CITY OF COTTAGE GROVE
CITY COUNCIL
AGENDA SESSION MINUTES
October 23, 2020

The meeting was held via GoToMeeting. Those in attendance either in person or virtually were Mayor Gowing, Councilors Ervin, Boone, Fleck, Roberts and Stinnett (8:35). Councilor Solesbee was absent. Staff present were City Manager Richard Meyers, Public Works & Development Director Faye Stewart, and City Recorder Trudy Borrevik.

Public Hearings

Public Hearing and Ordinance Amending the Cottage Grove Comprehensive Plan Land Use Diagram Map & Title 14 Land Use District Map for Coast Fork Willamette Riparian Property (East Bank Adjacent to Lincoln Middle School (Map 20-03-32 TL 3100) (MCPA 4-20)

Public Works & Community Development Director Faye Stewart explained the hearing was for the rezoning of property the City purchased from Dena McCoy. He said the property was located along the east bank of the Coast Fork Willamette River adjacent to Lincoln Middle School. He said the rezone would be from R-1 Single Family Residential to Parks & Open Space. He said the Ordinance would be for approval of the zone change.

Councilor Fleck asked if the letter attached to the staff report was the only comments received at the Planning Commission hearing and asked if the person’s questions were being addressed.

Faye said that yes the letter was the only comments received. He said regarding addressing the person’s questions, he said the intent was to build a fence between the property lines. He said the City was also addressing various encroachments such as planting boxes and a gazebo. He said he didn’t know at this time if the City would put in a parking lot.

Business from City Council

City Manager Annual Performance Review

Mayor Gowing said the City Manager’s Evaluation would be in Executive Session on Monday at 6:00 pm.

Richard pointed out that on the Executive Session was a separate meeting set up in GoToMeeting so Council would need to log into the Executive Session and then log out to log back in for the Regular Meeting. He said the Executive Meeting would be locked so Council needed to be on time to avoid being locked out. He said the media would need to log in with their name or media affiliate so they would be let into the meeting.

Councilor Ervin asked if the Executive Session was the appropriate time for Council to discuss compensation.

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City Recorder Trudy Borrevik said Council was not allowed to discuss compensation in the Executive Session however they could discuss any contract amendments other than compensation.

Mayor Gowing asked Richard to explain how to log into the Executive Session, etc. to Councilor Stinnett who had just joined the meeting.

Richard went over the Executive Session process.

Business from City Manager

Beds for Freezing Nights

Richard talked about Beds for Freezing Nights (BFN) and said due to COVID-19, they weren’t going to operate this year inside churches, etc. He said discussions had been held regarding options for providing some kind of shelter to provide the services previously conducted by BFN. He talked about Pallet Shelters that he and Faye had seen a demonstration recently that could be used outdoors to house individuals in during cold weather. He said Lane County had spoken for a number of them to use and the County, City, BFN and Community Sharing would form a partnership for the operation of the shelters. He said the City had Coronavirus Relief Funds (CRF) available that could be used to assist with the purchase of the shelters. He said the location of the emergency shelters would be the property in front of the City Shop behind Dominos. He said a fence and electricity would be installed for the shelters and would be locked when the shelters weren’t activated. He said Lane County might have some funding available for staff assistance for Community Sharing to apply for a staff person to assist BFN in managing the facility. He said staff was still working out a lot of details, but wanted to get support of the Council. He asked if Council would support using some of the Coronavirus Relief Funds for the project. He said the City would be the owner of the pallet shelters to store and use for other emergencies as needed.

Councilor Fleck said BFN had been operating at least for ten years and he thought they had been a 501(c)(3) for about seven or eight years. He said he would be declaring a potential of conflict of interest as he was the Executive Director for Community Sharing. He talked about contracting with Lane County and said it was easier for his agency to apply as they were already an approved agency.

Councilor Ervin asked what the expected life span of the pallet shelters was, if there was a plan in place to direct BFN patrons to the new location and how many people were required to administer the program.

