

CITY OF OREGON COUNCIL
WORK GROUP MINUTES
Tuesday August 30th, 2022, 5:30 P.M.
City Hall Council Chambers
115 N 3rd Street

The Council of the City of Oregon met Tuesday August 30th, 2022, at 5:30 P.M. The meeting was held in person in the City Hall Council Chambers.

Present: Mayor Ken Williams
Commissioner Melanie Cozzi
Commissioner Tim Krug
Commissioner Terry Schuster
Commissioner Kurt Wilson
City Administrator Darin DeHaan
City Clerk Cheryl Hilton

Present via Phone: City Attorney Paul Chadwick

Also Present: Liz Vos and Alexa Zoellner.

Mayor Ken Williams started the pledge of allegiance.

Electric Vehicle Station Update.

City Administrator Darin DeHaan connected with Region 1 Planning who have put together a program for electric vehicle charging stations and getting the best rate for the group. They have chosen Blink for the supplier of the program. He stated the location would be next to the coliseum, there is already an electrical meter there. He has also spoken to the ComEd representative for the city. ComEd would need the ICC to change the rules for them to be involved with the program. He asked the City Council how soon they would like to see these charging stations put in. Mayor Ken Williams said the only program available is the hybrid option where the city would provide a portion of the funding up front. He also said the city initially looked at adding three charging stations however the Sustainability Committee said to add one and see how it works. There will be one pedestal that will charge two vehicles. There are also three levels. Level 1 charges overnight, level 2 charges in a few hours, and level 3 charges in minutes. Level 2 would be the option the city would be looking into. Commissioner Terry Schuster said he would like to see the project happen sooner rather than later. City Administrator Darin DeHaan said we need to join with Region 1 Planning to help with the process. They have a group of people to help with the city sustainability planning. The school and park district could work off the city as Cog Memberships and work with Blink as well. There may be potential for private businesses as well with the city having a membership with Cog. Commissioner Terry Schuster asked what the membership would cost? City Administrator Darin DeHaan said the membership would cost nineteen hundred dollars a year. Mayor Ken Williams said that after a few years, a decision could be made to take it out if it is not cost effective for the city. He also stated Rochelle has added a row of chargers by the Casey's location. Casey's put the charging stations in. He asked if the city would want to have control over private entities or an incentive to adding the stations

on private property. City Administrator Darin DeHaan will move forward with the project and present the information to the City Council.

ARPA Funding Review and Look Ahead.

City Administrator Darin DeHaan said the city is ready for the next step for ARPA funds. He asked the City Council for any ideas or requests for future projects. The city has provided funds for the fire department, new computers for the police department, funds for the emerging leaders program through the Chamber and the most recent project with the school greenhouse. He asked if the city would want to set aside funds for energy incentives or other sustainable things. Commissioner Terry Schuster said whatever we spend the funds on needs to be durable so there are no reoccurring costs. Mayor Ken Williams said this is one-time funds and we won't be able to fund projects that cost money year after year. The projects need to be beneficial to the community, and sustainable on its own or earns the city revenue. City Administrator Darin DeHaan will send out the list that was created at the public meeting in August of 2021. Projects must meet the treasury guidelines. Commissioner Melanie Cozzi asked if the Rock River Center has been contacted to see if they have any needs of ARPA funds. City Administrator Darin DeHaan will reach out to them. Commissioner Melanie Cozzi also suggested murals on the crosswalks for the school students to see at Jefferson and 10th Street. Mayor Ken Williams said a crosswalk at McDonalds was a previous idea as well. City Administrator Darin DeHaan asked the Council to look at the list again, each commissioner pick five ideas that interest them and bring ideas back to the City Council.

Legal Representation Review-Annexation, Zoning, and other Legal Issues.

