

WORKSHOP MEETING MINUTES
SISTERS CITY COUNCIL
520 E. CASCADE AVENUE
JULY 22, 2020

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Chuck Ryan Mayor
Nancy Connolly Council President
Andrea Blum Councilor
Richard Esterman Councilor
Michael Preedin Councilor

STAFF PRESENT:

Cory Misley City Manager
Paul Bertagna PW Director
Kerry Prosser City Recorder

ABSENT:

Joe O'Neill Finance Director

GUESTS:

Gary Farnsworth Region 4 Manager, Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT)
David Brown Right of Way Manager, ODOT

Mayor Ryan called the workshop to order at 5:30 pm, and City Recorder Prosser took roll call.

1. Update on East Portal Intergovernmental Agreement with ODOT

City Manager Misley reviewed that acquiring the East Portal property had been a high priority partnership between the City and ODOT for the past year. The City met with the Forest Service (FS) in February, and the takeaway was the FS was willing to work to keep the property in public ownership. The FS needed a formal offer submitted for the property before they could move forward. The City and ODOT had been working behind the scenes on the project, getting an appraisal, and looking at the potential for a multi-modal transportation hub.

Mr. Farnsworth explained that ODOT was interested in this property/project, and they had started their due diligence on the value of the property. Mr. Brown noted an appraisal had been done on the parcel and had a value of \$7,500 an acre for a total value of \$58,538.

Mr. Farnsworth said they were working on a draft agreement so that an offer could be made to the FS. He thought it made sense for ODOT to identify the property's value above the benefit for transportation use. Mr. Farnsworth reviewed the benefits of the partnership:

1. General value for ODOT to own the underlying right-of-way outright versus having an easement, for example, if the property were to end up in private ownership.
2. ODOT ownership of the trail on the south/west side of the US 20 roadway benefits both ODOT and City.

3. Maintaining Public ownership of the 'gateway' to OR242. This provides us with the potential for a variety of gateway treatments for the scenic highway, including potential funding sources (e.g., FLAP).
4. General land use/transportation value in keeping the property west of OR 242 (Hood) in public ownership (portal/rest area/public restrooms much needed, park and multi-use path, all benefits to Scenic Byway and ODOT for US 20 travelers).
5. More off-street (US 20) Parking – The downtown corridor is already lacking for parking, and any parallel parking creates further safety issues. Having parking availability at this location would be a benefit to both the state and local systems.
6. Transit value in establishing a multi-modal hub at the East Portal site.
7. As a multi-modal hub, the site could enhance connections to the multi-use paths or recreational opportunities on the site or nearby. An informational kiosk for visitors about the scenic byway, bike fix-it equipment, benches, or other amenities could make this an attractive gateway feature as well as a functional investment for ODOT. With Park-and-Ride options – at least two long term park-and-ride opportunities - trips to/from Salem, bicycle use of OR 242. A hub would also support the overall system through a better balance of modes, transportation funding opportunities, etc.
8. A multi-modal hub site would serve as an additional / alternative start-end point – to the McKenzie Pass Scenic Bikeway and Sisters to Smith Rock Scenic Bikeway. If the site were served by intercity regional transit, it would support car-free recreational tourism in Central Oregon, a major focus of Travel Oregon in recent years.
9. Public Transportation funding opportunities – there are several statewide competitive grant opportunities the City could pursue for transit-related improvements to the site, including planning efforts. These include the Statewide Transportation Improvement Fund (STIF) Discretionary, STIF Intercommunity, or 5310 capital grants. Additionally, the City could pursue formula funds, such as STIF Formula, distributed to the County or CET.
10. The Central Oregon Regional Solutions Team will be a strong advocate - highlighting the value of maintaining a gateway space, a public restroom, and of using the site to improve intercity service connections.

11. The west and south faces of the triangle are gaps in ODOT's pedestrian-bicycle network. Sisters TSP identifies multi-use paths as the preferred infill improvements for those gap segments. With City and ODOT East Portal ownership, these infills could be constructed more rapidly than relying on future development. Providing safe/comfortable walking and biking in East Portal will take on increasing importance as the lands west Hood Ave/242 and north of US 20 increasingly develop. Completing the multi-use path gap on the south side of the triangle would eliminate the last ped/bike facility gap between Sisters Middle School, Downtown Sisters, and residential neighborhoods south of Downtown, enhancing non-motorized access and routes to school. If the City (or ODOT) owns the property, ODOT would very likely have bike/ped/path/sidewalk funds to construct the path improvements.