Richard said the pallet shelters had only been in existence for about four years, but the life expectancy was listed as ten years. He explained how they were built and talked about the features each one had. He said they were durable and were snow and wind rated. Regarding the plan to direct BFN patrons to a new location, he said BFN had multiple sites available and had a plan already in place. He said one plus to having the pallet shelters was that families or households up to four people could be placed in the same shelter. He said currently BFN
separated households and didn’t put men and women in the same location even if they were from the same household. He said they also didn’t allow pets which would be allowed with the pallet shelters. He said regarding staff, BFN liked to have at least two people on at all times. He said the City was looking at having at least three people on at all times and providing radios for them to communicate. He said BFN was looking for volunteers. He said if Council supported the program, he and his wife would be volunteering as he felt it was that important. He said it would treat people with dignity by providing them with an individual structure for the night that had heat and electricity and each shelter locked. He talked about the shower/restroom trailer the City had purchased in partnership with Community Sharing. He said the trailer would be located at and run by Community Sharing but could be moved to other locations as needed such as the BFN site when activated.

Mayor Gowing said he had received a call from Commissioner Buch regarding the Village Green. He said the County was getting some funding and were looking at purchasing the Village Green to use as a housing relief option for victims of the recent fires. He said they didn’t have a plan for what they would do with it once there was no need for the housing relief. He said he personally didn’t want to see it turned into a homeless community. He said the Village Green was more than a hotel, there had been community dinners and other events and there was a lounge and restaurant which locals used. He asked Council what they thought.

Richard said he had been contacted by Saria Johnson, Joint Housing Strategist for Eugene and Lane County, and he and the Mayor would be talking with her this morning to discuss the issue. He said there was a program, Oregon Turnkey, that had money available to purchase hotels to provide for homeless and the County was looking at it for displaced people from the fires. He said there were approximately 40 homeless people in Cottage Grove and the Village Green had about 86 rooms which would mean that an additional 40+ homeless would come to Cottage Grove from outside the area. He said it could set the City back in public support of doing anything for homeless in the community. He said the community didn’t have the facilities or capacity with the infrastructure we have and the services to address additional homeless in the City. He said the funding would be for capital items but not operational and support long term. He said purchasing the Village Green would be like Lane County purchasing the Valley River Center and all surrounding buildings and the impact it would have on the community. He said it would also impact the City’s transient room tax.

Councilor Ervin asked what a purchase would mean. He asked if there was discussion on renting rooms for the displaced rather than purchasing the Village Green.

Richard said one of his concerns was that there was FEMA money available for housing the displaced from the fires already in place.

Councilor Fleck said he would want to know exactly what the County was proposing. He said there were concerns years ago that the Village Green was going to be sold and turned into a truck stop. He talked about the need for transitional housing. He said if the Village Green purchase was a small portion as a shelter for displaced from the fires but mostly for transitional housing he said there could be huge benefits. He said he would not support purchasing the Village Green just for shelter for displaced people from the fires.
Mayor Gowing said his concern was that Commissioner Buch had always been upfront and honest but he didn’t trust the rest of the Board or the hidden agenda from their staff. He asked what their plan was after the relief shelter and no one could give him an answer.

Richard said staff had been talking with Travel Lane County since the Village Green came up for sale trying to get interest from previous interested buyers. He said there may be one hotelier that might be interested.

Councilor Stinnett asked if the County was looking at the Village Green because it was for sale.

Mayor Gowing said he was told it was the only hotel in Lane County that was currently for sale. He said it was for sale for $3.9M which was a lot of money to make it a homeless camp or truck stop.

