that live within Leavenworth city limits), employees and resident; several members from the current Parking Study Group would be critical to look to for participation. Discussion ensued on the need to create a more permanent committee as parking has been and will likely be an ongoing priority for the City. Long-term projects such as expanding current parking areas and adding new parking over time will morph based on the development of public and private improvements. Councilmembers shared some thoughts on the need to create the Stakeholder Group and then to allow them to analyze The Plan and Guiding Principles before making recommendations for implementation. Administrator Walinski added that the Stakeholder Group would be making recommendations for projects that will need future funding sources and review and consideration by the City Council.

4. Senator Brad Hawkins

Mayor Pro Tempore Carolyn Wilson introduced Senator Brad Hawkins to the City Council and thanked him for coming today to meet with city officials and residents. Councilmember Larsen thanked Senator Hawkins for assisting Leavenworth with the Apple Maggot Quarantine Burning Permit process last year and the many other initiatives that Senator Hawkins assisted with.

Senator Hawkins updated the Council on the focus for the State Legislature this year noting that much of their work revolves around budget approvals. He explained how the outcome of elections this fall could have impacts on the Legislative Agenda that are dependent on the potential for a political pendulum swing. He further explained his history of first being a member of the House of Representatives and now as Senator; since he has worked on both sides of the aisle he feels he has a positive edge to work with both on initiatives. He briefly explained the State's Operating Budget, which includes funding for schools and other community related services, the Transportation Budget which is for transportation and road related projects, and the Capital Budget which funds larger non-road related projects.

Senator Hawkins stated that he would like to support initiatives from local communities that directly affects each of the different budgets and asked the Council if there are any specific initiatives that they would like to suggest. He noted that he is aware of the current Corridor Study and the Leavenworth Parking Study. Mayor Pro Tempore Wilson stated that it is critical to continue the Public Works Trust Funding for small communities as that will be a necessary

financing tool for the future. Councilmember Larsen, in reference to the Corridor Study, would like to see ongoing review and implementation for improvements along the Highway, such as shoulder improvements and widening of the highway where possible. In addition, he asked Senator Hawkins to consider improvements similar to those that the State has assisted with on the Chumstick Highway as a separate corridor route, and to consider other arterials such as East Leavenworth Road and Icicle Road. He added that the Corridor Study may produce results that would encourage further improvements for safety in and around the Leavenworth area. Senator Hawkins commented on the Parking Study which includes the potential for a parking garage and timed parking options to help lower the risks of traffic movement. Councilmember Bretz stated that the Highway is critical to our economy and that effective and efficient movement of people into and through our town is extremely important particularly on Fridays and Sundays. She added that consistent changes and innovative solutions, such as more bulk transit options, may be beneficial to explore. Councilmember Larsen noted that the Corridor Study is specific to the Leavenworth area between the Big Y Intersection and Cole's Corner; however, he believes the State should consider improvements along the entire corridor from the west side to the east side. He identified the large amount of traffic that merely travels through Leavenworth each weekend that can cause traffic issues for many miles outside of town.

Councilmember Strand asked Senator Hawkins that given the budget concerns what does he see is a reasonable hope for winning legislative action this year. Senator Hawkins responded that having a responsible budget is likely the most critical action to be taken; however, he has some concern about potential tax pressures. For instance, if the political swing goes to one side or the other it may have negative outcomes; he stated that we currently have a strong economy with tax sales being up and extra revenue flowing in that is being held aside. His concern is that more initiatives will require additional spending and raising taxes to do so. He identified the correction of the McCleary decision which now frees up time to be directed towards more local priorities. Councilmember Neighbors identified the need for replacement of water meters and future utility infrastructure improvements; she concurred with Mayor Pro Tempore Wilson in the need to ensure that Public Works Trust Funds need to remain secure and funded for smaller communities. Senator Hawkins concurred noting that the current biennial funding in the program is already allocated for previous project requests but encouraged the City to apply for future funding to assist in the major capital projects in Leavenworth. In closing, Councilmember Lundgren questioned if there will be concerns with this budget process in regard to water availability. Senator Hawkins responded that water availability has been an ongoing discussion with current fixes being reviewed; however, this will continue to be an ongoing topic for Washington State.

