

## BINGEN CITY COUNCIL MINUTES

April 18, 2017

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Betty J. Barnes at 7:00 p.m. Council members present: Catherine Kiewit, Stephanie Porter, Laura Mann, Ryan O'Connor, Izzy Schroder. Staff present: City Administrator Jan Brending, City Attorney Tad Connors and Bingen-White Salmon Police Sergeant Mike Hepner. Audience present: Michelle Scott, Matt Siegel, Patti Newman, John Newman, Greg Colt, Gabriel Roth, Carl McNew, Carl Warren, Alisa Garlington, Shannon Armstrong, Howard Bulick, Michelle Roth, Angela Brackhahn, Phil Jones, Esther Harris, Emily Parlin, Eric Schroder, Gabe Genauer.

### **Public Comment**

#### ***Eric Schroder, Bingen WA***

Eric Schroder said he has seen a lot of improvements in Bingen since he moved to the city in 1988. He said he is here before the council to ask that proactive measures be taken to make the area safer for pedestrians. Schroder said he has known three persons who were struck down by cars. He said that by being proactive he hopes that will not happen in Bingen. Schroder said one of the areas is in the vicinity of Jefferson and Maple Streets and Franklin and Maple Streets due to cars coming down the hill from White Salmon and taking shortcuts to the east side of Bingen. He said he thinks drivers are not aware of how fast they are going. Schroder said Jefferson has a 30 foot roadway with no sidewalks and is an area where children walk to bus stops. He said he would like the council to consider some traffic calming strategies and speed limit signs with an appropriate speed limit for the area. Schroder suggested placing caution signs near the school bus stops, adding speed bumps and traffic lights. He said that in most cases slowing down in the area to 10 mph would only delay an individual 10 to 15 seconds.

#### ***Shannon Armstrong, Bingen WA***

Shannon Armstrong said she agrees with Eric Schroder. She said people "tear" down Franklin Street and that it would be nice for things to change.

Betty Barnes said the speed for the city's residential neighborhoods are 25 mph. She said the city can put out some traffic counters that also check speed to see how fast vehicles are going.

Mike Hepner said he feels 25 mph is too fast but he can only ticket anything above that. He said that if there are issues in any specific area he can assign officers to that area for monitoring.

Betty Barnes noted the city council can consider changing the speed limit.

Izzy Schroder said she encouraged Eric Schroder to come and speak to the council. She said she is nervous when her daughter is playing outside because of the speed of the vehicles. Schroder said if proposed development in the area is approved there will be additional traffic.

John Newman asked if there is a perception of traffic avoiding the intersection of Highway 14 and 141.

Jan Brending said yes. She said that, in fact, traffic is moving into other parts of town including west to avoid Highway 14 and 141.

Betty Barnes noted that a traffic study on Highway 14 is taking place and it will be looking at the intersection of Highway 14 and 141.

Jan Brending said that small traffic circles are being used in areas like Portland and Olympia even with narrow streets.

Laura Mann said she spoke with Seth Baker who is working on the traffic study. She said she gave him other names and agencies for people to contact to get different viewpoints regarding traffic. Mann said she told Baker a traffic light is needed at Highway 14 and 141. She said it would be nice to have some nice pedestrian bulbouts at Humboldt and 141.

### **Bingen-White Salmon Police Department Update**

Mike Hepner reported that he is working with the city's animal control officer, Mike Solomon and using the kennel setup at the public works location.

Izzy Schroder told Mike Hepner that she has received a lot of great feedback about him. She said that she hopes he will put his name in the hat for police chief when Chief Tracy Wyckoff retires.

## **Approval of Minutes – April 4, 2017**

Changes to the minutes of the April 4, 2017 regular council meeting were noted as follows:

Page 1, 6<sup>th</sup> paragraph, 1<sup>st</sup> sentence should read: “Tony Gilmer reported that five candidates have been selected for interviews after confirmation of their credentials for the position of operations management.”

Page 2, 1<sup>st</sup> paragraph, 1<sup>st</sup> sentence should read: “Tao Berman said he does not believe it is clear and that there are grey areas.”

