

BINGEN CITY COUNCIL MINUTES

December 5, 2017

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Barnes J. Barnes at 7:00 p.m. Council members present: Ryan O'Connor, Isolde Schroder, Laura Mann, Catherine Kiewit, Phil Jones, and Student Council Member Cesar Robles. Staff present: Deputy Clerk Cheyenne Willey, City Attorney Chris Lanz. Audience present: Ken Park, Tammy Kaufman, Jessie Burke, Jonathan Cohen, Matt Siegel, Gabe Grenauer, Richard Foster, Tony Gilmer, Devin Reck, Bethany Vermaas and James Newman.

Public Comment

Tammy Kaufman, Insitu

Tammy Kaufman thanked the City of Bingen Public Works Department and Insitu Facilities teams for putting up the Christmas lights on the downtown trees.

Mayor Barnes mentioned that many entities helped with the lights including Insitu, the Port of Klickitat, and the City of Bingen Public Works Department.

Tony Gilmer, Klickitat County Emergency Medical Services District No. 1 Representative

Tony Gilmer informed the council that he had prepared an informative document to answer some questions asked in the November 21, 2017 council meeting. He said the document was available with the Mayor and electronically. Gilmer said he appreciated the thoughtful questions from the council.

Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) Update – Bingen Point Access Project

Devin Reck

Devin Reck greeted the council and said he had met a few of the council members at various community events. He explained he had been working on the Bingen Point Access Project for quite a while. Reck said the project had been funded so he was working on the next step of the project: soliciting feedback and opinions from the public.

Reck noted that several of the possible options were over budget. He said WSDOT got great feedback from the community so far. He stated the goal was to get the project closer to Bingen and lower the cost. Reck noted that two options had been selected to move forward for closer scrutiny.

Option #2

Reck explained Option #2 approached the crossing by going over the train tracks east of Bingen. He explained that near property owned by Dickey Farms on the east end of Bingen there was a high point in SR14. Reck said the high point was the best place from an engineering standpoint to exit the road and cross the tracks.

Option #14

According to Reck, Option #14 began in Bingen near Elm Street. He said the option utilized frontage right of way near the railroad and featured a roundabout to exit SR14.

Reck said both of the proposals were brought to a value engineering team. He explained that projects over a certain dollar amount threshold require evaluation from independent experts. He said the engineers function was to find any flaws in the design and suggest ways to fix any issues found. Reck said the engineering team had recommended straightening the overpass structure and shifting SR14 to streamline Option #2. He said some lingering issues with Option #2 included soil stability concerns and cost concerns.

Reck stated that Option #14 satisfied all needs when it was assessed by the engineering team. He mentioned that the roundabout was crucial due to the tight turn required to exit SR14, as a traditional intersection would require significantly more space. He explained that roundabouts are safe and efficient. Reck said two bridges would be built to support the railroad tracks, and that the exit from SR14 would pass underneath and tie into Marina Road. Reck said Option #14 was nice because of its location in town, and also due to the fact that many of the parcels

needed for right of way are vacant. He noted that any location will have impacts, but vacant properties lessen the impact to the community. Reck said Option #14 would bring a community feel, featuring sidewalks, etc.

Reck said Option #14 was the final choice, and would be moving forward with construction scheduled for 2020. He mentioned that WSDOT was trying to streamline the process for the community, in order to provide a safe, efficient crossing. Reck also mentioned that any time an intersection is considered for an update or change, a roundabout must be considered as an option. He explained that the roundabout doesn't have to be the final choice, but it must be looked at.

Reck played a video showing drone footage overlaid with a 3-D simulation of the proposed underpass.

Council Member Mann asked how low the underpass would sink beneath the train tracks.

Reck said the road surface would be 17.5 feet below the tracks.

Council Member Kiewit asked how much shoulder would be provided along the underpass.

Reck stated the underpass would be built for two full-size lanes.

Reck noted that the green space between SR14 and the proposed exit road provided a space to complete necessary digging without impacting traffic. Reck said the only necessary impact to traffic would be when the roundabout gets installed.

Reck also said WSDOT had carefully been considering the storm water impacts of the proposed design. He said some high level concept ideas had been discussed including a pond, direct discharge, and any possible wetland impacts.

