

The City Council for the City of Junction City, met for a work session at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, October 22, 2019, in the Council Chambers of City Hall, 680 Greenwood Street, Junction City, Oregon.

PRESENT: Mayor, Mark Crenshaw; Councilors Sandie Thomas, Robert Stott, Andrea Ceniga, Dale Rowe, and Bill DiMarco; **Absent:** Councilor John Gамbee; City Administrator, Jason Knope; Public Works Director, Gary Kaping; HR/Administrative Services Manager, Stephanie Moran; Public Works Superintendent, Jeremy Tracer; and City Recorder, Kitty Vodrup.

1. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Crenshaw called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. City Improvements Discussion

Mayor Crenshaw stated that copies of an email from Councilor DiMarco had been distributed at the meeting, as a conversation starter. Discussion included:

- Councilor DiMarco shared that he was in favor of making City improvements and perhaps doing so in coordination with the City's 150th Anniversary in three years. His email provided some history on topic. At last week's Budget Committee, they talked about promoting enthusiasm and matching funds from private or other public sources, which would be a lot easier to do with a target or some kind of an observance coming up. Staff had made a presentation on development of the western area, in terms of parks, open spaces, and trails, as well as the concept of building a parking lot/event grounds off of High Pass that would connect to trails.
- Councilor Rowe stated that he would like to see the City be proactive as opposed to reactive and work with the festival, Historical Society, etc. and have a list of priorities and projects, so everyone was working on the same page. In addition, he hoped the City could spearhead some of these projects and work with community partners on funding sources, matches, and grants.
- Mayor Crenshaw noted that the first thing that came to his mind on City improvements was the appearance of things and the first impression that visitors saw when driving into town. He had heard a lot of citizens comment on appearance, especially on the highway and in the downtown area. He wondered if it was in the City's ability to stimulate or incentivize painting or cleaning up of buildings/areas, as some major upcoming events would be bringing tourists to Junction City. Sisters had a theme in their town, and he wondered if that could be a topic of conversation for Junction City. He had also heard a lot about street improvements, especially in the downtown area where they wanted to encourage pedestrianism where special events were held.
- Councilor Ceniga expressed her agreement and noted that curb appeal when entering the City said a lot about the City. She was in support of sprucing up Ivy Street, encouraging business owners to do that, and seeing what the City could do to help them do that. In the downtown area, specifically on 6th Street, some trees were removed, and she was in favor of having plantar boxes with trees or other plants to make the area look good.
- Councilor Thomas asked about the status of the burned building on Ivy Street.

Director Kaping responded that notice had been sent to the property owner and the area was cleaned up a bit. Next step would be for them to remove the car and then staff would need direction from the Council on how to proceed. It was noted that there were some delays on building clean up, because of insurance and property owner issues. It was unknown what the condition of the inside was, as staff had not entered the building. The property had been cited under the Dangerous Building and Nuisance code sections, and the building official could see if the code gave leverage to let him inspect to determine building safety.

It was noted that estimates for demolition could be anywhere between \$50,000 and \$150,000, depending on the age of the building. Administrator Knope stated that one of two things would have to happen to see improvements made; either the insurance company would be forced to pay the current property owner or the noteholder would take the property back, which could take a while.

It was noted that at a minimum, making the exterior not look like a burned-out building and cleaning up the property would be a good step.

It was suggested that Director Kaping contact the property owner to see where they were at and then provide a monthly status report to Council under his staff report.

- Councilor Rowe asked if there could be City funding, such as through the Revolving Loan Fund Façade Program that the City could help a business owner renovate a building. Administrator Knope responded yes. Mayor Crenshaw added that the Revolving Loan Fund Committee was almost ready to make a presentation to the Council on using the RLF money for grants.
- Councilor DiMarco stated that it would be nice for the City to find a way to incentivize improvements and more proactively present information on programs that were available to local businesses and organizations. The City could form partnerships with businesses and other groups to find out what they could contribute and what the City might be able to do, as well as look at grants, matches, public and private funding, and corporate sponsorships to get projects done. Project examples included the City putting a parking lot on City property on High Pass and FFA putting in a goat or sheep barn on the property, finding a way to make improvements at the 150-year-old Historical Society museums, or making improvements to the festival stage.
- Mayor Crenshaw wondered about improvements the City could make on City owned property, regardless of participation from others in the downtown or Ivy Street area.

Councilor DiMarco asked about any plans for additional downtown work. Director Kaping responded that staff's intent was to get 5th and 6th on Greenwood done next year; the area had been surveyed and he was waiting for the numbers to come back. That work would include the street and parts of the sidewalk, and then the Council would need to determine if they wanted to see those trees come down, have a conduit put in, or what they would want to see in the future. Next after that would be to decide if 6th and 7th on Greenwood would be the next section. The City was spending about \$300,000 this year in the exchange fund to do the work between 4th and 5th and Front and Holly.

Councilor Ceniga stated that she liked having trees, but if the trees were damaging the sidewalk, she would be in favor of having them removed and having something put back in their place.

Administrator Knope suggested that the Community Development Committee pick back up the discussion of beautification projects for the downtown area, such as trees, planters, flowers, etc. That would be a good place to develop a project concept and then staff could make sure there were some allocations for that in the upcoming budget.

Mayor Crenshaw stated that one of the things that came to his mind when talking about taking out trees was replacing the shade they provide during summer events and he suggested looking at installation of awnings.

Councilor DiMarco noted that there had been discussion and some work by past planners where awnings could be part of a façade program. He added that the downtown trees were ornamental pears that were only supposed to be 25 feet tall but ended up being closer to 75 feet. Some of those trees were still on Greenwood and resolving that and going with small trees or plants in planter boxes, doing awnings, or incentivizing façade work was not out of the realm of possibility for the budget over the next few years.

