

HERMISTON CITY COUNCIL

Regular Meeting

July 27, 2020

Mayor Drotzmann called the regular meeting to order at 7:00pm and announced the meeting was streaming live on YouTube. Present were Councilors Hardin, Myers, Barron, Smith, Gutierrez, Primmer, Davis, and McCarthy. In attendance were City staff to include: City Manager Byron Smith, City Attorney Gary Luisi, Assistant City Manager Mark Morgan, Chief Edmiston, Finance Director Mark Krawczyk, Planning Director Clint Spencer, Zoning Clerk Heather LaBeau, Library Director Mark Rose, and City Recorder Lilly Alarcon-Strong. The pledge of allegiance was given.

Citizen Input on Non-Agenda Items

Raeanne Blake, 1698 Diagonal Blvd- read her statement into the record (attached).

Cathy Lloyd, Stepping Stones Board- read her statement into the record (attached).

John Carbage, 1313 SW Riverhill Dr- stated the restrooms at Riverfront Park are closed and asked if porta potties could be placed there as many members of the public still use this site to recreate.

City Manager Smith stated the restrooms have been out-of-service since the flood and will be relocated to another part of the Park to avoid further damage caused by future flooding. He was under the impression portable restrooms had already been placed at Riverfront Park; regardless, he will work with Parks and Recreation Director Larry Fetter to have this done as soon as possible.

Consent Agenda Items

Councilor Primmer moved and Councilor Myers seconded to approve Consent Agenda items A-D, to include:

- A. Committee Vacancy Announcements
- B. Confirmation to the Hispanic Advisory Committee: Position #1, Mark Gomolski, term from 07/01/2020 to 06/30/2023
- C. Recommendation to the Planning Commission: Position #5, Josh Burns, term from 08/11/2020 to 03/31/2023
- D. Minutes of the July 13, 2020 work session and regular meeting of the City Council

Motion carried unanimously.

Public Hearing- Zoning Amendment for 157.055 and 157.153 Junkyards (Ordinances 2300 and 2301)

Hearing no declarations of conflict of interest from the Council, Planning Director Clint Spencer read the hearing guidelines and Mayor Drotzmann opened the hearing at 7:18pm.

Planning Director Clint Spencer gave information regarding repealing the existing Junkyard Code in Chapter 113 of the Code of Ordinances and inserting that language into the Zoning Code in Chapter 157 as part of the City updates of the code of ordinances as presented in the agenda packet.

Hearing no proponents, opponents or neutral parties who wished to address the Council, the hearing was closed at 7:22pm.

Councilor Davis moved and Councilor Hardin seconded to approve the Findings of Fact as presented by Planning Director Clint Spencer and in the agenda packet. Motion carried unanimously.

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Public Hearing- Zoning Amendment for 157.055 (B) Temporary Emergency Shelter

City Manager Smith asked that the Council consider a motion to postpone this hearing to September 14 to give the Planning Commission additional time to give a recommendation. The City had originally planned to hold the hearing at this meeting then publicized, in the agenda packet last week, it would postpone the hearing to August 24; however, after more discussion, the City is asking for the postponement date of September 14 to accommodate additional time and research information as requested by the Planning Commission.

Councilor Gutierrez moved and Councilor Primmer seconded to continue the hearing to September 14, 2020. Motion carried unanimously.

Ordinance No. 2300- Dealing with Junkyards and Secondhand Dealers

City Manager Smith stated this information was presented during the Public Hearing.

Mayor Drotzmann requested that the first reading be by title only. Hearing no opposition, City Attorney Gary Luisi read the ordinance by title only. Mayor Drotzmann requested that the ordinance be put on for final adoption at this meeting and that the second reading be by title only. After City Attorney Gary Luisi read the ordinance by title only for the second reading. Councilor Hardin moved and Councilor Primmer seconded that Ordinance 2300 be adopted and become effective 30-days after adoption by the City Council. 8 votes for; none against. Motion carried unanimously.