Catherine Kiewit moved to approve the meeting minutes of the regularly scheduled meeting of the city council on April 4, 2017 as corrected. Stephanie Porter seconded the motion and it was unanimously passed.

### **Gabriel Roth, Eagle Scout Project – Peace Pole**

Gabriel Roth said he is working on an Eagle Scout Project in conjunction with the White Salmon Rotary. He said the peace pole states “May Peace Prevail on Earth” in seven different languages. Roth said he is installing a pole at each school and one in White Salmon. He said he would like to install a pole in Bingen at Daubenspeck Park or an appropriate location of the council’s choosing.

Izzy Schroder said she has seen the peace poles while traveling and on Instagram.

Catherine Kiewit said she supports the project. She suggested locating the pole in one of the city’s landscape beds on Steuben instead of the park because more visitors will see it that way.

Mike Hepner said he agrees with locating the pole on Steuben versus in the park because of concerns of vandalism.

Stephanie Porter moved to approve the placement of a peace pole in Bingen in a location to be determined by the mayor. Izzy Schroder seconded the motion and it was unanimously passed.

### **Request to Close Portion of Humboldt Street, NAPA**

Jan Brending said NAPA is asking to close approximately 2/3 of the 100 block of East Humboldt Street for their annual tool sale. She said crosswalks and sidewalks will not be blocked and emergency access will be provided.

Laura Mann moved to approve the NAPA request to close approximately 2/3 of the 100 block of East Humboldt Street requiring that crosswalks and sidewalks not be blocked and that emergency access be provided. Stephanie Porter seconded the motion and it was unanimously passed.

### **Public Hearing – Conditional Use Permit Application 2017-001, Matt Siegel – KeyMar LLC (Bingen School Inn)**

Betty Barnes opened the public hearing for conditional use permit application 2017-001 submitted by Matt Siegel, KeyMar LLC.

Betty Barnes asked if anyone has had contact with the proponents of the conditional use permit application.

Izzy Schroder said she had an e-mail from the proponents prior to the application being submitted to the city.

Catherine Kiewit said she met with the proponents and Betty Barnes and Laura Mann prior to the application and also had an e-mail from them prior to the application. Kiewit said she also spoke with John Newman in the post office about the property and proposal.

Laura Mann said she also met with the proponents and Betty Barnes and Catherine Kiewit prior to the application being submitted. She noted that she also had a conversation with John and Patti Newman prior to her sitting on the council.

Stephanie Porter said she also received an e-mail from the proponents prior to the application and also spoke with John Newman.

Betty Barnes asked if there were any objections to any council members hearing the proposed conditional use permit application. There were none.

Betty Barnes also noted that she met with the proponents prior to the submittal of an application to hear general information about the proposal. She said the individuals who attended the meeting just listened and nothing was promised.

Betty Barnes asked if any council members would benefit financially from the proposal.

Council members said no.

Jan Brending provided a review of the staff report. She said the application is to expand the current use of the property: 13 to 15 units with 2 individuals per unit and use of the gym and facilities for community action activities by adding 20 280-square foot private cabins with a covered walkway connecting the cabins to the Bingen School building; adding a 3,200 square foot community building with a pool, sauna, hot tub, bathrooms, and small café with alcohol service; expanding the lobby area of the existing building to include small café with alcohol service; using the gym as multipurpose building which could include movie theatre, gym for community needs, meeting and event space; and continuing to use existing apartments under gym for hotel staff. Brending said the property is located at 405 E. Franklin and is approximately 112,000 square feet in size. She said the current zoning of the property is Single-Family (R1) District and the Comprehensive Plan designation is Multi-Family. Brending said the existing use of the property was approved as a conditional use on March 7, 1988. She said the property is surrounded by single-family residential on all four sides of the property. She said per Bingen Municipal Code 17.72.010 the current use of the property is not a nonconforming use. Brending said the applicants propose to provide 68 unattended off-street parking spaces and an additional 22 parking spaces with an attendant when necessary for larger events. She said two signs are proposed with lighting designed to match the aesthetics of the existing buildings and prevent light pollution on the surrounding neighborhood. Brending said the proponents have stated that they will have approximately 12-15 staff on site each day.

