

February 27, 2017

The Chehalis city council met in regular session on Monday, February 27, 2017, in the Chehalis city hall. Mayor Dennis Dawes called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. with the following council members present: Terry Harris, Tony Ketchum, Daryl Lund, Dr. Isaac Pope, Bob Spahr, and Chad Taylor. Staff present included: Jill Anderson, City Manager; David Fleckenstein, Airport Manager; Caryn Foley, City Clerk; Bill Hillier, City Attorney; Trent Lougheed, Community Development Director; Judy Pectol, Finance Manager; Rick Sahlin, Public Works Director; Glenn Schaffer, Police Chief; Judy Schave, Human Resources/Risk Manager; and Lilly Wall, Recreation Manager. Members of the media included Justyna Tomtas from *The Chronicle*.

Mayor Dawes noted there would be no executive session.

**1. Special Business**

a. **Employee Service Awards**. Police Chief Glenn Schaffer was presented a certificate for 10 years of service, while Public Works Director Rick Sahlin was recognized for 35 years of service.

b. **Chehalis Basin Strategy Update**. Mayor Dawes congratulated Mr. J. Vander Stoep on receiving the Gail & Carolyn Shaw Industry Award at the EDC banquet held earlier this month.

Mr. Vander Stoep stated the process is focused on two challenges – the decline of the fishery in the Basin and flood damage reduction. Predictions of continued increasingly hot summers over the next 100 years will create a significant decline in the four main salmon runs in the Basin if nothing is done. On the flood side, the five highest flows at the Grand Mound gauge since 1928 have all been since 1986, which results in two problems – floods are getting worse and the fisheries are in decline.

He explained that when an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is done, alternatives have to be offered, including a “no action” option. The draft Programmatic EIS released by the Department of Ecology (DOE) in October indicated that the “no action” option would result in \$3.5 billion in additional flood damage over the next 100 years, and that is without any factoring of climate change. Additionally, if there is an endangered species listing in the basin that will also cost many businesses, local governments, and land owners a lot of money.

Mr. Vander Stoep reviewed some of the habitat projects, including local projects, either completed or underway. He stated people think the process is taking a long time and he agreed, but noted that most of the projects have been completed under budget and under time. Mr. Vander Stoep showed a visual of flood level reductions from Pe EII to Cosmopolis that water retention would bring in a 2007 flood and a 100-year flood.

Mr. Vander Stoep stated an Aquatic Species Enhancement Plan with landowners with the Conservation District was created in response to the question of what happens to the fishery if you do all this work, and what happens if a dam is built? He stated that the information shows that you can have a dam and still have a very dramatic increase in the fishery. A visual was also shown that shows the difference in flood depths from the 2007 flood compared to how they would be different if the dam had been in place. It showed that the area of flooding would have been greatly decreased.

Mr. Vander Stoep stated the Programmatic EIS would be finalized in June. The Governor’s Work Group took Alternative 1 and a piece of Alternative 4 to the Governor for \$50 million in the next biennium. The Governor included it in his capital budget and it is now before the Legislature. The Work Group will go away in July when the Office of Chehalis Basin is funded and underway. It will be a seven-member board of directors and a director under the office within the Department of Ecology. The key difference of the new department is that it will be an action agency, not a regulatory agency. The office is charged with aggressively pursuing flood damage reduction and aquatic species enhancement, which is a good step forward. If the \$50 million is passed by the Legislature, \$13 million will go toward project permitting on the dam, and the Programmatic EIS will shift to a Project EIS.

Councilor Harris asked Mr. Vander Stoep if he would accept one of the appointed positions to the board of the Office of Chehalis Basin, if asked. Mr. Vander Stoep stated he would be willing to serve on the board for at least the first two years.

Councilor Harris expressed appreciation to Mr. Vander Stoep for all the work he’s done on this project. Councilor Harris noted that Kahle Jennings has also thrown his hat into the ring to be on the board.

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Councilor Lund expressed his support for Mr. Vander Stoep to be on the board of directors, as well.

Councilor Spahr noted that there are several projects in the local area, the lower basin has about 10 or 11 projects. When this was started it didn't seem like the communities in the lower basin had much to do, but it turned out they have a lot to do, and a dam would help them tremendously.

Councilor Harris stated that if it comes down to a dam project, he wanted to make sure that all of the local projects get done through the Flood Authority. Mr. Vander Stoep stated that the local projects will take well over a decade.

Councilor Harris asked what Mr. Vander Stoep thought about Hoquiam joining the membership. Mr. Vander Stoep thought it was good – the more communities that have a stake in it, the better.

Mayor Spahr asked why there has to be two EISs. Mr. Vander Stoep stated a Programmatic EIS looks at the whole project, while a Project EIS looks at individual-specific projects. If someone were to sue, the court has to focus on the specific project, not the project as a whole.

