

October 12, 2015

The Chehalis city council met in regular session on Monday, October 12, 2015, in the Chehalis city hall. Mayor Dawes called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m. with the following council members present: Terry Harris, Dr. Isaac Pope, Bob Spahr, Daryl Lund, Chad Taylor, and Tony Ketchum. Staff present included: Merlin MacReynold, City Manager; Bill Hillier, City Attorney, Judy Schave, City Clerk; Dennis Osborn, Community Development Director; and David Fleckenstein, Airport Manager.

1. **Executive Session.** Mayor Dawes announced the council would be in executive session pursuant to RCW 42.30.110(1)(i) – potential litigation for approximately 30 minutes and there would be no decision following conclusion of the executive session.

Mayor Dawes closed the executive session at 5:07 p.m. and announced the council would take a short recess and reopen the regular meeting at 5:10 p.m. Additional staff included: Glenn Schaffer, Police Chief; Judy Pectol, Finance Manager; Peggy Hammer, Human Resources Administrator; and Don Schmitt, Acting Public Works Director/Street and Stormwater Superintendent. Members of the media included Dameon Pesanti from *The Chronicle*.

2. **Proclamation Declaring October as “Domestic Violence Awareness Month.”** Mayor Dawes presented Human Response Network Executive Director Tara Leno with a proclamation declaring October as “Domestic Violence Awareness Month” in the city of Chehalis.

3. **Report on Initial Interview Findings for Recreation Park Project.** Community Development Director Dennis Osborn introduced Project Manager Tom Skillings with Skillings Connolly, Inc., to provide an update on where they are at in the process with regard to the improvement project at Recreation Park.

Mr. Skillings reported the city retained Skillings Connolly, Inc., to help implement the city’s goal of turning Recreation Park and Penny Playground into a “first-class” facility. He noted after the team met with members of the city they set out to interview the stakeholders that use the park. The stakeholders interviewed included:

- Chehalis Parks Committee
- City Council
- Chehalis Planning Commission members
- City management staff
- City maintenance staff
- Chehalis Foundation representatives
- Miscellaneous user groups

Mr. Skillings noted the purpose of the interviews was to determine the overall impression of the park: what they liked; what they didn’t like; how it was used; and, identify any issues with the park, what worked and what could be better. He noted at the end of the day they came up with a lot of information about the park. Mr. Skillings reported they divided the information up into the following three categories:

Items that need to be addressed:

- Drainage at the park
- Parking
- VR Lee and Fred Hess Kitchen need upgrading or replacement
- Penny Playground needs upgrading or replacement
- Ballfield drainage and playing surface needs to be improved
- Restrooms need improving and better security

Items that could be better:

- Ballfield facilities / dugouts / bleachers / access
- Ballfield orientation / size
- Park access
- Music in the park experience / access
- More green space
- Lighting

October 12, 2015

Other park features:

- Trails
- Picnic shelters
- Larger multi-use shelter
- Reorganize playground for better access
- New signage
- Stage / music / Wi-Fi
- Storage

Mr. Skillings reported his firm hired several experts that specialize in parks, to include:

- HBB Landscape Architects - Juliet Vong, Principal
- DA Hogan & Associates (sports field expert)
- MSGS Architects
- EnviroIssues (public outreach and social media) - Project Manager Erin Taylor

Mr. Skillings reported the first item on their agenda was to conduct individual site assessments. He noted their findings showed that in order to be a first-class facility a lot of the buildings would need to be replaced, rather than upgraded. Mr. Skillings reported they also conducted a parking study, which provided a pretty good conclusion as to what is causing the stress on near-site parking.