Councilor Preedin asked if this property was zoned open space what the zoning implication moving forward was. City Manager Misley replied a lot of the proposed plans would fit into the current open space zone. He said we did have some language in the Comprehensive Plan and the Parks Master Plan on development of the property; there had been a high-level concept developed ten years ago. City Manager Misley said we did not want to make changes to the zoning without acquiring the property and developing a masterplan. He explained the Council would ultimately be approving any changes.

Councilor Blum asked if, during the masterplan process, we would be looking at what impacts the project would have on the Pine Street intersection. City Manager Misley replied we would look at the intersection and try to get ahead of potential congestion.

Council President Connolly thought it was a good use of the property with long-term benefits.

Mayor Ryan asked if the appraisal had been done on the current zoning. City Manager Misley replied the FS had valued the property for its highest and best use; we did not know what the FS appraisal was. He noted none of our City plans supported a rezone application for the property. Mayor Ryan said the next step was critical; we needed to make an offer to get the project off the ground.

Mr. Brown thought there would be a good discussion with the FS once the offer was on the table.

Mr. Farnsworth noted ODOT had based their decision making on due diligence. He thought the range of benefits added value to US20 and US242, and they were willing to work with the City and the FS for an equitable solution.

Mr. Brown said if ODOT used the appraised valuation and paid for only the acquisition of the right-of-way, which was 5% of the property, their portion would be \$6900. They were willing to split the cost of the offer with the City and agreed to roughly \$30,000. Mayor Ryan appreciated ODOT coming forward with 50% of the funds.

Councilor Esterman asked how much it would cost if a private person wanted to rezone the property. City Manager Misley replied a rezone would cost tens of thousands of dollars and would take six to twelve months to complete.

Councilor Esterman thought the FS might drop their original asking price if we offered them \$60,000. City Manager Misley replied we were trying to operate on facts and let that guide our offer. He said the FS might ask for more, and then we would know if we wanted to increase our offer. City Manager Misley said the FS would not be offended by the offer; they were partners with us in the community. Councilor Esterman asked who had done the appraisal. Mr. Brown replied an independent company did the appraisal.

Mayor Ryan thought the IGA and offer were a good starting point.

Councilor Preedin thought there was essentially little risk in moving forward outside of staff and legal time.

Councilor Blum thought it was a good partnership with ODOT and could lead to the ability to apply for grants for the project.

Council President Connolly thought we might need to paint a picture for the FS on how the project could benefit them.

Council gave staff a head nod to move forward with initiating an IGA with ODOT to make an offer of the East Portal property and continue working on the plans for a mobility hub.

Mr. Brown noted this was a rare opportunity as the FS infrequently sold property; hopefully, we could secure it as the opportunity might not come along again.

2. Review Draft Boards & Commission Resolutions and Ordinance

City Recorder Prosser reviewed that City staff has been looking at streamlining the recruitment and appointment time frame for all boards and committees over the past year. The process included adopting an ordinance that repealed current code provisions and authorized forming boards and commissions by resolution. Staff was also proposing a new board, the Public Works Advisory Board (PWAB). The PWAB would meet quarterly to provide advice on public works related matters within the City.

Councilor Blum asked who would be qualified for the PWAB. Director Bertagna replied they would lean on engineers, surveyors, etc.

Council gave staff a head nod to move forward with the adoption of the ordinance and resolutions for boards and commissions.

3. Review League of Oregon Cities (LOC) Legislative Agenda

City Manager Misley explained staff had looked at the Council's choices for legislative priorities and noted that six issues had received two votes each. He had participated in a Central Oregon Cities Organization (COCO) meeting where these issues were discussed, and there was quite a bit of overlap between the Council's choices and other City's choices. If Council concurred, he would submit their top six priorities:

1. Broadband Infrastructure and Technical Assistance Funding
2. Housing and Services Investment
3. Long-term Transportation Infrastructure Funding
4. Mental Health Service Delivery
5. Property Tax Reform
6. Right-of-way Franchise Fees Authority Preservation

City Manager Misley said if the City were interested in other issues, such as funding for the roundabout, we could take a proactive approach and engage our legislatures.

Council gave a head nod to recommend six Council priorities for the LOC's 2021 legislative agenda.

4. Other Business - None

The meeting adjourned at 6:34 pm.



Kerry Prosser, City Recorder



Chuck Ryan, Mayor