Commissioner Terry Schuster said the city is growing up. There are many things such as ordinances, TIF issues, tax issues, public hearings, IDOT restrictions, and many more things the city is dealing. He asked if the city had any potential need for a municipal attorney. Mayor Ken Williams said the city has four attorneys currently and there are attorney's that manage municipal law. City Administrator Darin DeHaan said the city is getting into complex issues often. City Attorney Paul Chadwick said he is a general practice attorney and fully supports the decision of the city.

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Discussion.

City Administrator Darin DeHaan and Commissioner Melanie Cozzi have met with a pastor in Dixon with struggles they have met with in the community regarding equity, diversity, and inclusion. He also stated that the city is not attracting minority applicants. He has reached out to Liz Priller who offers a training seminar. The seminar would help prepare employees and other local groups could be included in the seminar such as the school district and the park district. The seminar can be held in person or via Zoom. He said there are things the city needs to learn internally as an employer on how to recruit minority candidates. Mayor Ken Williams would like to see this brought to the City Council as a two-step process.

Council-Manager Form of Government-Update and Look Ahead.

City Administrator Darin DeHaan said the Judge has approved the ballot. The Circuit Clerk and County Clerk have certified the ballot. Mayor Ken Williams said the change in

government is now on the ballot and the City Council cannot promote the change. Commissioner Terry Schuster asked how he can respond as a citizen. Only factual information can be provided. A FAQ sheet will be available.

U.S. Solar 2nd Proposal.

City Administrator Darin DeHaan stated USS Ducks Solar LLC is interested in the parcel that is to the West of the original parcel. The parcel is owned by the same landowner and would need to be annexed into city limits. The solar field would be about three hundred and fifty feet from the nearest home in the Century Hills subdivision. Commissioner Terry Schuster said one of the issues was the traffic on the access road along the edge of the subdivision. Being farther away and north of the subdivision, this will no longer be a concern. Mayor Ken Williams said he has shown the new proposal to Roger Cain, Mark Herman, and a current resident in the subdivision. They all believed it was a much better proposal. He also said the property would be zoned commercial with a variance for solar. The State of Illinois will be doing this solar program yearly for the next ten years. USS Ducks Solar LLC would be delayed by a year and will need to apply for the second round in the state program. Commissioner Melanie Cozzi stated she is glad they came back with the second proposal. Mayor Ken Williams said the city supports solar energy. Ryan Magnoni will be presenting to the City Council in the future.

Discuss Code Enforcement Official Position.

City Administrator Darin DeHaan said the city is looking at adding a code enforcement officer. He said Randy Cropp could be brought back in a part time position to help with ordinance enforcement. Currently one police officer has dedicated a lot of time to code enforcement. He stated he would like to see the position be educational and not just enforcement. He also plans to provide Randy with the resources and programs to help residents that are struggling. Commissioner Kurt Wilson said this will provide accountability and consistency. Mayor Ken Williams would like to see a formal reporting on this to the City Council. Commissioner Melanie Cozzi said she would like to see a list of resources that were used or available to the resident. City Administrator Darin DeHaan will be presenting a first read ordinance to the City Council in the future. A UTV has been ordered for the position and will also be useful for other departments within the city.

Comprehensive Plan Process.

City Administrator Darin DeHaan said the agreement has been signed with Northern Illinois University and they would like to schedule a kickoff Zoom meeting on September 22nd between 12:30 and 1:30. The first meeting will be to start to delegate responsibilities and prepare for the second phase to recruit individuals for the steering committee. Mayor Ken Williams said the project will take a minimum of six months. A public meeting can be arranged so members of the City Council can be present at the kickoff meeting.

ITEP Grant and Path Discussion.

