

August 9, 2010

The Chehalis city council met in regular session on Monday, August 9, 2010, in the Chehalis city hall. Mayor Ketchum called the meeting to order at 5:28 p.m. with the following council members present: Terry Harris, Dr. Isaac Pope, Bob Spahr, Chad Taylor, and Dennis Dawes. Councilor Lund arrived at 6:02 p.m. Staff present included: Merlin MacReynold, City Manager; Bill Hillier, City Attorney; Judy Schave, City Clerk; Tim Grochowski, Public Works Director; and Russ Cox, Engineering Tech III.

1. **Executive Session.** Mayor Ketchum announced the council would be in executive session pursuant to RCW 42.30.110(1)(i) – potential litigation for approximately thirty minutes and there would be no decision following conclusion of the executive session.

Mayor Ketchum closed the executive session at 5:55 p.m. and announced the council would take a seven minute recess and reopen the regular meeting at 6:02 p.m. Additional staff included: Glenn Schaffer, Police Chief; Bob Nacht, Community Development Director; and Peggy Hammer, Human Resources Administrator. Members of the news media included Adam Pearson of *The Chronicle* and Ron Hall of KITI.

2. **House of the Rising Sun.** Kris Darby (1452 SW William) wondered how the council could let two people rule the city to do what they want, when they want. She stated she was recently told that the laws weren't hard enough, and Keith Williams knew all the ins and outs. Ms. Darby felt the city needed to get smarter than Mr. Williams, adding the laws and the court were on their side. She suggested Mr. Williams couldn't possibly be able to outdo the city at every turn, and believed the city was not putting forth the effort because it would take too much effort. Ms. Darby asked what the council would do if the same thing was going on in their neighborhood, suggesting the problem would be fixed by now if that were the case. She thought after two-and-a-half years, it should be taken care of by now.

Mayor Ketchum reported he had spoke with Ms. Darby on the phone and told her that sometimes people in certain instances have a lot more rights than normal, and the city had to tread lightly. He noted the city had filed something against the House of the Rising Son. Mayor Ketchum stated Mr. Williams indicated on more than one occasion that he owned the Mayor and that he had him in his back pocket. He stated he had never met Mr. Williams and he was certainly not in his back pocket.

City Attorney Hillier indicated charges were pending on the case.

3. **Consent Calendar.** Councilor Dawes moved to approve the consent calendar comprised of the following:

- a. Minutes of the regular meeting of July 26, 2010;
- b. Claim Vouchers No. 97518-97646 in the amount of \$257,666.75 dated July 30, 2010; and
- c. Accept the Newaukum Bridge No. 20 Waterline Replacement Project as complete and release retainage in the amount of \$14,209.48 to Pilchuck Diversified Services/DIV Pilchuck Contractors, Inc.

The motion was seconded by Councilor Taylor and carried unanimously.

4. **Staff Reports.**

a. **Report on Chehalis Avenue Survey Parking Plan.** City Manager MacReynold reported, about ten months ago, the city began a pilot project on Chehalis Avenue to explore opportunities for traffic calming and enhancements. He stated one of the commitments the city made to the business and property owners was the city would survey them to see what their thoughts were after a certain time period.

City Manager MacReynold reported City Intern Ben Smith took the project on and recently completed the survey process. He noted Mr. Smith prepared a report and presented the findings to various businesses and property owners who attended a meeting held at city hall.

Mr. Smith presented copies of the survey results and analysis to the council, as well as a PowerPoint presentation. Mr. Smith reported, during the months of June and July, he worked under the direction of the administration and the Chehalis

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Community Renaissance Team (CCRT). He noted he performed a survey to assess the general overall sentiment towards the street changes made.

Mr. Smith stated the purpose of the survey was three-fold. The first purpose was to assess stakeholder sentiment towards the changes. He noted the specific changes were: angled parking in place of parallel parking, which increased parking by 11 additional stalls; potted trees placed on the street, to represent what trees planted in the ground would look like; and, painted bulb-outs around the trees, representing where a curbed-in bulb-out could eventually go.

Mr. Smith reported the second purpose of the survey was to really solidify a direction for the city to take for permanent changes. He noted the results would help to show what citizens felt was good and what was bad for the street, before the city spends a large amount of money on the changes.

Mr. Smith noted the third purpose of the survey was to generally garner stakeholder participation and to tap into the benefits associated with that.

Mr. Smith reported the survey included the stakeholders directly involved with the happenings of the street, including: residents, business owners and employees, property owners, patrons, delivery drivers, and county officials. He noted the survey showed 60 percent of the respondents were in favor of the changes; 46 percent felt the angled parking was the most beneficial change; 85 percent believed the angled parking made it easier to park on NW Chehalis Avenue; 76 percent felt the changes to NW Chehalis Avenue improved the look and feel of the street; and 77 percent agreed the additional parking improved access to local businesses. Mr. Smith noted there were additional questions in the survey that were tailored to the stakeholder group, which were shown in the formal report.

