

WORKSHOP MEETING MINUTES  
SISTERS CITY COUNCIL  
520 E. CASCADE AVENUE  
DECEMBER 20, 2007

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

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

**STAFF PRESENT:**

Eileen Stein	City Manager
Brad Grimm	Public Works Director
Lisa Young	Finance Director
Eric Porter	Planning Director
Kathy Nelson	City Recorder
Laura Lehman	Associate Planner

**GUESTS:**

Ryan Houston            Executive Director, Upper Deschutes Watershed Council

The meeting was called to order at 8:05 a.m. by Mayor Boyd.

1. Whychus Creek Restoration and Management Plan

**Ryan Houston**, Executive Director of the Upper Deschutes Watershed Council (UDWC), began by providing background information on UDWC stating it is a local non-profit organization dedicated to protecting the rivers and streams of the Upper Deschutes River. He stated that while the organization works on environmental issues it is not an environmental group and has representatives from many agencies with varying viewpoints.

**Mr. Houston** began his power point presentation (copy attached) with a brief review of his presentation to the Council at the March 22, 2007 workshop. He stated that Whychus Creek presents a four part problem, the first being an immediate problem of bank erosion along the creek that threatens property, public safety and stream health. He defined stream health as clean water, fish habitat and wildlife habitat. He stated the root causes include floodplain development that has put properties at risk, planning that has not factored in the channel migration zone and years of “fixes” that have actually made the problem worse.

**Mr. Houston** stated that what is needed is a holistic restoration plan as it is difficult to fix the problem one property at a time since what is going on upstream is linked to what is going on downstream. He stated the salmon and steelhead reintroduction is ongoing and is considered a very exciting effort since the steelhead have been blocked from migration for 40 years due to the dam at Lake Billy Chinook. He stated that prior to the dam Whychus Creek supported upwards of 40% of the steelhead in the region. He added that Sisters, situated as it is, will be involved, connected and engaged in the reintroduction plan. He stated that since the steelhead are protected as an endangered species Sisters can capitalize on that fact. He stated there are a multitude of funds available to help with the restoration and management plan. He stated another advantage is

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that federal regulations have provided time to create and implement the plans in the regulatory process to cities like Sisters that are impacted by this reintroduction.

**Mr. Houston** stated that the purpose of the Whychus Creek Restoration and Management Plan is to provide long-term guidance for the restoration and management of Whychus Creek to; 1) solve existing problems, 2) provide tools for the prevention of future problems and 3) position the City to capitalize on steelhead reintroduction funding opportunities. **Mr. Houston** briefed the Council on the detailed scope of work, including the process and necessary steps that includes \$70,000 needed to develop the plan. He stated he feels the DCWC can set up a cost share between the City and available grants, citing excellent opportunities with the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB). **Mr. Houston** stated that a number of grant opportunities would be available for implementation of the plan.

**Councilor Weed** asked Mr. Houston if he had a sense of what the cost share for the City will be. **Mr. Houston** stated that typically the cost share is a fifty-fifty split, adding that everyone wants to leverage their share to the best advantage including OWEB. **Councilor Merrill** stated that the Sisters Camp Sherman Fire District Chief has received a grant to study the issue of flooding and there needs to be a coordination of efforts and information. He asked **Mr. Houston** if the UDWC is involved with the Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) process being coordinated by the Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council (COIC).

**Mr. Houston** stated that the plan proposed by the UDWC fits well into the HCP project, adding the HCP will produce a legal document that defines what the City of Sisters will do to receive credit from the larger regulatory process. He stated the HCP is politically delicate and could bog down the UDWC process.

**Councilor Bell** asked if there is funding identified in the current budget year for this project and **Manager Stein** stated there is not. **Councilor Bell** asked if properties have been condemned in other cities that have gone through this process. **Mr. Houston** stated that he has not been involved in any projects that resulted in condemnation of properties. He suggested the City look at the process in layers and come up with an entire range of options such as working around existing developments or creating a plan that looks at every possibility. He stated the primary goal needs to be finding a balanced means to move fish safely though Sisters and that it needs to be positive for homeowners, the City, and from a fishery watershed perspective.

**Councilor Bell** asked what the cost to implement the plan, once developed, will be. **Mr. Houston** stated the amount is difficult to determine but he would guess it will be in the \$2 to \$3 million dollar range, stressing that it will be important to identify other agencies that could pay upwards to 95% of that cost. **Councilor Weed** asked if homeowners are responsible or if it is only the City's responsibility. **Mr. Houston** stated that is a good policy question to discuss but he feels it is everyone's responsibility. He stated that right now homeowners are spending a lot more individually as opposed to if a holistic approach were taken.