**Discussion Regarding Water and Sewer System Development Charges**

Public Works & Development Director Faye Stewart said there were several interested developers looking at multi-unit housing on the old Harrison School site. He said in reviewing building permit fees with one of the proposed developers, they brought to staff’s attention that the SDC fees were two to three times more than other cities they had done developments in. He said staff researched the SDC fees and said there were two methodologies the Council had adopted in 2011. He said one methodology was a fixture count and the second methodology, adopted but not implemented, was meter size. He said the difference in cost was $260,000 for meter size as opposed to the number of fixtures. He said staff had a discussion with the FCS Group who said it would be appropriate for Council to amend the SDC Ordinance to include calculating water and sewer SDCs fixture counts or using meter size. He said staff consulted with Legal Counsel who said the process to amend the SDC methodology required a 90 day notice be sent to interested parties and advertised. He said staff’s proposal was to advertise and bring the matter back to Council for a public hearing and consideration of adoption of an ordinance on January 25, 2021. He explained the differences between fixture count and meter size for a multi-unit housing and for a single family home.

Councilor Fleck said he owed Len Blackstone an apology as he had brought the issue up to him and he disagreed with him. He said he was concerned about the methodology. He said the whole point was to look at the impact on the system and it shouldn’t matter whether it was a fixture count or a meter size. He said he supported the direction of staff, but said there was a problem in the math involved with the percentage each fixture was deriving. He encouraged staff to schedule a review in the next year to two years.

Councilor Boone said he agreed with Councilor Fleck and was in support of staff’s direction.

Faye provided a scenario about the water usage in a single family home with six people versus an apartment with one bathroom. He commented that he thought the methodology was correct and was based on the probability of how much of the City’s infrastructure would be utilized at one time for that development.
Councilor Fleck commented that he thought it should be the same whether fixture count or meter size and should be based on what the total potential was. He said that should be how the SDC methodology worked at least in his mind.

Mayor Gowing said it was physics and the flow rate was only going to be so much through the meter.

Richard said both methodologies were correct but they weren’t always right at the same point on the graph and explained. He said when you got above a 1.5” meter, the fixture count started diverging and going high because you could have more fixtures on the other meters but they weren’t all being used. He commented about studies that had been done regarding fixtures and meter sizes.

Councilor Ervin said he shared Councilor Boone and Fleck’s concerns. He shared his confusion with the methodology. He asked if the proposal was for a total switch in methodology for multi-unit housing. He asked if the City would have to contact developments that had done multi-unit housing projects of the issue with determining SDCs and if any overpayment would have to be refunded.

Richard said there hadn’t been any large multi-unit developments since the ordinance was adopted in 2011. He said there had been duplex and four-plexes built but they were done with 1.5” meter or less. He said the proposal was to bring forward an ordinance that would leave the fixture counts for those services with 1.5” meters or less which would include single family, duplexes and multi-plexes. He said anything above a 1.5” meter would use the meter size as the basis for calculation of SDCs.

Councilor Ervin left at 9:26 am.

Councilor Fleck said a majority of the Councilors weren’t on Council when the ordinance was adopted and suggested having the FCS Group attend the meeting Monday night to answer any questions.

Councilor Boone provided a scenario of a pool and water usage and commented that the methodology needed to take into account the worst case not just the average case.

Richard said a pool would be included in the calculations for SDCs and could increase the size of the meter.

Fay referred to the charts included in his Memorandum and explained the information contained in the charts.

Richard said staff would bring the Public Hearing and Ordinance to Council in January, 2021.

Richard said a Memorandum was mailed to Council regarding executive sessions and Council wearing headphones. He said staff realized that during virtual executive sessions some Councilors are participating from their home which meant that anyone in that household could listen and
view the executive session. He said staff talked with the City Attorney who agreed that Councilors should be wearing headphones if there are other individuals in the same room. He talked about possible conflicts with Quasi-Judicial matters with virtual meetings. He said if anyone needed headphones/microphones to contact the City Recorder.

Mayor Gowing said last Friday Lane County went on the Governor’s watch list. He said Cottage Grove was doing a good job, however the numbers were increasing elsewhere in Lane County, possibly due to the U of O. He said he contacted Damien from the Sentinel and Cameron from KNND to get the media involved and get the notice out to mask up, practice social distancing and sanitize. He encouraged everyone to keep doing a good job.

Mayor Gowing adjourned the meeting at 9:37 am.

Trudy Borrevik, City Recorder
Jeffrey D. Gowing, Mayor