Ordinance No. 2301- Amending the Hermiston Code Relating to Regulations of Junkyards

City Manager Smith stated this information was presented during the Public Hearing.

Mayor Drotzmann requested that the first reading be by title only. Hearing no opposition, City Attorney Gary Luisi read the ordinance by title only. Mayor Drotzmann requested that the ordinance be put on for final adoption at this meeting and that the second reading be by title only. After City Attorney Gary Luisi read the ordinance by title only for the second reading. Councilor Davis moved and Councilor Primmer seconded that Ordinance 2301 be adopted and become effective 30-days after adoption by the City Council. 8 votes for; none against. Motion carried unanimously.

Resolution No. 2161 – Installing Stop Signs at W Joseph Ave and E Oregon Ave

Assistant City Manager Mark Morgan gave information regarding the need for Stop Signs in both areas as the number of new homes built and being built in these areas have increased since 2013. Adding additional stop signs will help with overall traffic flow and safety.

Councilor Barron moved and Councilor Hardin seconded to adopt Resolution No. 2161 and lay upon the record. Motion passed unanimously.

Resolution No. 2162 – Library Basement Contract Award

City Manager Smith gave information regarding the results of the construction bid and low bidder for the Library Basement Remodel as outlined in the agenda packet and presented the Council with an updated Resolution highlighting the change made (attached). City staff recommends awarding the contract to Knerr Construction, the low responsive bidder.

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After review and discussion, Councilor McCarthy moved and Councilor Primmer seconded to adopt Resolution No. 2162 and lay upon the record. Motion passed unanimously.

(Library Director Mark Rose exited the meeting at 7:37pm)

Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center (EOTEC) Report

General Manager Al Davis gave updates regarding: the impacts of COVID-19 on EOTEC; the outside events being held at EOTEC, to include many Barrel Races as EOTEC has a reputation of having the best arena soil/grounds; applying for and receiving CARES funding to help with COVID-19 impacts; new processes for allowing entry into facility, including taking temperatures and filling out symptom questionnaire; 2020 and 2021 events scheduled and potential events; virtual Fair Livestock Show of some sort, etc.

Mayor Drotzmann thanked Mr. Davis for thinking outside the box to continue hosting events at EOTEC, thus helping local restaurants, stores, and hotels as EOTEC visitors eat, shop and sleep in Hermiston.

CARES Act Funding Proposal

City Manager Smith presented the Council with proposed CARES Funding distribution to benefit the community as a whole, as proposed in the agenda packet.

The Council requested that businesses be allowed to apply for and be approved for funding, if they qualify, regardless if they have already been previously awarded funding as the impacts of COVID-19 are lasting longer than anticipated, and that the City contact hard-to-reach minority owned business to make sure they know about the funding.

City Manager Smith stated in partnership with the Chamber, City staff called every business in the City of Hermiston, during the last funding opportunity, to inform them of the process and encourage them to apply, this including members of the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. The City is planning on doing a similar process again this time around.

Councilor Barron moved and Councilor Gutierrez seconded to approve directing staff to modify the budget and expend CARES Act Funds as discussed. Motion carried unanimously.

City Hall Funding Agreement- Umatilla County

City Manager Smith gave information regarding the construction, funding and use agreement of the new City Hall with the County. As previously discussed, the County would occupy about 5,000 sq ft of the lower level, the privately-owned Lanham Building would be traded for the County's Cook Building and the County would pay a monthly maintenance fee to the City. The City and County will be using the Lamb-Weston Enterprise Zone funds, beyond the water tower funding, for this project.

After some discussion, Councilor Barron moved and Councilor Davis seconded to approve the City Hall Construction, Funding, and Use agreement with the County as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

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Legislative Priorities

City Manager Smith stated this information was presented and discussed earlier, during the Councils work session meeting. The Council is asked to select 4 out of 26 legislative priorities that the intergovernmental staff of LOC will focus on and advocate for with the state legislature.