Reck mentioned that this design was built already in another location successfully. He explained the process of creating the bridge for the train tracks including the installation of steel columns and a concrete tub.

Reck asked the council members if they were familiar with the widened spot on SR14 near the Bonneville Dam, noting the similar structure to the proposed underpass.

The council asked Reck which entity would be responsible for maintenance and upkeep of the various features proposed.

Reck said he believed Burlington-Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) Railroad would maintain the bridge, and the City of Bingen would maintain the exit and underpass road.

Council Member Jones asked what the green spaces represented in the simulation of the project.

Reck explained that the green spaces represented areas for possible vegetation or rocks. He noted that sometimes rock is necessary due to soil composition and topography.

Council Member Kiewit asked if Option #14 was the only option that met the budget requirements.

Reck said yes it was. He said Option #2 presented some possible issues that could require mitigation and incur more costs. He explained that WSDOT was trying to minimize risks and property impacts.

Reck said he will be presenting Option #14 at the planned open house. He said the presentation would not be formal, but the video would be shown, exhibits would show the project, and information on right of way purchases would be provided.

Reck mentioned that in concert with soliciting feedback from the public, a traffic study was completed. He said Option #14 was the common sense choice being closer to town. He said the study validated the proposal from a traffic standpoint.

Council Member Mann noted that the roundabout would become a gateway to the city. She asked about options for roundabout concepts and median appearance. Mann said the roundabout and underpass will be the biggest, newest addition to Bingen. She said she was interested in possible art installations, pedestrian access to the Port of Klickitat, and other design elements.

Reck reminded the council that maintenance and semi truck aprons would have to be considered.

Council Member Mann agreed that the design part of the process would come much further down the road.

Council Member Jones asked what the road grade would be.

Bethany Vermaas said between 5 and 5.5%.

City Attorney Lanz mentioned that as the city prosecutor, he hears gripes from traffic court regularly. He asked what would prevent improper turning at the roundabout exit.

Reck said curbing islands known as “pork chops” would effectively direct traffic and discourage improper turning.

Council Member O’Connor asked if the idea was that trucks going to the Port of Klickitat would use the underpass and that logging trucks would continue to use the Maple Street crossing.

Reck explained that the new access isn’t being installed to take away from current crossing, but instead to augment it. He said he thinks that both crossings are necessary due to safety concerns. He said he expects driving patterns to form and the two crossings to work in concert. Reck said he has experienced Bingen’s rush hour and he thinks that this will alleviate gap and will act as a meter.

Council Member Kiewit asked if the roundabout would be a yield or full stop.

Reck said it would be a yield as a full stop would defeat the purpose.

Council Member Kiewit asked how Elm Street would be integrated or addressed. She said she was concerned with drivers speeding through the residential area as a short cut.

Reck explained that he had spoken briefly with city staff and would like to explore closing Elm Street off by making it either a “hammerhead” or “T-bone” cul-de-sac. He noted that important details to consider would include fire trucks and turn around space. He indicated that he would like to discuss the option further with Public Works and the Fire Department.

Council Member Mann asked if the cul-de-sac option would make the westbound lane of SR14 straighter through the roundabout.

Reck said it was important to center the roundabout on SR14 to keep traffic balanced.

Council Member Schroder said she felt the roundabout would be fantastic for traffic calming.

Council Member Kiewit asked if WSDOT would accommodate a request for stamped concrete when the aesthetic side of the project is approached.

Reck said yes.

Council Member Mann asked what the next step would be after the open house.

Reck said the next step would be to go to work on the right of way purchase. He noted that his wife's family was recently impacted by a right of way purchase, so he understands the need for early communication. Reck said the human aspect is very important and he doesn't want any surprises.

Council Member Mann asked if the project proposal had been finalized.

Reck said yes, the next thing to do would be to actually begin the project.

Council Member Mann asked the audience what their thoughts were on the project.

James Newman said he felt it was not a new idea. He noted that in the past the main issue preventing a crossing project had been interrupting the rail traffic as all proposals required the tracks to be closed for a week during the construction phase.

Reck said now they can circumvent that issue by using a "shoo fly" bypass, and that it was accounted for in the project budget.

Council Member Mann asked what the Society Hotel thought.