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**Manager Stein** asked if there is any opportunity to help with the issue of the velocity of stream flow in Whychus Creek on City owned property such as Creekside Park. **Mr. Houston** stated he sees a lot of opportunity at that site, stating it is far easier to make changes on City property than on private property.

**Mayor Boyd** stated that with the Council's goal setting session quickly approaching the Council can decide if the plan will be a top priority goal for FY 08/09 and identify the necessary funding. He stated that some of the problem floodplain areas identified include properties whose property lines run to the middle of the creek. He stated it will be necessary to work with those homeowners to solve the problem. **Mr. Houston** stated that early communication with affected homeowners will be vital to the process.

**Councilor Bell** voiced concern with waiting to identify the project until the goal setting session with regard to the cost sharing opportunities explained by Mr. Houston. **Mr. Houston** stated that OWEB will meet in January to determine if it will commit \$4 million dollars to the Upper Deschutes. He stated that if that financial commitment is made, then how those funds will be dispersed will be determined in March or April. He stated that if by that time the Council has set the plan as a high priority goal for FY 08/09 then stating that verbal intention to OWEB will suffice. **Mr. Houston** stated he has already begun lobbying for those funds for the City.

**Councilor Merrill** stated that some of the same basic work that will be needed is being conducted by the Fire District at this time with regard to its creation of an Emergency Response Plan. **Manager Stein** stated that she will check with the Fire District to determine if the City can take its share and tap into the Fire District grant.

**Manager Stein** asked Mr. Houston if he knows how other cities have found funding for their local share of the grant either by means of imposing a surcharge or absorbing the cost. **Mr. Houston** stated that the City of Bend has absorbed some cost into its street and water budgets and has recently also imposed a four dollar a month storm water management surcharge on its water bills to fund this type of work. He stated that Bend has also considered an improvement district along the stream corridor.

## 2. City Manager Update

**Manager Stein** informed the Council of the resignation of Planning Commissioner John Rahm. **Mayor Boyd** read the letter and asked if there was an effective date for the resignation. **Planning Director Eric Porter** stated he was attempting to persuade Commissioner Rahm to stay on the Planning Commission for an two additional months. **Mayor Boyd** requested that the vacancy be noticed in the Nugget News and **Manager Stein** stated the vacancy for an inside city limits Commissioner will be noticed.

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**Manager Stein** alerted the Council to items in their mailboxes; 1) a list of potential transportation projects from Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT), 2) the November monthly budget report and 3) the scope of work for the Water Rights Management Plan. **Manager Stein** added she had questioned ODOT on which projects are in other cities and was informed that only LaPine projects were included on the list.

**Councilor Bell** stated she had several questions regarding the budget and that it would be helpful to receive a summary page on the budget. She stated she would also like a summary of personnel costs since those costs are spread across several funds. **Manager Stein** stated that the quarterly report will have that information. **Councilor Kellstrom** stated he had discussed the issue with Finance Director Young and she indicated she will provide a consolidated worksheet in the future monthly reports showing the General Fund and four enterprise funds.

**Manager Stein** stated that with the recent turn of events in Bend, she was interested in studying the year to date percentages and found that most were in line. She stated the difference between Bend and Sisters is that Bend made the policy decision to have their Planning Department be 100% fee funded whereas Sisters has a General Fund subsidy to the department. **Councilor Kellstrom** stated he sees this as the beginning of a long term slowdown and stated the earlier the City can see a problem, the earlier it can respond.

**Councilor Weed** referenced the memo from Manager Stein proposing to enter into a contract for \$15,000 for a Water Rights Master Plan. She stated she would like a workshop on water rights for educational purposes before this contract is approved. **Mayor Boyd** stated he has a great handbook on water rights from the State that he will circulate to the Council that he feels will answer many of the Council's questions. **Manager Stein** informed the Council that there is still \$22,000 left in the Water Fund budget for contracted services that will pay for the water rights work.

**Public Works Director Brad Grimm** informed the Council that he had received an executed copy of the Intergovernmental Agreement between the City and ODOT for the \$47,000 "quick fix" grant for the Cedar Street crosswalk.

**Councilor Weed** asked for an update on the bike path on Highway 242. **Director Grimm** stated he had met with ODOT and the Sisters School District to discuss the project. He stated that ODOT is determining what will be acceptable to their standards.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Kathy Nelson, City Recorder

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Brad Boyd, Mayor