

Local

Development code changes, airport plan and Rural Fire Protection withdrawals among topics at City Council



Gina K. Swartz / The Baker County Press

L-R: Baker Rural Fire Chief Dan Weitz, City Manager Mike Kee, Councilor Rosemary Abell, Councilor Richard Langrell, Councilor Benjamin Merrill, Mayor Kim Mosier, and Councilor Mike Downing.

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Tuesday evening's City Council meeting began with Councilor Langrell leading the pledge of allegiance and invocation.

With all councilors present, Mayor Kim Mosier called for any citizen participation of anything not on the agenda.

Deborah Hannah approached council regarding the most recent spraying in Geiser-Pollman park.

"Signs were inadequate. A sign is expected at each corner and each of the entrances. I only saw two small signs at the entrances at Campbell and Grove and one at Grove and Madison. One inch by one and a half inch in size. None at the main entrances and the entrance by the library. None listing of the chemical used. Many sprays are required by law to have signs saying 'warning: chemical' date applied and date to reentry, when it is safe to come back in. That knowledge is necessary to make an informed decision as to exposure," Hannah said.

She expressed concern that she saw children playing in the area, one a very young child clad only in a diaper. She also mentioned that young children also touch affected areas and then put their hands in their mouths possibly exposing them internally.

"All citizens, pet owners and especially parents deserve the opportunity to make an informed decision," she said.

Mayor Mosier asked Public Works Director Michelle Owen to address Hannah's concerns and speak to the signage requirements imposed on the Public Works or the contractors.

Owen said, "It is required that they (the city contractor) post notice and they did. Certainly there are other improvements—we can put larger signs. We can put billboards. There is a range of things, but we can certainly make improvements to the signage. We did ask them to put notices at the entrances to the park keep in mind the spray that is used is a concern until it is dry so we typically try to spray when the park is unoc-

cupied. I will confer with our contractor. We can use larger signs if that is the direction of Council."

Mosier asked Hannah, "Have you seen signs that you felt were adequate? Something that is different than the signs you saw here?"

Hannah said she had but not regarding the specific chemical in question, Glyphosate (Round Up).

Mosier asked, "So, what you're wanting to see is larger signs that include what was sprayed?"

Hannah indicated she would also like to see the date the spray was applied as well.

Owen said the date was not on the signs currently so the signs could be reused and not incur added expense creating new signs every time.

She did suggest adding words like "today" or "this morning" on those signs to give a time frame to park users.

Council then turned its attention to the remainder of the agenda.

Appointment of Volunteers to Board Vacancies.

Three of the City boards and committees had vacancies to be filled; the Tree Board, the Parks and Recreation Board and the Public Works Advisory Committee each needed one vacancy filled.

The Tree Board had two applicants, Lyle Kuchenbecker and William Albrecht. Kuchenbecker received two votes and Albrecht five votes.

The Parks and Recreation Board also had two applicants, Mike Clark and Steve Adams.

Clark Received five votes while Adams received two.

Only one applicant, Jim Bruce, applied to fill the vacancy on the Public Works Advisory Committee. The Council chose to appoint Bruce unanimously.

Human Resource Manager Luke Yeaton mentioned that one vacancy remains on the Public Arts Commission.

Ordinance 3341 Development Code was next on the agenda. Council next heard from Planning Director Holly Kerns. She updated council on revisions and changes being made to the code.

The current develop-

ment plan was adopted in 2009 a review that began in 2012 unveiled a number of updates needed. Most of which were housekeeping items such as spelling or references to sections that had been updated.

Eight public hearings were held before a recommendation for approval of the document before Council was reached.

Property owners were mailed notices and Kerns advised Council, "We have had a lot of public contact aside from getting caught at the grocery store or kids' ball games. I have highlighted portions of the changes that drew the most discussion."

The revised code outlines steps needed to be taken should a conditional use permit need to be revoked if there is one found to be in violation.

"There has never been an issue in the time that I have been with the program but it is good to have that tool in the toolbox if it is ever needed," Kerns said, and noted clarification of the Kennel Permit Code, to bring it more in line with Municipal Code as being one of the most discussed topics.

Kerns said she and her staff were careful not to create a conflict by clarifying a commercial kennel, requiring a land use permit and private kennel which is for personal use but would still need to comply with the kennel permitting process.

After Kerns' initial introduction, Mayor Mosier opened a Public Hearing. No one came forward to speak and after a few questions from Mosier clarifying questions she had about revoking conditional land use permits.

Kerns assured that it was complaint driven and not something the planning department would begin seeking out the need to do

City Manager Mike Kee read the ordinance in its entirety.