Mr. Skillings reported, using the information they collected from the condition assessment, his team prepared a rough order of magnitude cost estimate for the following improvements:

- Drainage (single implementation - offsite drainage) \$335,000
- Parking, Access and Safety (currently 190 existing parking stalls in and around the park)
  - 240 parking stalls (new parking lot) \$800,000
  - 280 parking stalls (two new parking lots) \$1,400,000
- Structures: VR Lee and Fred Hess Kitchen
  - 2,800 total sq. ft. (new Fred Hess Kitchen and new VR Lee meeting facility) \$1,112,000
  - 4,200 total sq. ft. (new, combined kitchen and meeting facility with room dividers) \$1,341,000
  - 5,800 total sq. ft. (new, combined kitchen and meeting facility with room dividers) \$1,933,000
- Penny Playground
  - Repair - maintenance and repair of existing playground facility - \$104,000
  - New - replace with new, standard playground facility - \$244,000
  - Custom - replace with new custom-built playground facility - \$525,000
- Ballfields: Configuration and Drainage
  - 2 ballfields w/dugouts - natural turf - \$1,115,000
  - 2 ballfields w/dugouts - synthetic turf infield - \$1,255,000
  - 3 ballfields w/dugouts - natural turf - \$1,537,000
  - 3 ballfields w/dugouts - synthetic turf infield - \$1,747,000
  - 4 ballfields w/dugouts - natural turf - \$2,163,000
  - 4 ballfields w/dugouts - synthetic turf infield - \$2,443,000
- Restrooms
  - Renovate existing restrooms - \$117,000
  - Replace restrooms with new facility - \$221,000
- Field House
  - Renovate existing field house - \$117,000
  - Replace field house with new facility - \$473,000

October 12, 2015

- Picnic Shelters
  - Replace three (3) shelters - \$60,000
  - Replace four (4) shelters - \$80,000
  
- Miscellaneous Park Features
  - Minimal Implementation - landscaping + amphitheater with lawn and drainage - \$1,052,000
  - Medium Implementation - additional landscaping + amphitheater with hardscape - \$1,332,000
  - Maximized Implementation - enhanced landscaping + amphitheater with hardscape, seatwalls, and stage arbor - \$1,963,000

Mr. Skillings introduced Ms. Vong with HBB to talk about the components and potential options for the project.

Ms. Vong provided an overview on three potential concepts. She noted the idea behind the different concepts is to get people to look beyond what they see now and look more towards the range of possibilities.

Mayor Dawes expressed concern with only having two ballfields, as identified in the third option. He noted our tournaments are a big draw and really feed into the hotel/motel tax. Mayor Dawes felt this concept would discourage a lot of folks from coming here.

Ms. Vong reported, with regard to the stakeholder interviews, there was definitely more concern with Option #3. She noted they purposely included this option to push the boundaries to get feedback from those who are not intensive users of the fields.

Councilor Ketchum suggested they would be shooting themselves in the foot if they even take out one of the fields.

Ms. Vong noted, on the flipside, parking to support the four fields is a real struggle, especially when you have other uses of the park going on at the same time.

Mayor Dawes stated the council certainly understands that, but they don't want to hurt any of the current uses. He suggested, whatever they decide, they need to make sure that they take a step forward, not a step back.

Mr. Skillings noted Option #3 is just to stretch the boundaries, adding in no way was it vetted with anybody. He reported they received a lot of responses from the stakeholders to add more green space.

Ms. Vong suggested if the council strongly feels there is absolutely no way two fields would work, they want to know that now. She noted they're totally open to scrapping any of the concepts, or mixing and matching different parts before they take it to the community for feedback.

Councilor Lund stated he was hoping the professionals would be able to tell them how many fields would be best before they even got this far.

Ms. Vong noted, from the interviews to date, there's been a bit of opinion in both camps with regard to the number of fields needed. She suggested, because we have a similar type of facility close by, we could do something there to offset it. Ms. Vong reported the whole point of the public process is to have the community help tell us what the right balance is.

Councilor Pope stated it's not their intent to have the council make a decision tonight, adding the intent is to bring the alternatives vested from the interview process. He noted the final product would not be decided on until December.

Councilor Harris suggested none of the concepts as a whole are what they're talking about adopting, adding it's all cut and paste at this point.

Ms. Von reported there's still a lot of work to be done with regard to easements and approvals from the railroad, as well as access and circulation items that need to be followed up on. She noted the city also received an RCO grant in 1999 to do some improvements to the ballfields, adding the perpetuity of that funding will also need to be considered as they move forward.