Councilor Rowe noted that adding lighting would also be great.

Administrator Knope requested that the committee or Council come up with an official definition of what was considered downtown, as it had varied over the years and if they were talking about a big picture planning perspective, it would be nice to know when talking about the downtown area, what that entailed. Administrator Knope noted that the old downtown plan went from Front to Ivy and 4th to 10th.

Councilor DiMarco noted that the Historical Society had two old houses, a cemetery, and endless other needs. What helped a group like that in applying for grants and attracting corporate sponsors was having a match in place, through donations, in kind work, etc. Examples of things that contributed to a match included taking the value of City staff

time/work on partnership projects or the Historical Society payment for taking out a tree at one of the museums.

- Mayor Crenshaw invited Ms. Sue Huntley to make a comment. She stated that she would like to add parking to the list.

Mayor Crenshaw asked how long it had been since the City implemented the 2-hour parking rule downtown, to minimize employees of downtown businesses taking up all the customer parking.

Councilor Ceniga asked where downtown employees were expected to park.

Administrator Knope responded that the intent of the 2-hour parking was that employees of downtown businesses would park in one of three public parking lots downtown, with any overflow going to Front Street.

Mayor Crenshaw stated that it would definitely improve the town overall by finding a way to ensure that all businesses had an adequate supply of parking spaces. He asked if a long-term investment of more City owned public parking would be something they would want to consider as services the City provides. He noted that there was definitely vacant property for sale in the downtown area.

Councilor DiMarco noted that land was very expensive, so they would be digging themselves into a hole to buy land. He brought up the idea of having a hypothetical partnership of the City partnering with somebody who owned land downtown. He shared the example that the empty lot behind the festival stage could be improved and landscaped with utilities for booths or music festivals on the stage during the year and then used as extra parking throughout the rest of the year. The stage could also be improved for summer music festivals or an earth berm amphitheater could be built out by the parking lot on High Pass.

Mayor Crenshaw stated that they could potentially recoup maintenance costs by making it permit parking and guaranteeing those for a small fee. Councilor DiMarco added that if you build a venue that the City, festival, Historical Society, etc. could rent out, there would be an income stream.

Councilor Ceniga asked Ms. Huntley what she meant on parking. Ms. Huntley responded that she did not shop much downtown, as it was hard to find parking close to the businesses. She noted that this was the same for Ivy Street. The City had wonderful shops, but where were people to park.

- Mayor Crenshaw asked for discussion on the western reserve. He said they had talked about SHPO (State Historical Preservation Offices) playing a role in the City developing the parkland property. He asked about the timeframe to develop that property and noted that he liked the idea of walking paths and kiosks with narratives, etc.

Administrator Knope responded that the western expansion was not just the 11 acres of parkland in the Reserve, but there were things to the south of that property that could be developed, as well as the parking lot that Councilor DiMarco referred to, which would segue into an event space, fairgrounds, etc. To start the parking lot on High Pass would be pretty simple, as well as starting a trail system going north, as the City already owned that ground. The City was in discussions with a developer over another segment that connects the City owned property to the parkland. They have also been discussing creating a living wetlands area which would use effluent from the City's Sewer Treatment Plant. That kind of thing would be more subject to sewer funding, which could more easily absorb a property purchase.

Administrator Knope continued that staff was talking with SHPO about the 11 acres at the Reserve. The Community Services Committee was starting work on an RFP (Request for Proposal) to update the Parks Master Plan. What could be done in a 3-year window was quite a bit, because the City already owned the property in play, which would be the biggest hurdle. He was assuming there would be a significant rethink for that 11-acre parcel in the Parks Master Plan update. Right now, the developers to the north and east of the City were moving forward, so now was the time to work with those folks to incorporate those concepts around the walking trails.

Mayor Crenshaw asked if projects could be broken out in phases, such as doing the parking lot and walking paths first as they would be easiest to complete. Administrator Knope responded that the Community Services Committee was working with the Reserve to develop a park on a portion of the 11 acres. They wanted to make sure that the City had an overall concept plan, so they did not inadvertently do one phase and mess something up for the next phase.

- Administrator Knope stated that he would recap the major points that had been discussed tonight:
 - Working with community partners to develop some kind of funding plan. This would be a good topic for the Finance and Judiciary Committee to work on.
 - Overall curb appeal, facades, planters, the façade program, trees, lighting, infrastructure, and downtown plan. Also, the question of what was considered the downtown area. These would be good topics for the Community Development Committee.
 - Looking at developing improved parking downtown and the concept of developing the public/private parking lot partnership with the festival. This would be a good topic for the Public Works Committee.
 - The Parks Trail was already being discussed by the Public Works Committee.
 - The Parks Master Plan and park at the Reserve were already being discussed by the Community Services Committee.

Administrator Knope continued that staff could put these items on their agendas, whether as a new item or bringing an old item back up to the front burner for November or December. The Committees could begin flushing these ideas out and then bring back to the Council in a Work Session format.

Administrator Knope added that the Community Development Committee might want to have more than one meeting per month to discuss their ideas, because there would be a number of things for them to discuss that would be impacted by seasonality and the ability to give Public Works feedback as they were doing sidewalks, conduits, etc.

Councilor DiMarco expressed appreciation for everyone's time to discuss this topic.

3. Adjournment

As there was no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

ATTEST:

APPROVED:

Kitty Vodrup, City Recorder

Mark Crenshaw, Mayor