Matt Siegel said he thinks it will contribute to the experience of entering Bingen. He also noted that it would be great to slow people down as they come into town. He said he felt it would also provide a nicer entrance to the natural area on the Port rather than crossing tracks.

Council Member Mann asked about bike access being provided with the underpass.

Reck said the sidewalk along the roadway would be five or six feet wide.

Tammy asked if electrical access had been planned for. She mentioned the possibility of placing a Christmas tree or something similar near the roundabout.

Mayor Barnes said yes, that had been considered.

Reck at this level of design WSDOT had not finalized those details but it would be addressed.

Mayor Barnes said the video made big difference in opinion and ability to visualize final product. She thanked Reck for taking the time to come out and speak to the council.

Council Member Schroder thanked the WSDOT representatives for their informative presentation and said she was looking forward to the open house.

Reck reminded everyone that the open house would be at the White Salmon Library on Wednesday, December 13th, 2017.

Council Member Kiewit mentioned that she felt outreach materials and information provided in Spanish would be very helpful. She said the survey provided in Spanish was difficult to find online and more information being circulated in Spanish may help prevent community members from being surprised by the project moving forward.

Reck said that was excellent feedback. He said he felt Mayor had done an outstanding job and that he was grateful for the support of the Mayor and council.

Approval of Meeting Minutes – November 21, 2017

Corrections to the meeting minutes of the November 21, 2017 regular council meeting were noted as follows:

Page 5, paragraphs 1 and 2

“Irving said the primary goal is to keep operating for residents, but in a way that scavengers aren’t a fixture, and that contamination rates go down. **She noted that the Bingen recycling site accounted for 50% of all recycling in Klickitat County.**”

“Council Member Mann **said that 50% of recyclables was a significant statistic, and proved a need for service in the Bingen area. She pointed out that** Klickitat County has many sites, and that the Bingen site is for residents of this area. She pointed out that the contamination rate goal is county-wide. She said Republic Services through the contract with Klickitat County Solid Waste provides a great service. Mann said curbside service is great, and has lower contamination rates. Mann said the Bingen facility is primarily for glass and businesses.”

Council Member Schroder moved to approve the minutes of the November 21, 2017 regular council meeting as corrected. Council member Jones seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Final Public Hearing – Proposed 2018 Budget

Mayor Barnes opened the public hearing for the Proposed 2018 Budget. No comments were made. Mayor Barnes closed the public meeting.

Proposed Ordinance 2017-12-683 – Adopting 2018 Budget

Council Member Kiewit moved to approve proposed Ordinance 2017-12-683 – Adopting 2018 Budget as presented. Council Member Schroder seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Public Hearing- Conditional Use Permit Application 2017-005, Society Hotel Bingen

Mayor Barnes opened the public hearing for Conditional Use Permit Application 2017-005, Society Hotel Bingen. She asked if any council members had discussed the proposed conditional use excluding the previous application and approval issued in May of 2017 that might influence their position or decision. She also asked if any council member would profit from this conditional use being approved or denied.

The council replied no.

Mayor Barnes asked if there were any objections to the council hearing this conditional use permit application.

No objections were made.

Deputy Clerk Willey read the staff report and explained the proposed conditional use expansion.

Representatives from the Society Hotel Bingen explained that the application stemmed from a procedural aspect where previous conditional use permit application had described the desired use as maintaining the existing use. They said what would have been more accurate would have been to apply for the existing use as is, not solely what had been approved for the previous owner. They explained that their intent was to have multiple beds in each bunk room, and that was what the current conditional use application was meant to clarify.

Mayor Barnes explained that the Society Hotel Bingen also was hoping to get approval to place one of their planned buildings into the hillside, partially underground. She said they had questions regarding setback requirements when a building was subterranean.

Council Member Mann asked what the use of the underground structure would be.

The Society Hotel Bingen representatives explained it would function as a small meeting space.

Mayor Barnes noted that the building was already approved, but that the actual location of the property line was a new development as it had been assumed to be closer to the roadway.

The Society Hotel Bingen representatives said the building would be completely on private property, and that they were just seeking clarification on the setback requirements.

Council Member Kiewit said she was understood that unless the building was less than 300 square feet, the setbacks needed to be met. She continued that she was not sure that setbacks for an underground building had ever been addressed in Bingen. She suggested speaking with the fire department for their thoughts on the matter before proceeding.

