

WORKSHOP MEETING MINUTES  
SISTERS CITY COUNCIL  
520 E. CASCADE AVE.  
AUGUST 16, 2007

**COUNCIL PRESENT:**

Brad Boyd	Mayor
Bill Merrill	Council President
Lon Kellstrom	Councilor
Sharlene Weed	Councilor
Shawna Bell	Councilor

**STAFF PRESENT:**

Eileen Stein	City Manager
Lisa Young	Finance Director
Brad Grimm	Public Works Director
Kathy Nelson	City Recorder

**GUESTS:**

Cheryl Mills                      Executive Director, Sisters Area Chamber of Commerce

The meeting was called to order at 8:04 a.m. by Mayor Boyd.

1. Preview 08/23/07 Workshop and Regular Meeting Agenda

**City Manager Stein** provided an overview of the upcoming workshop and regular meeting. She stated that she will create a draft ordinance for the creation of the Committee for Citizen Involvement (CCI) for Council review and discussion at the workshop. She explained for the benefit of new Council members and staff that a CCI is a body that advises the City Council and insures citizen involvement with City projects, particularly in planning.

**Manager Stein** stated the regular meeting will provide a public hearing for two ordinances adopting changes to the City's Comprehensive Plan and Development Code with regard to the Flood Plain district, acceptance of public improvements to a subdivision and a resolution establishing the fee the City will charge for backflow testing.

2. City Manager Update  
a. Chamber Branding Process

**Manager Stein** introduced Cheryl Mills, Executive Director of the Sisters Area Chamber of Commerce to discuss her request for the City to provide financial assistance for the branding process for the greater Sisters area. **Manager Stein** stated the Chamber is applying for a grant and would like to be able to indicate the City's support in the grant documents.

**Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Cheryl Mills** distributed information on branding and a letter of request from the Sisters Area Chamber of Commerce. She stated the Chamber of Commerce has decided to proceed with the branding process based on the Sisters Vision statement. She stated that a brand will provide a visual expression and tag line for the community to promote the greater Sisters area. She stated that the Chamber has already completed phase one of the process by working with Brand Navigation and that an unveiling of the new brand will take

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place in early September. She stated the Chamber is attempting to receive a matching funds grant from Travel Oregon to create a community web site, ad campaign and marketing materials. She stated the Chamber is requesting a commitment of \$1,000 from the City for the second phase of the branding process. She stated the Branding Committee is hoping to raise \$5,000 in cash to combine with \$5,000 of in-kind products to match a \$10,000 grant from Travel Oregon. She added the Chamber has already invested \$12,500 in the first phase of the project.

**Councilor Merrill** stated that Sisters has always been known as “the western gateway into Central Oregon” and questioned why that image is insufficient. **Ms. Mills** stated that the brand will be different in that it will tell people what Sisters and include encompass the outlying areas as well. She stated that Sisters is more than a western town. She added that branding is an economic development strategy that will also attract new businesses.

**Manager Stein** stated that branding is the final piece of the visioning process. She stated that when the Community Action Team of Sisters (CATS) laid out the visioning process there were insufficient funds to follow through with the branding process and that the Chamber has picked up that piece. She stated the next logical step after creating the pictures, graphics and web-site is to create a physical manifestation of the brand with the redesign of the Cascade Avenue streetscape.

**Councilor Weed** asked how the additional \$4,000 needed will be raised. **Ms. Mills** stated that she has made requests to the Central Oregon Business Association (COBA), Metolius Recreation Association and an assortment of business owners.

**Councilor Merrill** stated he felt that a step has been missed. He stated the Branding Committee should be determining who Sisters is competing against and the strengths and weaknesses of our Sister’s competitors. **Ms. Mills** stated that is the purpose of the branding, to set Sisters apart. She stated the strategy is to make Sisters more desirable. **Councilor Merrill** stated he feels the branding process is premature. **Councilor Bell** asked if the \$1,000 the Chamber is asking for will help accomplish the process of determining the strengths and weaknesses of the Sisters area. **Ms. Mills** stated the funds will indirectly help with that determination by helping to create the website and marketing materials. She stated creating a brand gives an edge to attract the types of businesses the City wants in the area.

**Mayor Boyd** asked what will happen if the Chamber is unable to raise the total amount needed to go forward with the branding process. **Ms. Mills** stated that if the total funds needed are not raised then the City will not be obligated for the \$1,000.