5. Budget Priorities Review

Administrator Walinski updated the Council on the current budget process and discussion with the Finance Committee at the last meeting to start prioritizing the major projects for consideration. He identified the Osborn Elementary School property purchase which will not be finalized until 2019 or 2020; therefore, should be put on hold at this time. Councilmembers began discussing the pros and cons of the water meter project and whether this is a major priority as the meters are several years past their life expectancy of twenty years. The City is currently experiencing losses of water production versus sales of nearly 25%; however, overall use of water by the City is much lower than the Fish Hatchery and irrigation districts. Council Member Larsen suggested there is a potential for cost savings if a coordinated purchase can be made with the PUD when they do their electrical meter replacements.

Councilmembers questioned if there is a best approach for prioritizing the projects as several of them are underway and funding is available for some. Administrator Walinski discussed options for considering certain projects that are already underway and that it is okay to let the fund balances grow while awaiting decisions as opportunities come up throughout the biennium. Council noted some items should be included already as committed, such as the Link Park & Ride, the property purchases and the Corridor Study. Councilmembers each reviewed and identified their individual top three priorities of which a majority included the Osborn Property Purchase, the Parking Study which would include the DOT Parking Lot purchase and the Water Meters.

Administrator Walinski stated that the next discussion on the agenda is to explore the use of the Lodging Tax funds and how best to approach use of those funds over the next biennium. He explained the various pieces of the Lodging Tax Fund that supports “tourism operations” which are administered by the City’s use of the funds. These expenditures include overtime staffing, Pacific Security and sheriff patrols, recycling, restroom operations and maintenance in the downtown area and future capital improvements within the downtown. Councilmembers discussed comments that they have heard from the Chamber and constituents over time noting that the more recent concerns have moved towards supporting and maintaining current amenities such as street and sidewalk maintenance, parking and restrooms rather than advertising to bring more visitors in. A question was asked regarding the City “Sanctioned Events”, Administrator Walinski reviewed the history on the city sanction of Maifest, Autumn Leaf and Christmas Lighting for noise variances. Council discussed funding of festivals in general and suggested looking at ways to determine how funding of festivals is utilized. Administrator Walinski discussed how the funding has morphed over the years through Council decisions without an actual policy in place and the need to consider creating a policy for use of the funds for event funding both new and existing. Council discussed the concept of creating a policy and the many considerations that need to be taken into account for the use of the funds, including city operational costs for tourism impacts, supporting festivals and events whether they generate revenue or not and funding capital improvements. Council discussed the Autumn Leaf Festival funding provided this year and the concerns with transparency and fairness in the decision making process for future allocations to any festival or event. Councilmembers noted their concern at making challenging decisions when presented with a multitude of requests for the use of the funding and that having a policy could be beneficial in making future allocations.

6. Public Records Act / Open Public Meetings Act Training Renewal Due by 10/9/2018

Finance Director Chantell Steiner reviewed the deadlines for compliance with the State laws regarding completion of trainings and noted that staff will be reaching out to individual members as the deadline approaches for their four year renewal.

7. Council Open Discussion

Administrator Walinski stated that the School District will have an active shooter training tomorrow evening at the High School Auditorium.

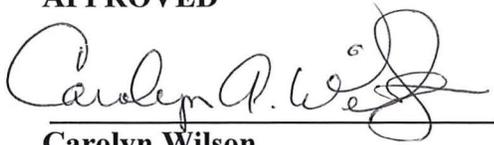
Councilmember Lundgren noted that a request from Duane Goehner is to have a standing time slot for The Friends of Leavenworth on the Council Study Session similar to that of the Chamber. Council discussed options for allowing a standing specific time versus scheduling a specific time for updates when needed, no decision was determined.

Councilmember Lundgren stated that he would like the Council to consider a biowaste facility that could have significant impacts on reduction of the food waste generated in Leavenworth. He spoke to some of the benefits of the program and encouraged the Council to review the recent email that includes a 3 minute video on a biowaste facility. He noted several cities on the west side that have already implemented similar programs.

Councilmember Waters voiced some concern at impacts and the accumulation of use along the riverbanks through Leavenworth that affects the shoreline and fish habitats. Councilmember Lundgren noted that Trout Unlimited will be having a meeting next week to discuss the impacts and potential solutions for mitigating impacts that have grown in recent years.

Study Session adjourned at 11:17 AM.

APPROVED



Carolyn Wilson
Mayor Pro Tempore

ATTEST



Chantell Steiner
Finance Director/City Clerk