City Attorney Lanz said he was unprepared to discuss the issue, as he was made aware of the question shortly before the council meeting.

Matt Siegel asked if the Society Hotel property was subject to commercial or residential setbacks.

Council Member Kiewit said the property's designation remained unchanged, as just a conditional use was addressed.

It was noted that the question related to building code and zoning interpretation instead of conditional use, and that while it was good to bring the question to light, this was not the best time to discuss it in detail.

James Newman said as a significant adjacent property owner, he would like to see comprehensive plan designation eventually updated to mixed use.

Siegel said he believed that when the Society Hotel project initially began that, he was told that the comprehensive plan would be updated eventually.

Mayor Barnes suggested leaving the discussion there and returning to the proposed conditional use permit. She asked the council if they had any comments regarding the proposal.

The council did not express any comments or concerns.

Council Member Kiewit read a public comment submitted by the Washington State Archaeological & Historical Preservation Department regarding the SEPA Determination of Non Significance for the Society Hotel Bingen project.

Mayor Barnes closed the public hearing.

Council Member Kiewit moved to approve Conditional Use Permit Application 2017-005. Council Member Jones seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Mayor Barnes said the review and final decision would be addressed at the council meeting of December 19, 2017.

Siegel said on a personal note he had been falling in love with Bingen more and more with every visit. He mentioned having great interactions with local people and enjoying the connections being established.

Mayor Barnes thanked him and all of the representatives from the Society Hotel.

Port of Hood River – Update

Michael McElwee, Director, Port of Hood River

Director McElwee apologized for not making it to the last meeting. He said part of what he had to share was old news now, but he was unable to attend the November 21, 2017 council meeting because the Port of Hood River had a board meeting the same night. He said there was a very high likelihood of a toll increase in 2018, and that he would also like to discuss bridge replacement efforts.

McElwee said every year the bridge plan is updated with available information. He said since the bridge is nearly 100 years old, maintenance costs are increasing. McElwee said over the next 15 years, upgrades are expected to cost around 51 million. He said that figure included a bridge deck and guardrail replacement, structural upgrades to increase seismic stability, as well as lift span updates. He stated that the Port of Hood River needs to prepare and be ready to make those improvements so the bridge stays operational and safe.

McElwee said he believed the toll increase would bring in two million dollars a year or less, and that it would be dedicated to bridge repair and replacement. He mentioned that electronic Breeze By tolling would remain the lower cost option, increasing from \$0.80 to \$1.00. McElwee added that cash tolls would increase from \$1.00 to \$2.00. He noted that the bridge being utilized as part of an interstate detour in 2017 ended up costing 20 thousand dollars in repairs.

McElwee said that public hearings and comments submitted on the Port of Hood River's website show a theme of concerns regarding the impact of a toll increase on low income people. He said he understood that to a person working a minimum wage job and crossing the bridge twice a day, an increase would be a significant hit. He said the Port of Hood River attempted to reach out in multiple languages and ways to say that transponders would be provided for free and presented a lower cost option. He said he understood that electronic tolling still may not be the right fit for some people.

McElwee noted the need to keep the bridge operational as if it will be continue to be used for the foreseeable future, while at the same time looking seriously at the need to replace the bridge. He expressed a need to balance both options and show solid recognizable progress in the effort to replace the bridge.

McElwee said the process to replace the bridge could be a typical design and bid procedure, or may end up being a public-private partnership. He noted that one entity has already shown interest in working together, and even presented a proposal to the White Salmon City Council. He said the proponent also intends to present to the Hood River City Council. He said the proposal was sent to the Port of Hood River, and that he made the decision to promptly return it without even reading it. He said his reason for making that decision was due to the Oregon legislature requiring rules to be in place and similar to the rules the Oregon Department of Transportation used before a private proposal could be considered or acted upon. He said once rules are in place, the process will be big, exhaustive, expensive and extensive. He reminded the council that the entity doing the bridge replacement would need to make money back for investors. He said the company would want the ability to raise tolls.

Richard foster said that the bridge is used by both Washington and Oregon residents, but the revenue only benefits Oregon. He asked if over the years money had been used solely for bridge maintenance.