**Councilor Weed** asked if the funds are granted, where they will come from in the budget. **Manager Stein** stated the funds can come from the Community Grant line item or a miscellaneous line item. The **Council** stated agreed they would prefer the funds come from a miscellaneous line item. **Councilor Weed** stated she is in support of providing support as she feels it will be a good tourism tool for the Chamber.

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**Councilor Kellstrom** stated that creating a brand is one thing but spreading and promoting the brand is another. He asked if the Chamber has given any forward thinking as to how it will financially support the branding marketing effort in the long term. **Ms. Mills** stated that all marketing efforts by the Chamber from here forward will utilize the new brand. She stated the Chamber currently has a \$44,000 yearly marketing budget. **Councilor Kellstrom** asked how far reaching the Chambers marketing efforts are. **Ms. Mills** stated that the Chamber works cooperatively with the State of Oregon and its international marketing efforts, Central Oregon Visitors Association (COVA) as well as the local community. **Mayor Boyd** asked if the Chamber has begun any discussion with Hoodoo, Five Pine Conference Center, Suttle Lake and the like to include the brand in their marketing efforts. **Ms. Mills** stated the Chamber is working to get all of those destinations on board with incorporating the brand into their marketing efforts. She stated that Sisters, Black Butte and Camp Sherman are already committed and that there will be strength in numbers. **Mayor Boyd** asked if in those discussions there was a sense the other destinations will join in the combined marketing effort. **Ms. Mills** stated that all of the companies have representation on the branding committee. She added that the website will help with those efforts as well as creating a consistent marketing message and make it easier to get help in the form of cooperative marketing dollars.

**Manager Stein** discussed the upcoming 150<sup>th</sup> birthday of the State of Oregon in 2009. She informed them that there is a group working on the celebration event already. She stated one of the tasks for that group is to identify “signature communities” in Oregon of which she believes Sisters qualifies. She stated the 150<sup>th</sup> birthday event will provide another place to leverage those marketing dollars. The **Council** agreed to a letter of support from the City for \$1,000

**Councilor Merrill** stated that he feels the economic growth of the City will come from those individuals that work from their homes and choose to live in Sisters. **Manager Stein** stated that in order to move here those individuals will come and visit first. She added she thinks it is time the City informs the community all that the City has accomplished and what it has to offer.

b. Response to “64 Concerned Citizens”

**Manager Stein** circulated a second draft of a letter of response to “64 Concerned Citizens” stating she had incorporated the feedback she had received from Council members thus far. She requested additional input from the Council.

**Councilor Merrill** provided his input on substantive changes he felt were necessary to provide a shorter, succinct letter. The other Council members agreed the letter needed to be shortened. **Councilor Merrill** suggested the City set a policy to accept only completed applications in the future.

*Councilor Merrill left the workshop meeting at 8:55 a.m.*

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**Councilor Kellstrom** stated he felt the letter is too general in nature and excuses or defensive statements should be removed. **Councilor Weed** stated the letter should only address the issues and how the City is looking forward. **Councilor Bell** stated she feels the City should acknowledge staff turnover and the frustration felt by some members in the community. **Mayor Boyd** asked that the extraneous information be removed from the letter and stated that much of the information the citizen group requested is already available on the website, in paper work received from the City and at City Hall. **Councilor Bell** stated the City should thank the writers of the letter for the concerns expressed and state the City's willingness for continued improvement. She stated that once something has been published, such as the letter from the concerned citizens the public perception is that it is the reality.

**Mayor Boyd** stated he feels the City should thank the concerned citizens for their valuable input and make them aware of the steps the City is taking to improve. **Councilor Weed** stated the letter should also stress that all Council members are available to discuss specific concerns with citizens.

**Manager Stein** stated she will revise the letter as per the Council's discussion.

**Councilor Weed** suggested conducting an executive session to make certain morale issues among staff are improving as it appears they are. **Councilor Bell** suggested an anonymous employee survey as a valuable tool in allowing staff members to express themselves. **Mayor Boyd** suggested an informal survey by the Council and department heads is a good way to check the pulse of the staff. He added that when the new Planning Director begins, he does not want to tell the individual how to do their job. Instead, he stated, he wants to make the new director aware of the concerns of the development community so the Planning Director can put into place his or her own processes and management principles to best address the issues.

**Councilor Kellstrom** stated he does not agree with the notion of surveying individuals who have left the employment of the City but surveying current staff members should be Manager Stein's decision. He stated asking employees for their opinion makes them feel validated. **Manager Stein** stated she would be open to that suggestion and stated she feels that any lingering morale issues are coming from only one or two individuals. She added she would welcome the opportunity to have that conversation with the Council.