Mr. Smith reported pretty much all of the respondents expressed concerns towards the changes, but with the help of the administration and the CCRT they came up with some possible resolutions. For example:

- The angled parking was dangerous to exit and made Chehalis Avenue feel too narrow. Possible resolution - retain the angled parking, but widen the street and reduce the width of the sidewalks.
- Curbs were too low on Chehalis Avenue. Possible resolution - dig out Chehalis Avenue to reduce the height of the street.
- Firefighters cannot easily navigate big trucks around the corner at Park Street and Chehalis Avenue. Possible resolutions - reduce the size of the bulb-out at the Park/Chehalis intersection, make Park Street a one-way street, widen Chehalis Avenue, or remove parallel parking.

Mr. Smith reported part of his research was to see if there had been an increase in traffic collisions resulting from or attributed to the changes. He noted he worked with the police department and found a total of nine collisions since June 2007, four of which took place after the pilot project was implemented. Mr. Smith thought it was important to note, of the four incidents reported, only two were attributed to the parking changes. He didn't believe there was any over-riding data that showed more accidents had occurred because of the changes.

Mr. Smith briefly talked about the traffic counts on Chehalis Avenue conducted on two different two-day periods. He reported the first count was taken on a Tuesday and Wednesday in October 2009 shortly after the changes were made, and the second recordings were taken on a Tuesday and Wednesday in May 2010. Mr. Smith stated the graph showed people had not reduced or increased their traffic usage of Chehalis Avenue. He noted the traffic counts did not take into consideration any possible exterior things happening, adding there may have been a public event that may have increased traffic during a given time period. Mr. Smith still believed people were pretty much using the street as they had been before, which was a good thing. He reported, overall, the survey seemed to indicate the changes were looked at positively, which was a good sign for moving forward with more permanent changes to the street.

Councilor Pope stated the report was an interesting comparison, noting he had given CCRT Chair Larry McGee some pictures of his previous hometown where he grew up, where they had a similar situation and voted to do just what the city was planning to do here. He noted the study done in his hometown was also very favorable of the angle parking on one side and parallel on the other, as well as the bulb-outs and shrubs. Councilor Pope felt the changes made a significant difference in that community, and they were really going to change the appearance of our city.

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Mayor Ketchum thanked Mr. Smith for all his work, adding he was sorry to be seeing him go.

b. **Update on Transportation Enhancement Grant.** Tim Grochowski reported the administration submitted an application for a \$90,860 transportation enhancement grant for Chehalis Avenue and were notified recently that we got it. He noted the grant would pay for the concrete bulb-outs, stop signs, new pavement markings, tree planting, park benches, and irrigation. Mr. Grochowski reported they received the full amount of the request, adding they made points by coming up with \$24,100 in soft match money. The soft match would include the city installing the stop signs and plants for the bulb-outs. Mr. Grochowski stated they also received support from the CCRT, who put together a PowerPoint presentation for the project in a very short period of time. He reported the enhancement grant would go to the Washington State Department of Transportation for finalization in November, and to construction in 2011.

Mr. Grochowski reported they would be meeting the following Thursday with the Transportation Improvement Board (TIB) to talk about a larger grant to tear up Chehalis Avenue and possibly shorten the sidewalks. He stated they were also looking at installing new antique street lighting and incorporating one-way streets in certain areas around Park Street and Chehalis Avenue. Mr. Grochowski noted the TIB grant would be awarded in November or December and would not go to construction until 2012. He reported they also asked the county for a letter of support for the TIB project.

Mr. Grochowski reported the city would get points by using the enhancement grant as a match towards the TIB grant, and additional points for the county's participation. He stated if the city were to receive an award for the TIB grant he would hold another public meeting to discuss the engineering and design of the project, adding if they go to smaller sidewalks it could eliminate some of the sidewalk cafes currently in the area. Mr. Grochowski noted he had talked to one of the representatives from Security State Bank, who let it be known they did not want to become an island, referring to the proposed one-way street reconfiguration.

Mr. Grochowski stated they were also talking to Lewis County about their proposed parking garage, its placement and other facilities. He noted the county would be responsible for some frontage improvements with their proposed projects, which meant the city could be receiving some money from them, as well.