Councilor Gutierrez moved and Councilor Primmer seconded to select A, U, Q, B, & E, with B & E being quite similar, as discussed during the work session, as the City's legislative priorities. The Mayor also added Item H. Motion carried unanimously.

Goal Setting Report

City Manager Smith gave updates on Council Goals, to include: City staff meeting with consultants and working to form a Steering Committee for the community vision process, and continuing updates to ordinances and additional housing.

Committee Reports

Public Infrastructure Committee- Mayor Drotzmann, and Councilors McCarthy and Smith stated the Committee met earlier and were presented with information from City staff and Anderson Perry regarding: analysts of sewer line pipes infrastructure, similar to the analysts done on the water system, and wastewater collection study. It is obvious, based on the information supplied, the City must prioritize funding and future planning to this system; Safe Routes to School improvements with rapid flashing lights at cross walks to help keep kids safe; Stop Sign recommendations as presented during the meeting, etc.

Recreation Projects Fund Advisory Committee- Councilor Barron stated the Committee will meet July 29th to review and recommend TRT fund disbursement to be used for local recreation projects.

Hispanic Advisory Committee- Councilor Barron stated due to COVID-19, the Committee will not be meeting until further notice and encouraged the community to apply for the open position.

Public Safety Committee- Councilor Primmer stated the Committee met earlier and was given information regarding the Investigation Team receiving the 2nd Quarter Recognition, new radio system, big three synopsis, working on accreditation, crime report and use of force statistics, etc. Chief Edmiston also answered questions from the public.

Mayor Drotzmann thanked the public and Police Department for coming together, in good-will, being transparent and taking care of the community.

Mayors Report

Mayor Drotzmann spoke regarding:

- Funland Groundbreaking Ceremony on Wednesday, July 29 at 12:30pm
- August 25, 2020 at 5:00pm deadline to submit candidacy for At-Large Council. Three candidates have filed to date
- City continues to be ranked #1 with having the highest active Covid-19 cases in the state, and asked that people do what we can to protect family, friends, and neighbors by practicing the safety guideless set forth by the state, wearing masks, frequently washing hands and social distancing when able
- Thanked all front-line workers who provide essential services, food, gas, etc. The community appreciates your service

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- Hot temperatures this week- reminded everyone to stay cool and hydrated and take special care of kids and animals
- Asked that the community support local farmers by purchasing produce locally as Hermiston grows an abundance of fruit and vegetables

Council Reports

None given.

Manager's Report

City Manager Smith spoke regarding:

- Required Cybersecurity training. City Recorder Lilly Alarcon-Strong will be contacting Council members who have not completed the training
- Personnel changes at the Police Department
- League of Oregon Cities Conference to take place virtually on October 15, 2020. Council members are asked to contact City Recorder Lilly Alarcon-Strong if they would like to sign up.

Recess for Executive Session (At or After 8:00PM)

Mayor Drotzmann recessed the regular meeting at 8:33pm and announced the City Council will meet in Executive Session pursuant to ORS 192.660 (2) (e) which allows the Council to meet in Executive Session to conduct deliberations with person designated by the Council to negotiate real property transactions. Representatives of the news media and designated staff shall be allowed to attend the executive session. All other members of the audience are excluded. Representatives of the news media are specifically directed not to report on any of the deliberations during the executive session, except to state the general subject of the session as previously announced. No final decision may be made in executive session. At the end of the executive session, the council will return to open session which the audience may attend. The executive session will last approximately 15 mins.

Reconvene and Adjournment

Mayor Drotzmann reconvened the City Council meeting at 8:59pm; there was no other City business and Mayor Drotzmann adjourned the regular meeting.