October 12, 2015

Public Outreach Specialist Erin Taylor reported their intent it to take the concepts, or versions of the concepts forward to the public over the next month, or so. Their key objective is to:

- Provide information about initial design concepts for Recreation Park and Penny Playground
- Offer several comment and feedback methods for varying schedules
- Define public involvement process and next steps
- Provide opportunities to directly engage city and project staff

Ms. Taylor reported the public involvement process would launch on October 15 and run for approximately one month. She noted some of the broad questions they will be asking the public include:

- How do you use the park currently?
- How do you wish to use the park?
- What is your vision for Recreation Park and Penny Playground?
- Specific thoughts on design concepts

Ms. Taylor stated they were looking for council approval to move forward with the engagement process. She noted, initially, they would like to engage the community with a letter signed by the council stating they are taking on an endeavor to upgrade and renovate Recreation Park and Penny Playground. Ms. Taylor reported they will also be offering information on the city's website, Facebook posts via the "Experience Chehalis" Facebook page, yard signs in Recreation Park, and a project informational flier in City Hall.

Ms. Taylor talked briefly about the in-person open houses, which will give the public the ability to ask questions of Chehalis staff and project designers. She reported the open houses are scheduled for Thursday, October 29, at the VR Lee building from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., and Thursday, November 5, at Chehalis City Hall from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Additionally, they plan to provide an online open house for people to offer their feedback on their own time.

Mr. Skillings reported they are also looking for direction from council to move forward with the open houses. He noted from there they will simulate the data received and put together a new concept, along with associated costs. Mr. Skillings noted they plan to present the feedback received to the city council on Monday, November 23, and will request a special council meeting on Monday, November 30 to decide on the preferred concept. He reported, if the outcome is positive, they will go into design immediately and have the project ready for advertising in mid-March, with construction starting in May 2016.

Mayor Dawes suggested the window for fundraising was not very big.

City Manager MacReynold reported when they bring back the final design they will also have options on how to fund it.

The consensus of the council was to move forward with the letter and public meetings on the Recreation Park/Penny Playground Improvement Project.

Councilor Spahr asked if there was any mention of putting the amphitheater at a different location, rather than Penny Playground. Mr. Skillings reported relocating it never came up, but that doesn't mean it's not a possibility.

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

- a. Minutes of the regular meeting of September 28, 2015; and
- b. Claim Vouchers No. 113741-113853 in the amount of \$216,395.74 dated September 30, 2015; and Payroll Vouchers No. 38406-38484, Direct Deposit Payroll Vouchers No. 6413-6500 and Electronic Federal Tax Payment No. 152 in the amount of \$758,998.97 dated September 30, 2015.

The motion was seconded by Councilor Taylor and carried unanimously.

October 12, 2015

5. **Administration Reports.**

a. **Annual Debt Compliance Update.** Finance Manager Judy Pectol reported, on September 28, she submitted the city's annual financial statements and other required supplemental information to the Municipal Securities Rulemaking Board. She noted this information is submitted annually in order to be compliant with the federal requirements of our general obligation bond.

6. **Council Reports.**

a. **Update From Councilor Harris.** Councilor Harris reported the Lodging Tax Advisory Committee met on October 6, noting the meeting went well and he was hopeful with what they'll be bringing to the council for consideration at the next meeting.

Councilor Harris also noted Centralia Councilmember Lee Coumbs suffered a tragedy earlier in the day, adding his thoughts and prayers would be with the family.

b. **Update From Councilor Spahr.** Councilor Spahr reported he attended the Lewis Economic Development Council Board meeting, noting they have some interesting things going on that will hopefully benefit all of us.

c. **Update From Councilor Lund.** Councilor Lund stated the city is lucky to have people like Councilor Harris and Councilor Pope. He noted, in working with them on the Chehalis Parks Committee, they've come up with some really great ideas, adding Mr. Skillings is pretty impressive too.

d. **Update From Mayor Dawes.** Mayor Dawes reported the Council Budget Committee consisting of himself and Councilors Spahr and Harris attended four budget meetings and had some very good discussions with the administration. He noted they plan to bring the 2016 proposed balanced budget to the council for consideration in the very near future.

There being no further business to come before the council, the meeting adjourned at 6:10 p.m.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor

Attest:

\_\_\_\_\_  
City Clerk

**SUGGESTED MOTION**

**I move that the council approve the minutes of the regular city council meeting of October 12, 2015.**