McElwee said that was a really important question. He explained that revenues from the bridge pay for things related to the bridge. He mentioned that the insurance premium for the bridge is 250,000 dollars per year. He said the net result is that a certain portion of funds subsidize other things at the port.

Council Member Kiewit said she understood that some of the bridge revenue in being used on other port expenses. She said she wondered if at some point it would be time to look to those developments to help relieve the burden from those developments. She suggested increasing lease amounts as an example.

McElwee said next year the Port of Hood River intends to have consultants and legal help available to hear proposals in order to effectively process sophisticated proposals. He said there was a definite need to prepare.

Council Member Kiewit said she appreciated the explanation and thought process, but she said sometimes there is a need to move forward without having all of the information, just to get things done. She said she was not sure

when that point would be, but she thought it should be sooner rather than later. She said the age and state of the bridge had been a known issue for decades and yet the beginning of the planning stage is just being reached now. She expressed a desire for the Port of Hood River to be thorough, but not so meticulous that the progress is stifled. She said there had to be a balance. She also shared concerns about agency as small as the Port of Hood River facilitating a project of that scale because it is so complicated and has many political layers.

Mayor Barnes thanked Director McElwee for the information and for taking the time to attend a council meeting.

McElwee said he would be happy to come back anytime the council would like an update.

Old Business – Radcomp Back Up Infrastructure Upgrades Agreement

The council asked for information on the cost to be clarified.

Council Member Kiewit moved to table the Radcomp Back Up Infrastructure Upgrades Agreement until the meeting of December 19, 2017. Council Member Jones seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Mayor's Update and Council Comments

Mayor Barnes said Evergreen Rural Water of Washington (ERWoW) would be doing a second door-to-door survey on Thursday, December 7, 2017 from 5:30 pm to 7:30 pm. She said plenty of Spanish language interpreters had volunteered to assist.

Council Member Kiewit asked if ERWoW had been successful so far in collecting responses to the survey.

Mayor Barnes said currently the number of responses collected was quite low. She said only about 50 had been received so far, with 25 being mailed responses, and 25 from the door-to-door effort. She said she believed another 75 responses were needed.

Mayor Barnes asked Student Council Member Robles about his experience as an interpreter assisting with the door-to-door survey.

Student Council Member Robles said he felt a poor day had been chosen, as the survey was attempted on a Saturday in the mid-afternoon. He stated that many people did not answer their door. He said it was very cold, and the surveyors from ERWoW decided to split everyone up because it was taking so much time to canvass the neighborhoods. He said if he had to estimate, about 20% of the time someone would answer the door. He felt that he was not successful in collecting many responses due to his age and lack of professional identification.

Council Member Mann asked if anyone was wearing any identification.

Student Council Member Robles said yes, the ERWoW surveyors were.

Richard Foster asked if a survey was mailed out to residents.

Deputy Clerk Willey said yes there was.

Mayor Barnes said she would like to talk with ERWoW before the second door-to-door is completed. She felt that splitting the volunteers off seemed inappropriate. She said she would ask for the process to be reviewed.

Mayor Barnes said the Santa Parade would be on December 22, 2017. She said Beneventi's Pizza would be supplying hot chocolate, the Eagles would supply candy bags, Chips Bar & Grill would supply cookies, and Stephanie Porter volunteered to help decorate.

Council Member Kiewit asked what time the parade would start.

Mayor Barnes said it would begin at the Fire Station at 6:00 pm and would arrive at Daubenspeck Park around 6:30 pm.

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 December 5, 2017. The council by unanimous vote does approve for payment the following list: Payroll EFT, Checks 19606-19610 (dated 11/30/2017) totaling \$21,569.19. General Fund - \$8,194.50, Street Fund - \$3,754.39, Water Fund - \$2,589.03, Sewer Fund - \$474.91, Treatment Plant Fund - \$6,556.36.

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 December 5, 2017. The council by unanimous vote does approve for payment the following list: Claims EFT - \$4,980.78 and Checks 19611-19628 (dated 12/05/2017) totaling \$57,733.04. General Fund - \$36,903.87, Street Fund - \$1,819.45, Water Fund - \$14,731.98, Sewer Fund - \$1,055.38, Treatment Plant Fund - \$3,222.36.

The council adjourned 10:05 pm.

City Clerk

Mayor