Jan Brending read two letters of comment into the record:

1. Betty Berry asked if the Bingen School Inn needs more space and how often it has full occupancy. She stated that she would prefer the vacant property to stay as a children's play field.
2. Betty Berry, Kathleen Zeitlin, Kimberly Berry and Michael Berry expressed concerns about the height of new trees that would be planted along Franklin Street that they may block the view from their family home. They asked what information does the proponent have that the hostel will attract sufficient numbers to make it a successful endeavor. They thanked the proponents for being willing to address traffic and noise. They stated they hoped the full-time jobs would be above minimum wage and would provide family wage jobs that are needed in the community.

Matt Siegel, representing KeyMar LLC, said that he is one of four partners who have been searching for their next project. He said their project, The Society Hotel, has been well received and is successful in downtown Portland. Siegel said he feels the Gorge is a special place and that KeyMar's proposal would provide a unique experience.

Gabe Genauer said he is also one of four partners who came together 3 to 4 years ago. He said they have no corporate ties to the hotel industry and 3 of the 4 are contractors. Genauer said the fourth partner has experience in running a café and is involved in community outreach. He said it is their goal to provide a warm welcoming area to the neighbor and to fit into the neighborhood and town. Genauer said he feels the proposal will be attractive to recreationists in the area. He said they will be landscaping and creating a buffer to prevent disturbances in the neighborhood.

***Public Comment on Proposed Conditional Use Permit***

***Carl Warren, Bingen***

Carl Warren asked what the vision will be 3 to 5 years from now. He hopes that he can still have his views from his property, walk his dog in the neighborhood and hopes that the proponents will nurture community and use local contractors. Warren said he wants to see the values of the neighborhood kept.

Gabe Genauer noted that none of the new structures will be over two stories. He said they want to be considerate of the neighborhood. Genauer said he feels diversity of the room types is necessary for financial purposes.

Carl Warren said he wants to keep the small town feel.

Gabe Genauer said the development will feel like summer camp for adults. He said the development will be constructed to have four season comfort.

Matt Siegel said their goal is to also highlight the view and for them the views are of the hills to the north and south. He said they also don't want the landscaping to grow so tall that the views will be blocked.

***Shannon Armstrong, Bingen***

Shannon Armstrong said she is concerned about the extra traffic in the area. She said hopefully there can be some measures to help control the traffic. Armstrong said she is also concerned about alcohol being served on the property in a kid-filled neighborhood. She said that it is her understanding the cafes would be open to the public.

Matt Siegel said yes they will be open to the public. He said he hopes that surrounding area residents will use the facilities. Siegel said it is about engaging people.

Gabe Genauer said they will have to follow all regulations regarding the service of alcohol. He said that The Society Hotel has a good track record with employees who care about their guests and the community. Genauer said their philosophy is to provide old world hospitality. He said there will still likely be some level of impact on the neighborhood.

Jan Brending noted that both cafes are very small and not the size of any of the restaurants in town.

***Howard Bulick, Bingen***

Howard Bulick said he likes the vision of the development and feels it would be an asset to the town. He said it will be hard seeing the changes in the single-family neighborhood. Bulick said he has concerns that the property might be attractive to kids in the area as they are used to playing on the property. He noted that if the property was converted to residential use there would like be more traffic also. Bulick said he hopes that the proponents of the project will help with traffic problems.

***John Newman, Bingen School Inn***

John Newman noted that there are some proposed improvements on Humboldt Street that are coming up.

Jan Brending noted that the city was not successful in obtaining the grant for those improvements but will be resubmitting an application this summer.

***Greg Colt, Hood River***

Greg Colt said he feels the proposed development will have a positive impact on the current business in Bingen.