Commissioner Terry Schuster said this is the bike path grant. The city grant writer is helping to write a grant to submit to the State of Illinois for a grant that will pay for close to ninety percent of the bike path. The grant needs to be completed by the end of

September. The construction of the path would start in 2024. The path would be from the Trestle Ridge subdivision to Route 64. City Administrator Darin DeHaan said Erin Folk with the Oregon Park District has committed to allowing a portion of the drive at Carnation Park for the bike path. He also stated this is starting to show connectivity for bike and rec paths and is creating great partnerships with private individuals, the park district, and the city. Commissioner Melanie Cozzi asked about pedestrian safety at Rt 64. City Administrator Darin DeHaan said IDOT will figure out the crosswalk. This may include reducing the speed across the bridge. Mayor Ken Williams stated this may present an opportunity to have the speed reduced to thirty-five mph. He also said ninety eight percent of the bike path is owned by the city and the park district. The north, south, and east side of Rt. 2 and Rt. 64 have all had sidewalks and curb and gutter replaced as part of the Streetscape ITEP Grant. He said the city will need to decide to either apply for a Streetscape grant or the bike path grant as they are both ITEP grants. Commissioner Melanie Cozzi asked if the sidewalk project could be done in house. Mayor Ken Williams said the city would need new estimates from Willett Hofmann for the construction of the sidewalks. He believes the city should move forward with the bike path and postpone the Streetscape.

Lead Pipe Requirements Deployment.

City Administrator Darin DeHaan said Rockford is ahead of the game with lead pipe replacement required by the IEPA. He is putting the right information together before sending it out the residents. He also said the homeowner is responsible for the service line from the water main to the house and could be a potential cost to a homeowner. Willett Hofmann will be assisting the city with a grant that is available to offset the costs.

Drive Up Facility Update.

Mayor Ken Williams said phase two at the old drive through facility will be cleaning the inside of the building up to provide a space for community concessions, such as the Oregon Lions Club. There have been funds donated to do this.

Rental Inspection Policy.

Commissioner Melanie Cozzi asked if there was any policy regarding holding property owners responsible for their properties. She is trying to understand the public health safety concerns with what renters are going through. City Administrator Darin DeHaan said the health department has been a previous contact to help with properties in disrepair. Mayor Ken Williams said a certified RRIP inspector would need to inspect these properties. It is much more common in large cities. He asked how the city would fund this project. The city has a list of rental properties and owners of the properties that will be shared with the City Council.

Create a Vacant Building Registry.

City Administrator Darin DeHaan said when Commissioner Melanie Cozzi and himself were at CDI there were Iowa communities that had absentee property owners. To stay on top of vacant properties and foreclosures they require these properties to be registered with the city. Mayor Ken Williams asked City Administrator Darin DeHaan to work on a process or policy to bring to the City Council for review.

Bring Workforce Training Event to Oregon.

Mayor Ken Williams said the city has done this in the past and has worked with Best, Business Employment Skills Team. When the job market changed not as many people came to the job fairs. The US Postal Service held one recently. He asked Commissioner Melanie Cozzi to meet with Best and ask how we can assist or help with job recruitment programs.

Create a Young Adult Advisory Board.

Commissioner Melanie Cozzi thought the city could bring in younger people to help with the Comprehensive Plan update. She would be happy to reach out to the school district. Mayor Ken Williams said to add this group of people to the list of potential candidates for the meeting with the NIU group on the 22nd of September.

Create Guidelines and What to Expect for Businesses that Qualify for TIF Grants.

Commissioner Melanie Cozzi said the owner of Mutts and Cuts had questions regarding TIF grants. Mayor Ken Williams said we have a brochure explaining the TIF process. He asked City Clerk Cheryl Hilton to update the form. City Administrator Darin DeHaan said Mutts and Cuts specific questions regard the façade grant and that application and process needs to be cleaned up.

Open Comments of Discussion by Mayor or Council Members.

Commissioner Tim Krug asked if the driveway approach program that had been discussed previously could be finished. He said the previous discussion included reimbursing the resident a portion of the cost for the approach. He would like to see that get done. City Administrator Darin DeHaan said a separate estimate for the cost for the approach would need to be submitted so the city has an idea of what the cost would be. A program will need to be created. Mayor Ken Williams said this will be a part of the community service position, they will be able to provide the residents with the required permitting information.

Meeting Adjourned: 7:09 P.M.

Ken Williams, Mayor

Attest: _____
Cheryl Hilton, City Clerk