**Mayor Boyd** asked if general personnel issues can be discussed in executive session. **Manager Stein** replied only in the context of reviewing her performance evaluation.

c. East Cascade Realignment Project

**Manager Stein** informed the Council that the City received no bids for the East Cascade Realignment project. She stated that investigation by City staff to potential bidders indicated that the tight time line was a major reason for not bidding the project. She stated the project will go back out to bid with an extended construction performance time line. She stated the goal will be

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to have the Cedar Street crosswalk completed by November and the rest of the project completed by spring 2008.

**Councilor Weed** asked for an update on the bike lane on Highway 242 by Sisters Middle School. **Manager Stein** reported that because of the lapse of time and thus increased cost, Hap Taylor no longer feels it is responsible for the bike lane on the north side of Highway 242. **Public Works Director Grimm** stated that Hap Taylor feels the City should participate in the cost of the path. **Councilor Weed** stated that Hap Taylor stalled on the project and that does not erase its responsibility for building the path. **Mayor Boyd** stated that City Attorney Bryant will look at the contract and determine what the City can enforce.

**Manager Stein** stated that a bike path on the south side of Highway 242 is eligible for a *Safe Routes to School* grant but in order to apply for the grant a *Safe Routes to School* plan is necessary. She stated a Sisters School District parent group is more focused on a *Safe Routes to School* grant for the elementary school at this time and has not even considered the bike path at the middle school. She stated the parent group thinks the City should create the plan while the City has assumed the school district will prepare it. She stated that follow up with the district will be necessary to determine who will be responsible for the plan.

d. Other

**Director Grimm** stated that the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) engineer that has reviewed the proposed south side path voiced concerns on a safe way for students to cross the highway. He stated it is the engineer's opinion that it is safer to have students on the north side of the road. **Mayor Boyd** stated that the school district has voiced concern over the number of cross streets and driveways on the north side that also create a hazard for students. **Councilor Weed** stated that a crosswalk with a flashing light and crossing guard would be ideal. **Manager Stein** stated that ODOT feels it is safer for students to cross at Hood Street and Highway 242 as opposed to a mid-block crosswalk. She stated that ODOT feels that driver expectancy is to stop at the side streets onto Highway 242 so it will be safer for students and drivers. **Manager Stein** stated the City will have additional conversations with ODOT regarding the matter.

**Director Grimm** stated that the flooding issue on Brooks Camp Road and McKinney Butte will be addressed by creating swails on both sides of the roads using Public Works staff. He stated that ODOT will also smooth the grade on the shoulders of the affected streets at no cost to the City.

**Finance Director Young** distributed a sample of the questionnaire each Council member will receive relative to the City's audit. She stated the questionnaire will come directly from the auditing firm of Pauley Rodgers to survey the Council with regard to general questions on City operations and then be returned back to the auditors. She stated the questionnaire will be mailed to the Council and key staff members.

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**Manager Stein** reminded the Council of the upcoming LOC conference, COCO dinner and City tours. **Councilor Kellstrom** asked for clarification on a breakout session at the LOC conference on SB400. **Manager Stein** explained that SB400 is for mandatory collective bargaining for any issue determined to be a safety issue for police and fire unions. She stated SB400 is expected to have significant budgetary impacts on cities.

**Manager Stein** informed the Council that interim Planning Director Susanna Julber has withdrawn from the recruitment process for Director of Planning and Community Development. She stated interviews for the position will take place on August 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>.

**Councilor Kellstrom** questioned an article that appeared in the Nugget Newspaper regarding the City's purchase of software costing \$6,600 to be used to help with the Tree City USA project. He stated he was upset to learn of the expenditure and felt the Council should have been informed prior to the articles circulation. **Manager Stein** explained that the purchase of the software was discussed and approved at a previous City Council meeting under accounts payable. She stated the software will be used for GIS and floodplain mapping as well as providing a tree inventory. **Councilor Kellstrom** stated that the perception is the City has spent \$6,600 on the software that inventories trees and that he is reluctant to have Assistant Planner Laura Lehman spending time on the Tree City project because of the City's increased labor costs. He stated he would prefer to see her performing planning work.

**Manager Stein** stated that goals set by the City Council might take more than one year to implement and complete as is the case with Tree City. She stated Tree City was identified by a previous Council in a prior fiscal year. **Manager Stein** stated she will provide information to the Council on the various applications and features of the purchased software.

**Director Grimm** informed the Council that the City received 30 applications for the Utility Worker I position. He stated that many of the candidates are highly qualified.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:03 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Kathy Nelson, City Recorder

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Brad Boyd, Mayor