After the reading Councilor Merrill moved to approve the first reading of the ordinance seconded by Councilor Downing.

Council voted unanimously to accept the first reading with Mayor Mosier stating that the public would be given another chance to speak before final approval at the

July 28 meeting.

Council was then given an informational presentation from Oregon Climate.

Oregon Climate is a rural-led, rural-started organization aiming for a timely global transition to a clean energy.

Emma Ronai-Durning addressed Council saying, "Oregon has a history of solving hard problems. We have to dig deeper wells and find a way to grow our crops no matter what happens to our climate."

She said Oregon Climate wants to see companies that are adding to the carbon pollution pay for what they are doing to our environment. They are proposing these companies be taxed and a portion of the revenue collected be divided up among the citizens of Oregon.

"Just like we have to pay for our trash to be collected they should have to pay for putting that into our air," Ronai-Durning said.

Mayor Mosier told Ronai-Durning that council would take the information provided under advisement.

Council then looked the Task Order TO Engineers (Airport).

"Before you tonight is a task order for your approval for our airport. We recently entered into an agreement with TO Engineers they have been our aviation engineers for the past five years and we entered into another five-year agreement," said Michelle Owen.

She introduced Kevin Bissell, project manager from TO Engineers who spoke to Council about the project and task order that was before them for redesigning and improving airport aprons.

Owen and Bissell advised council that cost for the apron rehabilitation is set at 158,225.

The task order referred to a FFA grant that could be secured only if a signed agreement and approval by Council was obtained.

Mayor Mosier asked if there was a timeline and was told to expect approximately one year. Councilor Downing moved for approval of the task order with a second by Councilor Merrill. A unanimous vote in favor of approval was carried.

Ordinance 3340 – Remove Annexed Properties from Rural Fire District was up next.

City Manager Mike Kee advised council he had written a staff report in April of 2015 regarding residences that had been annexed in 2005.

Those residents waived city taxes by signing an agreement that will expire this year.

There was a statement in those agreements that the city could eventually withdraw from the rural fire protection district.

"Properties in the country are often in a district that they fund themselves for fire protection. That is what is currently in agreement and the residents pay taxes to the district rather than the city for that protection," Kee explained. "As those properties withdraw from that district, rural fire loses those taxes and the city gains. In this case we will gain some property tax from those properties and they will be protected primarily by the city fire department."

Kee estimates 20 letters were sent to the property owners that will be affected and he had heard back from only two who just asked some questions but has not heard any objections.

Kee explained that Council had the authority to bring in all properties or just certain properties if there were objections.

Dan Weitz, fire chief of the Baker Rural Fire Protection District said, "We have no objection with the withdrawals."

Kee read the ordinance for the first time and Councilor Downing moved for approval of the first reading with a second by Councilor Merrill.

Councilor Langrell, who lives in this area told fellow Councilors "I will not vote on this."

The rest of Council voted unanimously in favor.

Mayor Mosier thanked Baker Rural Fire for their "Collaborative spirit." Resolution 3757 Oregon Savings Growth Plan.

City Manager Kee told council he would like to add Oregon Savings Growth Plan as an option to city employees and Council would need to authorize participation in

this plan.

"The plan has become very popular in the last several years due to the low fees. There is no cost to the city. Several cities around us offer this as well as Baker County and the Prisons. It is a good way to self-fund retirement," Kee said.

Councilor Augenfeld voiced his concerns. "I don't know if the other plans we offer are the same in nature I assume that they are but it seems a shame to offer another one. My reservation about this sort of thing is I don't know if at this level it is appropriate for the employer to somewhat control the investment options. I wonder if the investor will be buying a share or whether they will have a choice of picking their own investments like through a broker."

Kee explained that the program is overseen by Oregon PERS the brokerage that is used is ING, a nationwide company. They will allow representatives to broker for individuals or The Oregon Growth Plan can pick for them, and there are more options available as far as how aggressive the investor chooses to be.

"I realize this is common practice but I'm going to have to vote against it. I just don't feel it is appropriate to offer," Augenfeld said.

For clarification Mosier asked, "This is after tax, like a Roth IRA?" to which Kee said yes.

Councilor Downing made a motion to adopt that was seconded by Councilor Merrill. All Councilors voted in favor with the exception of Augenfeld.

The meeting wrapped up with a mention to buy Jubilee buttons for this upcoming weekend.

Councilor Abell announced to everyone that HBC is selling Ducks and Beavers for the races on Sunday.

Mayor Mosier reminded everyone that Turbo pins were also for sale and those proceeds will go to fund a new drug sniffing dog, specifically trained to detect only illegal drugs.

With that she adjourned the meeting wishing all a safe and fun Miner's Jubilee weekend.