SIGNED:

/s/Dr. David Drotzmann

Mayor

ATTEST:

/s/Lilly Alarcon-Strong, CMC

City Recorder

To whom it may concern;

Since the zoning commission meeting Stepping Stones has become the topic of conversation on multiple pages on Facebook. I have seen people opposed to the idea, but I have seen a large number of our community members in favor of a sleep center for the homeless in Hermiston.

A concern that has been voiced and continues to be voiced is the proposed sites proximity to the Theatre Lane Sports complex. I have spent an incredible amount of time thinking about this issue, and talking to mothers of young children about that specific park, and how they feel about a sleep center being located near it.

I get mixed responses and mixed emotions every time it is discussed. There are those that feel the sleep center will ruin that park for the children in our town, and there are those that feel that with proper management Stepping Stones will have no large impact to it.

My personal feelings are that our proposal is for the sleep center to be open during the late evening, night, and early morning, which is when city parks are closed. This limits the contact between the potential guests of Stepping Stones and children playing at the park. We are also willing to have a security camera aimed towards the park so that someone is always watching the activity there. As a board we have committed to cleaning the area and neighborhood around Stepping Stones routinely and thoroughly once a month.

I can't deny that there is an issue with drug paraphernalia and trash in the area around Harper Rd, but I can with the support of our board commit to being good neighbors and offer to help clean up an issue that already exists.

When I drive around Hermiston I see there are several areas in town that the homeless population currently seem drawn to, Mackenzie Park, Victory Square park, Oxbow trail, and every entrance to Walmart. What these sites all have in common except for Walmart, is they offer shade, and cover to the homeless during the day, the covered area at Mackenzie Park has outlets so charging devices is convenient. The theatre lane park lacks these amenities, it is in direct sunlight most of the day and lacks power, which is why I believe homeless people are not already there, and will not draw them to it once Stepping Stones is established, they will continue to go to areas of town they are currently in.

In an ideal world we would find a cost effective site, with all of the perks of the proposed location with no neighbors, business owners, houses, schools, preschools or parks anywhere near it, that is centrally located for ease of access to the homeless population, but sadly I have yet to find a spot like that in Hermiston Oregon, what I believe we have found is a spot that fits some or maybe even most of the criteria I feel would make a place like Stepping Stones successful.

I don't want to dismiss the concerns I have heard about Stepping Stones I want to work with everyone with concerns to find a solution that satisfies the majority of issues. I have told everyone I have met with that I am not married to the Harper Rd location, but I am married to this project and in order for it to get off the ground we need the zoning amended to allow temporary emergency shelter and we need to be willing to make a conscious effort to come up with solutions instead of only pointing out the potential problems.

Thank you so much for your time and diligence,

Raeanne Blake



July 27, 2020

Dear Mayor Drotzmann , members of the zoning commission and members of the Hermiston City Council,

Once again I stand before the City Council as the chair of the non-profit foundation Stepping Stones of Hermiston. At this time, it is not my intent to present the pros and cons of our specific project nor am I speaking to the potential site that we would like to lease for this project. I am speaking to the need as a community to address our responsibility to the homeless population of our area. Yes, I am speaking about “Those” people. I visited today with some individuals who talked a lot about ‘those’ people. You know the ones I mean, the violent, drug users, alcoholic, sex maniacs that live only to cause crime and disruption to our community. I am talking about the transients that have raped and murdered individuals in near by Pendleton and the ones who walk or lounge about leaving their trash, wine bottles and used needles in all of our parks and alongside our roads and steal from our local businesses. I am talking about the ones who have never wanted to follow the rules and who don’t want to conform in any way to societal norms and if there is a sleep center, I am talking about the ones who will get on their cell phones and call all of their loser buddies to come to our gentle, quiet, crimefree city and ruin it for all of the other citizens living here. Because these are the homeless that are being rejected as not worthy of any assistance from others in the community. As we speak of ‘those’ people let me also reflect on some individuals that we are not considering:

1. The nineteen-year-old young man who has lived his life in foster care and when he aged up out of the foster care program, he had no place to go and no support system in place to help him.
2. The 31-year-old mother and child who came regularly to the warming station because there was no low-income housing available to her and Martha’s house was full.
3. The two men that had full time jobs but were separated from their wives and the salary from their full-time jobs went to supporting the family they aren’t able to live with at this time.
4. The families sleeping in cars.
5. The high school students who are couch surfing.
6. The mother of three who had a good job but had such enormous medical bills that she lost her housing and had no place to turn.
7. And so many more.