2. **Consent Calendar.** Councilor Spahr moved to approve the consent calendar comprised of the following:

- a. Minutes of the regular meeting of February 13, 2017;
- b. February 15, 2017 Claim Vouchers No. 118228 through 118406 and Electronic Funds Transfer No. 12017 in the amount of \$545,975.12;
- c. Change Order No. 1 in the amount of (\$15,424.56) for the Airport Pump Station Project;
- d. Resolution No. 1-2017, first and final reading – declaring property to be surplus; and
- e. Reappoint Sue Carmick, Denny Clark, and Etsuko Holmes to the Sister City Committee for 4-year terms expiring December 31, 2020.

The motion was seconded by Councilor Lund and carried unanimously.

3. **Administration Reports.**

a. **City Manager Update.** City Manager Anderson announced that the Transportation Benefit District (TBD) election was certified February 24, and the electors approved an increase in sales tax for the TBD.

b. **Finance Report.** Finance Manager Judy Pectol reviewed financial reports for November, December and 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 2016 and January 2017. The city is doing well financially. The General Fund and Dedicated Street Fund had lower fund balances at the end of 2016, primarily due to the timing of grant revenues. One surprise was the Airport Fund, which ended the year fine, but there were some expenses that were not budgeted and that will be dealt with. This year will be interesting for the Airport Fund as it is the year the county makes the last payment on the GO Bond, including interest, and the city will be totally responsible for operating the airport financially. The county will pay approximately \$1.5 million for the GO Bond and about \$15,000 above that amount in interest.

For January 2017, the biggest difference for the General Fund is how it appears because the Community Development Department was broken into three separate funds – parks, facilities, and building and planning. It looks like some departments are spending too much. For example, the Finance Department had already spent 23.7% of its budget at the end of January, which is due to some one-time payments. As the year goes along, that evens out. Ms. Pectol thanked the Public Works Department for lending the help of an employee that was assigned to light duty work. She was very helpful and much appreciated.

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#### **4. Councilor Reports/Committee Updates.**

a. **Councilor Harris.** Councilor Harris stated the presentation made by J. Vander Stoep at the last Chehalis Basin Partnership meeting was well received. He attended the Chehalis Wedding Show at The Loft and it was very busy. He looked forward to how many weddings would result in the event and how many heads it put into our local hotels.

Mayor Dawes stated he saw information in the latest AWC bulletin about a Senate bill that impacts lodging tax. The City Clerk indicated she would look into it.

b. **Councilor Spahr.** Councilor Spahr stated a letter was received from Janet Rowley regarding Amtrak eliminating staff from the Centralia station. Mayor Dawes stated he asked staff to draft a letter to Amtrak in opposition to leaving the station unattended. Councilor Lund noted that the Olympia station eliminated staff, but volunteers formed a non-profit to help people with their travels. He suggested that letters also be written to our Congressional representatives.

c. **Mayor Dawes.** Mayor Dawes attended the Chamber's Business After Hours at the Chehalis Theater on February 23.

5. **Recreation Park Improvement Project.** City Manager Anderson stated an update was prepared for the council and the community on some of the work that has been done on Recreation Park and asked for direction in regards to the timeframe for moving forward with the park and authority to spend approximately \$85,000 to complete the 30% design, which is needed to get a better cost estimate for construction of the park.

Trent Lougheed stated staff is looking for direction for proceeding with the 30% design, scheduling, and funding. He provided a brief history of the project, which began in 2015. Some of the projects discussed included additions to parking, site drainage, improvements to ball fields, and remodeling of the community buildings. The council agreed with the potential improvements in order to make the park a "first class facility." Skillings Connolly was hired to provide project management.

City Manager Anderson noted that a subcommittee of the council was created who have provided direction on the project. She thanked Councilors Harris, Lund, and Dr. Pope.

Tom Skillings discussed development of the plan to-date. Extensive public outreach activities were conducted, and specific improvement elements were identified. Those elements included improved ball field drainage, increased safety, security, and maintenance of the current characteristics of Penny Playground, a new community building, additional parking and access around the park, and added walking trails and perhaps on amphitheater. As a result of all the comments obtained, a Recreation Park Master Plan was drafted, which included:

- Community Building
- Outdoor Event Space
  - \* Temporary Stage
  - \* Grass Lawn Seating
- Ballfield Maintenance
  - \* Drainage Improvements
  - \* Minor Improvements
- Penny Playground
  - \* All-Weather Play Surfacing
  - \* New Play Structures
  - \* New Drainage
- New Parking Area
- Drop Off Area
- RV Parking
- Bus Parking/Drop Off
- Rose Garden to be Relocated
- Frontage Improvements along Williams & 13<sup>th</sup>
- Greenhill Parking
- Picnic Shelters
- Existing Trees to Remain
- Proposed Trees
- Open Lawn
- Pathways

Mr. Skillings noted that increasing parking has been completed through an agreement with Green Hill School for about 100 parking stalls. The estimated cost for completion of all elements ranged from \$7 million to \$8 million, with the first phase costing about \$2.4 million with \$400,000 being allocated for ball field drainage. Additionally, if Penny Playground was removed from the project, the cost would be \$1.36 million for phase 1.

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City Manager Anderson noted that removing Penny Playground from the project scope related to discussions about having city staff manage the project and be a little closer to the community because of the emotion and ties to the playground that the community invested so much into making it happen. There is also a group of people that want to raise money for the project.