***Angela Brackhahn, Bingen***

Angela Brackhahn said she is able to look at the mountain and the river currently and is afraid that all she will be able to see in the future is the proposed development. She asked if access to the property will be driven from one location.

Matt Siegel said the west-end parking lot will be the access to the development and therefore should not affect the surrounding streets.

Angela Brackhahn asked if they would consider fencing the property.

Matt Siegel said possibly.

Angela Brackhahn said she also likes things to be symmetrical and suggested that the cabins be placed in the shape of a square or rectangle.

Matt Siegel said the design of the cabins deals with the scale and slope of the property.

Gabe Genauer said the cabins will also be used as structure columns for the covered walkway which they feel is important due to the weather in the Gorge. He noted that the cabins will be one-story.

Catherine Kiewit asked what is the actual height of the structures.

Gabe Genauer said the maximum height will be 15 on the tall side of the structures. He said that the center building will be one story but does not know the actual proposed height at this time.

***Patti Newman, Underwood***

Patti Newman said that in the 1990's the Bingen School Inn had 45 people a day staying there and that it could be noisy. She said she does not believe that the height of the cabins that will be located in what is currently the ball field will be above the Franklin Street level.

Matt Siegel said that none of the new structures will be taller than existing structures. He said they believe the existing structures are worth saving.

***Carl McNew, White Salmon***

Carl McNew said there are people who would like to see the ball field turned into residential development which would bring more traffic to the area and could cause more problems with views than the proposed development. He said he thinks the proposal is an amazing concept and it glad to see the school preserved.

Howard Bulick asked if jobs will be made available to locals.

Matt Siegel said yes.

Howard Bulick asked how long people will be able to stay at the facility.

Matt Siegel said it would not be financially viable for individuals to stay at the facility long-term.

Catherine Kiewit asked if they will provide living wage jobs.

Gabe Genauer said that at their existing property an individual starts at about \$13 per hour. He said he expects jobs to pay between \$14 to \$20 per hour. He said the general manager and maintenance manager will earn \$50,000 to \$70,000 per year. Genauer said they pay above the minimum wage and also provide full health benefits for employees, education benefits, staff morale programs, and community service activities. He said staff retention is important.

Izzy Schroder asked if the development will be dog friendly.

Matt Siegel said he does not know yet. He said their current facility allows service dogs.

Izzy Schroder said it would be important to identify locations for walking dogs and where they could go to the bathroom.

Izzy Schroder said she loves the vision versus more residential because she wants to keep the look and feel of the old school.

Izzy Schroder asked if the proponents are familiar with the laws on marijuana use.

Matt Siegel said it will not be allowed at the facility.

Izzy Schroder said she would like to advocate for the use of locally sourced foods, wines, etc.

Matt Siegel said local is good for everybody. He said it is something they are currently doing at The Society Hotel.

Izzy Schroder asked if they would be offering concierge service to customers who may be coming in on Amtrak.

Matt Siegel said a shuttle might be feasible.

Izzy Schroder said she likes the community and meeting room space.

Laura Mann asked what is the maximum capacity of the facility.

Gabe Genauer said approximately 200 people.

Laura Mann asked if the development will be phased.

Matt Siegel said no that they plan one grand opening and want to sell the experience as a whole package.

Laura Mann said she is concerned that 4 to 5 parking spaces for employees might not be enough given the number of employees the company might have each day.

Matt Siegel said it is there hope that some of the employees will live in Bingen and walk to work. He said that employees are also staggered and will not be onsite all at one time.

Laura Mann noted that alcohol has been served at events at the Bingen School Inn in the past.

Jan Brending noted that the café at The Society Hotel is only open from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m.

Laura Mann asked if a school motif will be used and whether they will talk about the history of the school.

Matt Siegel said they want to respect the building and highlight its history. He said at The Society Hotel they have displays of items they found in the hotel. Siegel said it is their goal to keep the spirit of the buildings alive.

Catherine Kiewit said she thinks the development would be a great addition to the community. She said she does think people's concerns are valid. Kiewit said it will be a big change and feels it is the best alternative possible than seeing the old school torn down and residential homes put up in its place.