These are all real people, who live in Hermiston, who are citizens of Hermiston and have need of our assistance. We need to do better to help our fellow community members We need to stop the finger pointing and listen to each other. We need to make sure we truly know the facts. Right now is not about Stepping Stones or its possible location. Right now is about changing our zoning.

The proposed zoning change would allow night time temporary emergency shelter to be allowed in light industrial zones. Right now, Hermiston does not allow for any such shelters which limits the extent to which our law enforcement is able to roust homeless individuals from camping overnight on public property (see Boise vs. Martin) Allowing a temporary night time shelter would help empower our law enforcement to be able to better address night time homelessness.

The Walla Walla Alliance for the Homeless offers a successful template that other communities can follow. While currently open 24 hours/day due to Covid 19, the Walla Walla sleep center was designed to be a night time only shelter which is what we are requesting Hermiston zoning to address. Here are some of the positive results that the Walla Walla Alliance has reported:

1. 85% of the guests at the sleep center have been Walla Walla residents. There have been no large influxes of transient individuals coming from long distances to their sleep center. It has not served as a 'magnet'.
2. There have been no violent physical confrontations between guests and area neighbors and confrontations on site have been largely verbal.
3. They have had a high success rate in placing sleep center guests into long term housing of their own.
4. Property values in the area have not decreased.
5. By law, homelessness cannot be criminalized so citizens have the right to sleep on public property if there is no alternative. A zoning change for Hermiston is needed.
6. The Walla Walla City Officials, Police Department, Downtown merchants and community citizens all tell of the positive effects of effective management of a well-run temporary sleep site.
7. Walla Walla states that a well-managed shelter is much safer for the community than the unmanaged encampments that are endemic with a population of persons experiencing homelessness.
8. There have been very few reports of thefts of neighboring property near the sleep site. The theft rate in the city is no higher now and probably is lower than if these individuals were on the street at night.
9. This provides homeless individuals with a safe place to sleep at night and raises their quality of life.
10. This has been a work in progress for Walla Walla and they have strived to do what is possible now and adapt the program as needed.

Now is the time for the City of Hermiston to take positive action to provide support for those within the community who have needs. I respectfully ask you to consider all of the facts and not make such an important decision based on emotion and societal pressures.

Sincerely,

Cathy Lloyd

RESOLUTION NO. 2162

WHEREAS, the City plans to remodel the basement of the Hermiston Public Library to accommodate the housing of temporary city hall operations while planning for long-term improvements and expansions to library services;

WHEREAS, Notice was published in the East Oregonian Newspaper and several regional plan centers beginning June 30, 2020;

WHEREAS, 5 proposals were received and publically opened and read on July 22, 2020; and

WHEREAS, the procurement complies with the City's public contracting requirements.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF HERMISTON, OREGON, that:

Section 1. Knerr Construction was the low responsible bidder and is hereby awarded a contract to construct the Hermiston Public Library remodel – Phase 1 subject to the Notice of Award process.

Section 2. The City Manager is authorized to execute a contract with Knerr Construction in the amount of \$910,000.

Section 3. The City Manager or designee is authorized to execute Change Orders totaling up to 10% of the original contract price.

Section 4. This resolution is effective upon adoption.

PASSED by the Common Council this 27th day of July, 2020
SIGNED by the Mayor this 27th day of July, 2020

Dr. David Drotzmann, MAYOR

ATTEST:

Lilly Alarcon-Strong, CMC, CITY RECORDER