Mr. Skillings stated he and his staff met with the city's park committee to develop a Phase 1 plan to address the highest identified priorities:

- Safer parking
- Better drainage
- Improved accessibility
- Improved ball field drainage
- Other components included:
  - \* Drainage improvements around the perimeter of the park
  - \* New parking area along park access road
  - \* One-way connector drive between the new parking lot along the park access road and the existing parking lot
  - \* New parking area in the existing Green Hill parking lot (accomplished)
  - \* Ball field improvements
  - \* Minor renovations to the existing restrooms
  - \* Improved lighting
  - \* Improved accessibility
  - \* New Penny Playground
    - Completed as part of a community design/build process
    - Penny Playground Committee responsible for leading fundraising efforts
    - Skillings Connolly design team will design connection points only
    - City will work directly with a playground manufacturer to design/construct new playground facility

Mr. Skillings stated that additional activities identified on the master plan can be accomplished, but they can be done in phases for:

- A new community building
- New parking
- Walkways
- Landscape improvements

Councilor Pope stated that he has been asked about the safety of Penny Playground. If the playground is unsafe and does not meet code, what is the city's liability if we continue to let people use it? Should it be closed? City Manager Anderson stated that has not been a question that has been discussed. While she had heard there were issues with the playground, she has never heard it put that directly in terms of liability. If it is determined to be unsafe, we would need to close it.

Mayor Dawes didn't recall liability ever being a concern. He noted they don't make playgrounds out of wood any more, and it may be extended past its useful life, but because of ongoing maintenance it's in the shape it is.

Mr. Loughheed stated there are concerns with the playground not meeting current codes for ADA and fall protection, but those are considered existing, nonconforming uses. There has been nothing presented to the city that indicates that anything is unsafe and nothing has been proven unsafe. The plan is to upgrade the playground with more modern equipment and one that meets compliance with ADA and safety requirements.

Mr. Skillings stated a condition assessment was done and conditions were found that do not meet standards, but there were no issues identified as safety hazards. The city's parks maintenance staff do a great job keeping the park usable. Mayor Dawes stated that things that were code years ago may not be code now. Ms. Anderson stated there is a fine line between safety and risk, and even with a brand new playground, someone can still have an accident.

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Councilor Spahr asked how much of the new playground had to be ADA accessible. Mr. Lougheed stated it was up to the city. The playground needs to be accessible as far as the surfaces getting to and from. Portions of each of the features will be accessible, but he noted that some cannot (e.g., a climbing rope).

Mr. Lougheed stated staff recommended the council approve a plan that would complete the project in phases:

Phase 1 would address the highest priority needs, including safer parking, better drainage, a new playground, and improved ball fields:

- New playground area (community design and build)
- Drainage improvements around the perimeter of the park
- New parking area along the park access road
- One-way connector drive between new parking lot along the park access road and the existing parking lot
- Grading and drainage improvements to the ball fields
- Minor renovations to the existing restrooms
- Improved lighting
- Two (2) new picnic shelters
- Improved accessibility

Design to be completed in phases:

- 30% Preliminary Design and Estimate would provide the first opportunity to evaluate the cost of the project based on a design
  - \* 30% design will allow the City to evaluate the total anticipated cost of Phase I, less Penny Playground, picnic shelters, and restroom upgrades.
- 100% Design and Estimate:
  - \* Authorize the engineer to proceed with final design, or
  - \* Reduce the scope of the work to fit within budget

Mr. Lougheed stated that if they can get the 30% design stage and go forward with what we want to see built in Phase 1, and get 100% bid documents ready, that scores a lot higher in the grant cycles they are looking to potentially apply for, which refocus the construction part of the project into 2018 instead of this year.

City Manager Anderson stated the main question tonight was to ask for the council's authority to spend \$85,000 using Real Estate Excise Tax money to do the 30% design, and to get some direction as to the timing. The project has been in the works for about two years and there was discussion of getting it built this year, which is possible, but it would require the city to fund the entire \$2 million up front, which means getting a loan, less the \$400,000 committed by The Chehalis Foundation for ball field drainage, which they plan to contribute over a period of years. If construction is deferred to 2018 for construction, we can do a 100% design, have a shovel-ready project, use the enthusiasm of the community to do a fundraiser for Penny Playground, and also apply for lodging tax money and grants. This would help reduce the amount of money the city would need to put forth.

Councilor Spahr moved that the City Council authorize the City Manager to execute a professional services contract to Skillings Connolly, Inc., in an amount "Not-to-Exceed" \$85,000 to complete the 30% design level documents for Phase I of the Recreation Park Project. The motion was seconded by Councilor Pope.

Councilor Lund stated that waiting until 2018 was wise, so that lodging tax money can be used.

Councilor Ketchum stated that .09 money may also be a possibility.

Mayor Dawes also wondered about the potential for using Tourism Promotion Area monies.

The motion carried unanimously.

There being no further business to come before the council, the meeting was adjourned at 6:14 pm.

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Dennis L. Dawes, Mayor

Attest:

Caryn Foley, City Clerk

Approved: 3/13/2017

Initials: cf