



ALBANY CITY COUNCIL

MINUTES

Monday, December 11, 2023

Work Session

Council Chambers, City Hall

Approved: January 10, 2024

Call to Order

4:00 p.m.

Mayor Alex Johnson II called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

Roll Call

Councilors present: Mayor Alex Johnson II and Councilors Matilda Novak, Jackie Montague, Ray Kopczynski, Ramycia McGhee, and Marilyn Smith

Councilors absent: Steph Newton (excused)

Business from the Public

4:00 p.m.

None

Presentation from CASA of Linn County

4:00 p.m.

Leslee Mayers presented slides* and shared about the work of CASA of Linn County.

Public restroom facilities

4:12 p.m.

Parks and Recreation Director Kim Lyddane shared information about restrooms downtown and asked for direction from the council.

Councilors discussed options for restrooms including Portland Loo, port-a-pots, and permanent structures. Councilor Matilda Novak and Councilor Marilyn Smith suggested partnerships with various non-profit or business entities to provide restroom services downtown. Councilor Jackie Montague emphasized the need for a restroom at the Amtrak station and said that downtown restroom will become a need. Johnson II suggested that any downtown restroom should be visible and in a high traffic area to prevent misuse.

Lyddane summarized the council's direction. Lyddane said her interpretation of the direction is for staff to look at finding a restroom option for the Amtrak train station during off hours and, in the long term, look at developing a potentially 24/7 restroom downtown in a visible location. The council agreed with Lyddane's interpretation.

Code amendments, housekeeping

4:34 p.m.

Code Compliance Officer Kris Schendel shared information about the ordinances that were listed in the packet. Schendel shared that the suggested changes were mostly minor changes to bring the sections in alignment with other parts of the code or close loopholes.

Responding to a question from Montague, Schendel said the city currently has approved around 25 permits for food trucks. Schendel confirmed that it would be less of an operational burden to have all food truck permits be renewed at the same time, rather than spaced out over the year.

Fireworks discussion

4:43 p.m.

Fire Chief Shane Wooton and Police Chief Marcia Harnden shared how other Oregon communities have been addressing the sale and banning of fireworks. They both shared the statistics of annual fireworks-related calls, noting that almost all fireworks complaints the city receives are concerning fireworks that are already illegal.

Responding to questions from Councilor Ray Kopczynski and Councilor Ramycia McGhee, Wooton and Harnden said there are not certain parts of the city that generate more fireworks calls than others. Harnden, Wooton, and City Attorney Sean Kidd also spoke about the current state statute and fines for using illegal fireworks.

Novak said she is concerned about the noise from fireworks and sees a large community interest in banning fireworks altogether, especially on the Nextdoor social media site.

Montague said she does not see a need to pursue a fireworks ban until there is a greater fire risk, noting the issues with enforcing the current ban on illegal fireworks. Montague said she does not currently see widespread community support for a fireworks ban.

Harnden and Wooton said their staff would work on a campaign to inform residents on how to report the use of illegal fireworks. City Manager Peter Troedsson summarized the information from Harnden and Wooton by restating that the issue is largely one of enforcement.

Marvin's Garden update

5:04 p.m.

Harnden and Wooton gave an update on the Marvin's Garden campsite. Harnden noted that most calls to the site are police-initiated, proactive checks. Harnden shared costs associated with the camp and thanked CHANCE for all the work they have done for the encampment.

Responding to questions from Montague and Johnson II, Harnden said there are still hotspots around town for calls related to unhoused people and that there is no limit to how long someone can stay at Marvins Garden.

Responding to a question from Kopczynski, Harnden said that she is not aware of any issues with cold exposure during a recent cold snap. Wooton said there were no calls for cold exposure to either camping location.

Pavement management funding discussion

5:15 p.m.

City Engineer Staci Belcastro shared slides* about the history of street funding in Albany and discussed a list of funding alternatives to bridge the current funding gap.

Johnson II said he is not interested in pursuing a fuel tax, calling it a regressive tax. Novak said she is open to the idea of a fuel tax. Belcastro answered questions from Montague about what a transportation utility would look like and the history of a fuel tax in Albany.

Belcastro said the council will continue discussing street funding in January.

Business from the council

5:54 p.m.

Councilors shared updates about recent community events.

City manager report

6:00 p.m.

The city manager informed the council of upcoming community events.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Reviewed by,

Gabe Shepherd
Deputy City Clerk

Peter Troedsson
City Manager

**Documents discussed at the meeting that are not in the agenda packet are archived in the record. Documents from staff are posted to the website after the meeting. Documents submitted by the public are available by emailing cityclerk@albanyoregon.gov*