City Manager MacReynold felt it was important to note that he had the advantage of volunteering to be on the selection committee. He reported the staff from the Cowlitz and Lewis County Economic Development District spoke very positive about our project, adding the city hardly had to say anything. City Manager MacReynold noted the committee supported the project due to its regional significance of being the county seat, and because it fit into an even bigger plan, the Chehalis Renaissance Plan. Mr. Grochowski noted former City Manager David Campbell was also part of the selection committee.

c. **2010 Budget Reduction Package.** City Manager MacReynold stated, based on the most recent sales and use tax numbers, he and the management team would be meeting over the next week or so to put together a budget reduction package for 2010. He noted it was going to be pretty significant and he would be briefing the council members individually, and at the next council meeting on the full extent. City Manager MacReynold noted they all hoped the sales tax would begin to turn around as the media keeps telling us the recession is over, but they couldn't wait any longer. He noted it was very serious and they were going to have to be pretty creative about changing how we do business in the city of Chehalis.

Councilor Lund wanted to know if they could get a consensus from the council to increase the chip seal budget, since they were going to be making changes to the budget anyway. He stated he agreed with Councilor Pope at the last meeting that they did not want that to get cut. City Manager MacReynold agreed.

Councilor Spahr suggested they wait to see what they come up with for reductions. He asked when the next numbers for sales tax would come in. City Manager MacReynold noted the August report for May was sent out in an email to the council the previous week. Councilor Spahr felt there were some real extenuating circumstances with April's revenues. He commented on the fact that they were currently sitting at 2005 numbers, adding if they were to look back they would see that the sales tax revenue went up with the real estate bubble, and suggested the city was a bubble, as well.

Councilor Taylor wondered if they looked at what the other jurisdictions were receiving, with reference to sale and use tax. City Manager MacReynold thought Eve Lindgren had taken a look at that, but was not aware of what she found. He noted she indicated the county was pretty much in the same situation as the city, and thought Centralia might be in a little different

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situation.

Councilor Spahr asked if the county was impacted by the streamlined sales tax. City Manager MacReynold thought the county actually did better with the streamlined sales tax, but it didn't really help them.

Councilor Harris stated larger populated communities would do better because they have a greater population and import more products from other areas. He suggested they might be receiving significant amounts of revenue that they were not receiving before.

Councilor Lund noted May's revenues were down by 11 percent and asked if anyone recalled what April's amount was down by. City Manager MacReynold thought it down by about 14 percent.

#### 5. **Council Reports.**

a. **Update from Councilor Spahr.** Councilor Spahr reported his daughter delivered a baby boy earlier that afternoon, and mother and baby were doing just fine.

b. **Events Attended by Councilor Dawes.** Councilor Dawes reported he had a chance to work down at the community farmers market the last couple of weeks, adding it was nice to see they were doing so well.

Councilor Dawes noted he and Mayor Ketchum worked at the Lewis County Historical Museum during last weekend's Trains, Planes, and Automobiles event. He believed they raised about \$700 from the pancake breakfast, but didn't know what they received in revenues during lunch. Councilor Dawes noted he had a chance to walk around different parts of the event and hoped everyone had a good time, adding the rain might have dampened things just a little bit.

c. **Meeting and Events Attended by the Mayor.** Mayor Ketchum reported he enjoyed another fun night at 'Music in the Park' at Recreation Park on July 30, and again last Friday at Washington Park in Centralia.

Mayor Ketchum attended the 'Valley View Health Center Week' ceremony earlier in the morning and presented them with a proclamation. He and Councilors Taylor and Harris attended a meeting with State Attorney General Rob McKenna, adding it was a really nice get together. Mayor Ketchum noted Attorney General McKenna talked about things that were happening and what he would like to see happen. Councilor Dawes wondered if they mentioned the streamlined sales tax issue to him. Mayor Ketchum noted they did, adding they told him they needed to work real hard to have the legislators suspend it until they figure it out. Councilor Harris stated he told them the Department of Revenue was hiding behind the Revised Code of Washington and Washington Administrative Code to keep from being forthright with all of us, and we were not being compensated properly.

Councilor Dawes stated it was too bad they weren't suspending it, adding it doesn't really affect the state's collection, even though it's down.

6. **Ordinance No. 858-B, First Reading – Updating Development Regulations for 2010.** Bob Nacht reported Ordinance No. 858-B was being presented on first reading. He noted it had been through the hearing process and the planning commission and there were no citizen comments on any of the proposed updates.

Councilor Harris moved to pass Ordinance No. 858-B on first reading.

The motion was seconded by Councilor Pope and carried unanimously.

There being no further business to come before the council, the meeting adjourned a 6:39 p.m.

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Mayor

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Attest:

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City Clerk

**SUGGESTED MOTION**

**I move that the council approve the minutes of the regular city council meeting of August 9, 2010.**