Catherine Kiewit discussed parking.

Jan Brending noted the parking identified in the proposal is all off-street parking and would all be on the property and not on the street.

Catherine Kiewit said the Newmans have been very supportive of allowing the community to have access to the community space and asked what the company's vision is for community access.

Gabe Genauer said they want to continue to provide community access but it will be dependent on timing and if the facilities are not being used.

Laura Mann said she thinks community access can be worked out.

Stephanie Porter said she is excited about the project. She said that in looking at their other project she feels the company cares about communities. Porter said she hopes that free access to the facilities could be provided to some of the low-income residents who could not afford a pass.

Stephanie Porter asked if there are any plans to have sidewalks or pathways around the property.

Gabe Genauer said the full design process has not been completed. He said there is a budget and that anything voluntary will have to meet the budget goals.

Matt Siegel said ideally it would be great to have a path around the property.

Jan Brending noted the city council develops any conditions of approval.

Ryan O'Connor asked if they have concerns about how the city itself might affect the develop and asked what support the city can offer.

Matt Siegel said having a meeting like this is important and feels the support of the community is very helpful. He said they want the project to be a good thing for everyone. He said concerns would be purely financial and there is definitely a limit to the budget.

Jan Brending noted that unlike Portland the city has no development charges. She said there will be some permitting charges and possible charges related to water and sewer connections.

Gabe Genauer said he is optimistic in working with Bingen.

Betty Barnes closed the public hearing.

The council discussed establishing quiet hours from 11 p.m. to 7 a.m.

The council discussed the number of parking spaces that would be required and whether they should be paved and striped. The council identified a minimum of 47 delineated parking spaces.

The council discussed whether to require sidewalks around the property or just on Cedar Street. The council identified the need for a sidewalk on the east side of Cedar when the city completes its Humboldt Street project.

The council discussed the height of any new landscaping. The council identified a limitation for the height of new landscaping not to exceed the height of the tallest building or no more than 10 feet of the above highest grade whichever is greatest.

Catherine Kiewit moved to approve the conditional use permit with the following conditions of approval: 1. a minimum of 47 off-street delineated parking spaces must be provided; 2. quiet hours between 11 p.m. and 7 a.m. must be established; 3. the maximum height of the any new landscaping shall not exceed the peak of the tallest building or no more than 10 feet above the highest grade whichever is greatest; and 4. Installing a sidewalk on the east side of Cedar when the City of Bingen develops its Humboldt Street project. Stephanie Porter seconded the motion and it was unanimously passed.

There was a consensus of the council to table the remaining agenda items until the next council meeting.

### **Voucher Approval**

Vouchers audited and certified as required by RCW 42.24.080 and expense reimbursement claims certified as required by RCW 42.24.090 as of this date April 18, 2017. The council by unanimous vote does approve for payment the following list: EFT and checks 19129-19151 (dated 04/18/2017) totaling \$19,868.81. General Fund – \$5,881.90; Street - \$523.46; Water Fund - \$4,026.41; Sewer Fund- \$2,721.70; Treatment Plant Fund - \$5,818.16; Water Construction & Maintenance Fund - \$897.18.

Vouchers audited and certified as required by RCW 42.24.080 and expense reimbursement claims certified as required by RCW 42.24.090 as of this date April 18, 2017. The council by unanimous vote does approve for payment the following list: checks 19127-19128 (dated 03/31/2017) totaling \$1,474.44. Court Remittance Agency Fund - \$1,474.44.

Vouchers audited and certified as required by RCW 42.24.080 and expense reimbursement claims certified as required by RCW 42.24.090 as of this date April 18, 2017. The council by unanimous vote does approve for payment the following list: EFT, payroll checks 19122-19126 (dated 04/14/2017) totaling \$18,386.10. General Fund – \$7,770.63; Street - \$3,221.65; Water Fund - \$2,154.00; Sewer Fund - \$392.42; Treatment Plant Fund - \$4,847.40.

The council adjourned 10:50 p.m.

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City Clerk

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Mayor